

The Voice

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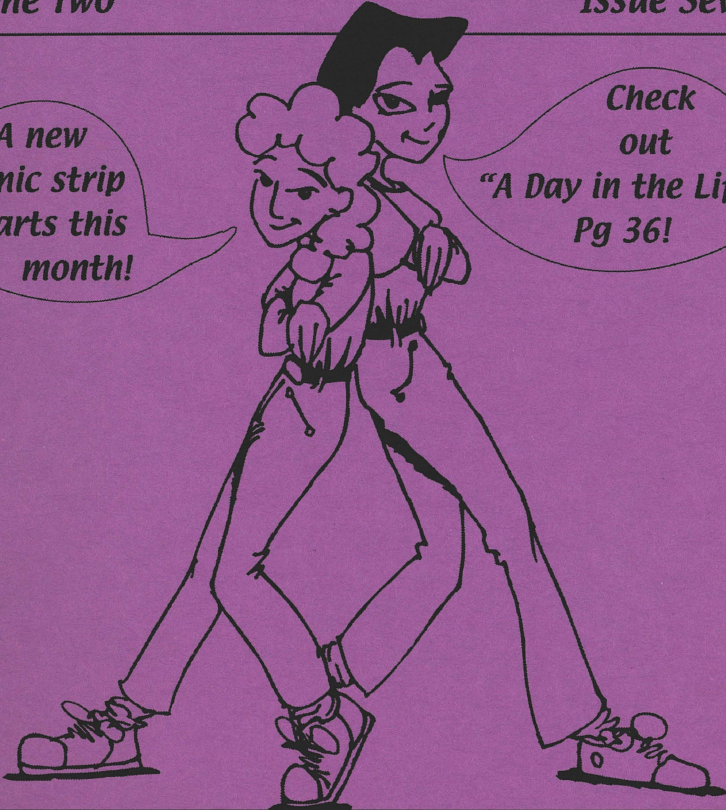
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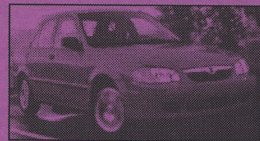
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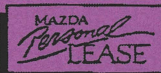
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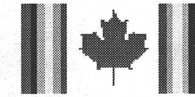
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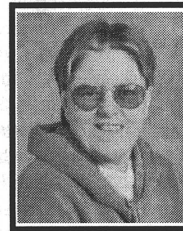
Denise A. Wood

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WHERE IS YOUR VOICE?



We are NOT vocal enough. We do not exercise our democratic right to lobby our elected officials often enough or consistently enough.

voice? Have you added your voice to the reality that those of us who are lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgendered exist too? Have you spoken up to your elected official and let them know how your life has been impacted by the inequality that Bill C-23 can address to one degree or another? If not, why not?

With Bill C-23 (omnibus bill to give same-sex couples equal status with straight common-law couples) is before the Federal Government now and with Focus on the Family and other such organizations urging their "members" and or supporters to be vocal in their disgust regarding equal rights for lesbians and gays where are our voices? Why is it that a substantial segment of our "community" can be counted on to be silent when being heard would count most?

It can be so easy to think that your voice doesn't count. But, if you don't attempt to use it you can rest assured that it won't count.

We, in the name of "community" need to take more of an active interest in all that affects or has the potential to affect the quality of our lives.

There has been much criticism of the government for legally protecting the "santicty" of marriage as a union between heterosexuals only. Instead of criticizing what we may not be able to attain right now why not get out there and be vocal about what is on the table?

Why is it always a minority that are left with the responsibility to "take care" of the majority of us -- minority that we all are? Are we too busy trying to "protect" ourselves from the "what ifs" of speaking up? What is the cost of that? Where is your

Progress is a process not a destination. Where is your voice?

EDITORIAL

Lynn Voortman
Naturopathic Doctor



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An Amendment to Bill C-23

The House of Commons Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights yesterday adopted a government amendment to Bill C-23 *inserting an interpretative clause to recognize marriage as restricted to opposite-sex couples only*. The clause reads:

Interpretation

1.1 For greater certainty, the amendments made by this Act do not affect the meaning of the word 'marriage', that is, the lawful union of one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others."

The Government announced the amendment on Wednesday, and the vote was deferred to Thursday morning. When it became apparent that the Government would not withdraw the amendment, the efforts of EGALE, Svend Robinson and others opposing the amendment became focused on revising it to end after the word "marriage", so that the clause would affirm that the Bill does not affect the meaning of marriage, but would not go further and define marriage in explicitly heterosexual terms.

On Thursday morning, it became apparent that the Liberals had closed ranks to push the amendment through. EGALE filed a letter with the Committee, asking that we be recalled as a witness to address this new development. In our letter, we explained that if the rights of same-sex couples were to be restricted in this way, the least we expected was the right to be heard. A copy of our letter is reproduced at the end of this e-mail.

When the Committee reconvened on Thursday morning, Svend Robinson moved a motion that the Committee hear further witnesses on the marriage issue, to accommodate EGALE's request. The Committee debated the request for over

an hour. Réal Ménard, of the Bloc Québécois, delivered a particularly touching testimonial to EGALE's efforts, insisting that the Committee could not debate the amendment without hearing from us. The Conservative representative to the Committee, Peter MacKay, also supported the motion to hear further witnesses, as did Liberal MP Carolyn Bennett. Ultimately, however, the motion was defeated.

Svend then moved a motion to amend the Government proposal to end after the word "marriage", and to remove the explicit limitation on same-sex marriage. This was vigorously debated, and again defeated by the Reform MPs and all the Liberals except Carolyn Bennett. Again the NDP, Bloc and Conservative MPs, and Ms. Bennett supported Svend's motion.

Eric Lowther of the Reform Party then proposed his own motion, to expand the government amendment so that the restriction on same-sex marriage would apply not just to throughout "all federal laws". This too was defeated.

Finally it was time to vote on the Government amendment itself. Svend vigorously defended the right of same-sex couples to marry, and questioned the



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government representatives on the legal implications of the proposed amendment. The government acknowledged that the "interpretative provision" did not in itself create an obstacle to same-sex marriage but only affirmed the Government's understanding of the existing state of federal common law. They did, however, indicate that the new provision will be relied upon by the Government in any future same-sex marriage challenge as evidence of the Government's position that marriage excludes same-sex couples. After further debate, the amendment passed as a result of the combined votes of the Liberal, Reform and Conservative MPs. It was opposed by the NDP, Bloc Québécois and Liberal MP Carolyn Bennett.

Yesterday afternoon, the Committee proceeded to review the rest of the Bill, but no further amendments of any substance were made. The Committee has now concluded its clause-by-clause review of the Bill, and the next step will be for the Bill to be reported back to the House for a debate and vote at third reading. Further amendments are possible by the House of Commons as a whole at report stage, and already we understand that the Reform Party are planning a number of other amendments to weaken the Bill.

The Bill is now out of the hands of the Committee and on its way back to the House. The priority for members of our communities now switches to contacting your local MPs as constituents and urging them to resist further amendments to the Bill. We know that MPs are receiving numerous calls from the anti-gay forces - we need to make sure they hear from us, and our friends, families and supporters. As always, you can obtain your MP's number through Elections Canada at 1-800-463-6868, or by visiting the following Website: <http://www.parl.gc.ca/36/sm-mpcur-e.htm>, and you can also fax your MP through the Internet, using the link at:

www.egale.ca/politics/politics.htm

I should say also that Svend Robinson was fabulous, both in using every legitimate procedure to try and defeat the amendment, in addressing the issues on their substance and in pinning down Justice officials on the legal impact of the amendment. Other MPs who deserve our praise and thanks are Réal Ménard of the Bloc Québécois and MP Carolyn Bennett for resisting the Liberal machine and standing up for what's right in the face of pressure from her own government.

Please let these people know that their support has not gone unnoticed. Their contact details are:

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Source:

John Fisher
Executive Director, EGALE

More information about Bill C-23 is available on the net at Egale's web site at: <http://www.egale.ca>

In Response To March's Voice Editorial

In June 1993 a 55-year-old Anglican priest, Daniel Webb, the divorced father of two teenage boys, was arrested in a Kitchener park for sexual assault. So horrified were his sons and his parishioners after the details of the charge against him were published that he lost both his sons and his job. The charges against him were withdrawn six months later when the arresting officer failed to appear in court to testify but, by then, the damage had been done.

What dreadful act had this priest performed to bring down such terrible retribution? The priest was in a park which was/is a place where men who want anonymous and consensual sexual contact with other men go looking for release. When a man approached him and indicated he was interested in a sexual act, the priest had, sensibly, queried whether or not the man was a cop and, receiving a negative response, he had, according to press reports, "touched the officer's groin area". This then was the dreadful act - he groped an undercover cop (with that cop's consent) and was busted for "sexual assault".

Until his arrest, the priest was a deeply closeted man who was not "out" to himself let alone to his family or his world. All of that changed forever when he agreed to jack off another man in a park.

Now Webb is suing the Waterloo Region Police Service for \$4,000,000. Now, Webb is also being criticized by some members of the local LGBT community who doubt the cops were running a "gay sting", who feel that Webb "chose" to be in the bushes and therefore he "gambled" and "lost". It is held out that not only is Daniel Webb not deserving of our sympathy but that we should distance ourselves from him as his actions are responsible for a negative public perception of the LGBT communities. I am saddened and angered by such reactions. Daniel Webb was the victim here; anger towards him is at best displaced and at worst homophobic.

The Waterloo Region Police Service received complaints about sexual acts in the park. So what did they do? They went looking for men

cruising men in the park. They were not looking to bust men and women having consensual sex with each other. They were not looking for men buying sex from women. They were not even looking for men forcing themselves on women (when such a sting would be justified). It wasn't a heterosexual sting.

Had the complaints only been about men having sex with men, the police still had more effective and more appropriate options they could have used. They could have increased their presence in the park using fully clothed, uniformed officers instead of half-naked, well-buffed lures. They could have used the opportunity to work with outreach workers from ACCKWA to pass out safe-sex information to men in the bushes. Instead they put their MALE officers to work enticing other men to have sex. That's why *the police* call it a "gay sting". We need no better reminder that to the police in this community, who we are as individuals is confined to what we do sexually. Forget how much we conform, how "normal" we are in the rest of our lives. (Then again, the Waterloo Region Police Service seems to have a fondness for naked bodies. After all, according to the Canadian Civil Liberties Association the police service here has one of the highest strip search rates in the country. Maybe there was another agenda at work here after all. But I digress)

Not that those men seeking out other men to have sex in the bushes are "gay". No, really. Some years ago, the Aids Committee of Ottawa did a study interviewing such men in parks. The researcher was surprised to learn that these men identified themselves as heterosexual - not gay and not bi-sexual. Even some of my gay male activist friends of a certain age (over 40) tell me that, in the absence of other resources, they first found the way to their own orientation through anonymous casual sex in the parks.

Where is the crime in that? Danger - of bashing or disease or public lewdity - perhaps. But not sexual assault. There was a crime but Daniel Webb did not commit it. No, the police are the guilty here. They set the trap, one of

them agreed to consensual sex, one of them made a spurious arrest and they released the information to the media before, in the end, withdrawing the charges. They used their homophobia and the homophobia of the press to destroy Daniel Webb's life.

Bravo to Daniel Webb for having the courage to pursue his lawsuit against the cops. Bravo to Daniel Webb for gaining the courage to live his life in pride. Bravo to Daniel Webb for reminding me that it wasn't all that many years ago that two women were kicked out of restaurants in Toronto and in Vancouver for holding hands in public - too much of a display of public affection for the "detractors" of lesbians and gays. Bravo to all of us for our personal struggles to identity, no matter how messy and uncomfortable they may be.

K-W resident Diane Kilby

It was in a public place and this is not the kind of place for any kind of sexual activity (as distinguished from a display of affection) therefore Webb shares in the responsibility for the consequences he has suffered.

More than the issues of police action and policy this is about personal responsibility. Whether Webb was wronged or not he did make a choice.

Within our personal struggles to and for identity each of us is still responsible for our own choices and actions -- regardless of what the police do or of what heterosexual society thinks about gay sex.

Editor



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DANCING TO THE MUSIC OF A DIFFERENT DRUMMER

By Charles W. Westfall



I can't dance. Not just because I'm in a cast right now. I never could dance. Not really.

Oh, I could manage to fake a Fox Trot, Waltz or Polka, without stepping on my partner's toes too often. But to really dance, that takes something more. A kind of interior and exterior freedom that I never had.

Acquiring that kind of freedom isn't easy, either. I remember the High School dances of my youth. All the girls lined up on one side of the gym and all the boys lined up on the other side. For some time, at the beginning of the night, they just stood, or sat, there looking at one another across the empty space. Then, when it looked as though the evening would be a complete bust, a couple, usually two girls, would slip onto one side of the dance area and begin dancing. In those days, it was quite all right for two girls to dance together. Two guys, never. Eventually, others would follow suit and soon there would be a dance floor filled with swaying bodies.

That image came to mind a while ago when a friend took me to my first Gay Bar. Sure enough, all the women were on one side of the room and all the men on the other. But, this time, they weren't looking across the floor but at the people around them. And the dance floor

was filled with swaying bodies as same sex couples, men and women, moved with a freedom and energy that I had never seen before. I remembered my own tortured efforts at counting out the rhythms and trying to remember which foot to move next and how to lead. I thought of how much I had missed and I envied the kind of joy and abandon that characterised the scene before me.

In time, of course, I was to learn that LGBT's dance extremely well. They love dancing and will do so whenever the opportunity arises.

That's why I thought it especially sad, recently, when Queen Elizabeth II issued a very strange and contradictory invitation. She invited, for the first time in her reign, same sex couples to attend the Royal Household Christmas Party at Buckingham Palace. However, she made it quite clear that they weren't allowed to dance. Given the sexploits of other members of the Royal Family, I wondered why she didn't extend the prohibition to them as well.

On the other hand, maybe she didn't want to be eclipsed by the Tiaras and Jewelled Gowns of the other Queens who would be there. Whatever her reason, it was just one more example of a subtle and ongoing discrimination against same sex couples. It's a wonder those in question didn't turn out in

full armour. Whatever the case, I think that QEII missed an opportunity to have one of the liveliest, most colourful and entertaining of Royal Household Christmas Parties ever.

Here at home, there is something else that will be missed. THE EMBASSY, the popular LGBT Dance Club in downtown Hamilton, recently closed its doors for renovations. It will reopen in another form sometime in the future.

Just as my memories of that first Dance Club are vivid and enjoyable, so too are those generated by THE EMBASSY's classy and flashy light show. The two story chandelier, alone, was a showpiece. But the Black Light, Strobe Light's, Reflector Balls and billowing artificial Fog provided an atmosphere that urged involvement. The hundreds that crowded the place on Friday and Saturday evenings were a testimony to the club's popularity. The fact that most streamed in during the 20 minutes preceding the time a cover charge went into effect is just one indication of its troubles.

Other clubs and dances will undoubtedly do their best to fill the void. If people want to have a good time and dance up a storm, they will. They'll find a place and fill it with movement and sound. And memories, even the happiest one's, do fade with time.

I can't dance and members of the Royal Household can't dance; but, that simply isn't enough to stop those who can. Nor, should it be.

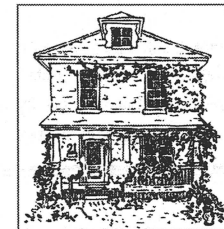
Even though we're missing a

popular club, here in Hamilton, something has been added. PRIDE PAGES, a directory of area Lesbian and Gay Owned and Operated and Queer Positive Businesses, has just been published by GOMORRAH'S. It's a handsome effort and worth acquiring if you intend to be in the area. The Publishers tell me, however, that they are eager to extend the service to a broader geographic base. So, anyone interested can get more information by calling (905) 526-1074 or, Toll Free, 1-888-338-8278. You can e-mail them at info@gomorrah.com

I can't dance; but, I like to applaud those who can and do. Especially, those who dance to the music of a different drummer.

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

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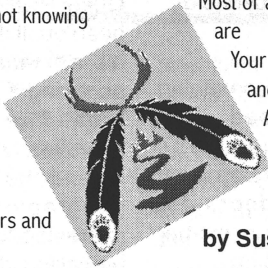
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 find a way through pathless land
 You will be lost before you are found...You will
 be empty before you are full
 You will cry the deep sobs of the earth and
 tears of rain will cleanse the house around
 your heart
 In time...because life, like birth and death,
 knows its own time
 Your fears and struggles and unknowing will
 be transformed
 You will become a mountain place where
 eagles soar
 You will become a reflecting pool which sees
 and knows the mysteries of your life
 Your heart will be light like a butterfly as you
 follow the currents of its true desires



The flight of the honeybee will be yours as
 you seek the nectar of what brings sweetness
 to your daily life

Most of all you will become who you truly
 are

Your life will hold truth and promise
 and meaning

And the heart of the heavens
 will hold your heart.

by Susan Squellati Florence

The Road Home

You must travel your road like there has never
 been another before you
 .And each mountain you climb will be easier if
 you leave the last one behind.
 Let each river you cross cleanse and quench
 you for you can only drown in your own fears,
 or loose the road in blinding tears.
 Travel that road like there will never be another
 before you.
 Inspect it and feel it every inch of the way.
 It's a road you should know,
 for all of it's beauty and struggle,
 its mountains and valleys are made from your
 mind --
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MESSAGES

by Denise A. Wood

I get rumblings in my chest
 approximately where i believe
 the heart is hidden;
 the rumblings need expression.
 Somewhere in the journey
 from the source to thought
 or from thought to words,
 the original intent and meaning
 are marred or lost altogether;
 I am left confused and alone.

There is always a point in time
 when i realize the tongue
 is clanging a hollow bell;
 the the message is all wrong ...
 But rather than stopping
 and trusting the powers
 of telepathic heart messages,
 the tongue rattles louder
 in skitty hummingbird flits;
 confusing the issue more.

Clogging whatever portion
 of the original intent of the message
 that is somehow transmitted
 into a mass of jumbled words
 with no pattern or sense.

Will you help me sort them out?

Every Woman

by A.J. Mahari

Every woman, beautiful and true
 You are more than you do
 Your words and passions shine through
 The heartheache of what it means to be you

Being true to all that you have been
 Being true to all that you are
 In search of all that you seek to be
 Being

Woman to woman the touch is so sweet
 So deeply we continue to meet
 I see your face on every street
 A work of art awesomely - incomplete

Words & Friends/Lovers

by Denise A. Wood

music; words of music;
 words of others;
 words; MY words.

feelings; emotions;
 expressing.

i cannot say; get out;
 get across;
 RELEASE!

friends!?!?!?
 meaning what? meaning how?
 meaning support? meaning stand by?
 WHY?

friend;
 hurts! loneliness! scared!
 RISK.

friend;
 i have hurts; loneliness, fears.

friend/lover
 share;
 share together;

take chances;
 take risks;
 risk friends, lovers

need
 want
 fear
 risk
 happiness?????

**Denise A. Wood is a 40 year old
 writer and mother of 3. She lives in
 Alberta with her life-partner,
 Rhonda. These poems were
 submitted to The Voice by Denise A.
 Wood.**

SANTA'S CLAWS

The Ultimate Daddy Bear

By Howard Watson

I have always wanted to fuck Santa Claus. Or, to be precise, I have always been sexually attracted to Father Christmas. I was never fooled by the impostors in department stores with their false beards and promises. I wanted the real thing.

Being somewhat shy and retiring as a child I, naturally, kept my feelings to myself. Such fantasies were far from encouraged in my neck of the woods and for years I considered myself the only one with such illicit thoughts. It has only been within the last few years that I have found out that I am far from alone.

Over the last thirty years or so, the overriding image of the average gay man has been that of a slim, young man with a close-cropped haircut and a moustache. Clones, as they are commonly referred to, have become as much a stereotype as the limp-wristed femme of yore. Within the space of two decades, a quiet revolution has crept through the gay community. A global phenomenon which has gone largely unrecognised by the outside world, and, even by the gay media.

For those not born with perfect cheekbones, buns of steel and a body that has less extraneous flesh than a starved whippet, the clone

look became an exclusive, rather than an inclusive, look. Gay pornography is dominated by images of young, fit, hairless, mostly white, males. Anyone who is over thirty and has less than perfect looks is consigned to the bin.

Not anymore, however, as men have given up the tyranny of dieting, surrendered to gravity's downward pull and thrown away the razor. Welcome to the cult of the bear.



The bear cult, as with most things in the Western world, emerged in the United States, around the early to mid eighties. The origins are unclear, but it appears to have developed in Florida; partly in response to the AIDS crisis but also as a protest to the bodyism of the clones and initially inspired by the films of Steve Reeves, an US bodybuilder turned b-movie star, but also by the mountain men of the Wild West. Perversely, bears have stolen the clothes of middle America with its baseball caps, plaid flannel shirts and jeans. Just as gay and bisexual men in this country have adopted the skinhead look, bears have adopted the outward appearance of those who would normally despise them.

Where Uncle Sam leads, the rest of the world tends to follow. Bear groups have sprung up throughout

most English-speaking nations, such as Australia and New Zealand. Elsewhere, Switzerland, Belgium, Italy and Spain have followed suit. all with little or no publicity spread through word of mouth or the worldwide web. Only recently have the likes of Boyz, one of this country's leading free gay newspapers, deigned to mention bears, usually in a rather condescending manner. How, I hear you ask, does this fit in with wanting to make love to Santa?

Bears in Germany have adopted Saint Nicholas, or Father Christmas to us Englishers, as their patron saint. In German Bears by Klaus Schulte-Derne, who specialises in photographs of large hairy men, there are a number of Santa lookalikes. In this respect, he is a very Northern, if not distinctly polar,

bear.

In Pierre De Mey's essay 'A French Bear Asks: Are Bears an American Thing?', he describes Santa Claus as the fifth of seven bear archetypes, being one of the basic components of daddy bear fantasies: "A man/child of advanced and indefinite age, Santa is a strong, jolly, good-natured, playful bear". A total contrast to the severe and emotionless clones.

To make love to Father Christmas may, sadly, be out of the question, being that he does not exist, of course. Although I have shown that there is certainly a good chance of bedding someone who bears more than a passing resemblance to that big man in the red suit who comes, as we all know, but once a year.

Howard Watson is a writer who is a resident of London, England.

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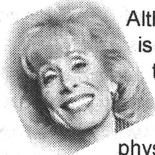
Weighing in on Dr. Laura

by Dr. Jeffrey Chernin

In the 1970s, Anita Bryant harmed the LGBT community. Or did she? Today, Dr. Laura hurts us. Or does she?

In the 1970s, orange juice spokeswoman and former Miss America Anita Bryant tried to convince the American public that we were harmful to society. Ultimately, after the general public decided that her ideas were mean-spirited and misguided, she lost her support and faded into obscurity. In the meantime, she was a lightning rod for the LGBT community, and people came out in huge numbers and became politically active as a result of the anger they felt at being unfairly labeled.

Twenty-five years later, history is being repeating.



Although they are both public figures, one difference between them is that Dr. Laura Schlessinger acts as an "expert," dispensing advice to millions of listeners on her radio show. She calls her show "Dr. Laura," which leads people to believe she has a doctorate in psychology. Her doctorate is actually in physiology, which is the physical study of living beings. She is also a licensed marriage and family therapist; in 1997, however, her license became inactive. So despite being technically licensed, she can no longer practice psychotherapy.

Another difference between Anita Bryant and Dr. Laura is that given her background, Dr. Laura should understand the impact that she has on us. She has called us "deviants" and "biological errors," but she should know that some LGBT people will hurt themselves as they continue to buy into these ideas.

Dr. Laura should know that her calls for reparative (conversion) therapy will be the straw which propels hundreds of LGBT people into it, only to be further harmed and take them longer to come to terms with their sexual orientation. She should know that lawsuits against reparative therapists by their clients for the damage done to them is only a matter of time, which will finally put a stop to the practice.

And she should know that some of her followers interpret her words as the (tired) "recruitment" theme. I recently went to the Paramount protest, and one of the counter-demonstrators screamed that gays recruit.

It's ironic that the term "recruitment" is used as a reason for being gay, isn't it? Men who were molested as children are supposed to "become gay" as a result of being molested by a man. Lesbians are supposed to "turn lesbian" as a result of being molested by a man. Apparently, being molested by a man makes boys attracted to men and girls attracted to women. The truth is, being molested makes it harder to come to terms with your sexual orientation no matter which one you have.

Another counter-protester said he was an "ex-gay," and I could see in his eyes that he couldn't fool himself. This poor man has AIDS, and as he insists that he has exorcised his homosexuality, he adds credence to the claim that sexual orientation can be changed.

I admit it. I'm angry. I'm angry that in this "enlightened" age, people still buy into myths about us. I'm angry that this woman is being paid to have a forum by Paramount Pictures to bully people into self-selected "moral" behavior. I'm angry that she

apologized to us and then retracted it, calling it a "clarification."

I'm angry that more "ex-gays" will convince people that they have changed so that they can get custody of their children, inheritance from their parents, and approval from their therapists and families.

Dr. Laura does hurt us. And helps us by galvanizing our community.

I'd like to conclude the column with an open letter to Dr. Laura:

In your recent "clarification" to the gay community, you apologized for hurting people with your words. You insisted that you never intended to hurt anyone or contribute to an atmosphere of hate and intolerance. You are likewise upset at the angry reactions of the LGBT community.

Given your background as a Marriage and Family Therapist, however, you know that anger is a way to channel hurt, and you were able to make amends sooner if you had wanted.

You know that being called a "deviant" and a "biological error" is hurtful. Would you like to be called these names?

The truth is, you have been called these names. You know that prior to WW II, Jews were labeled deviants and biological errors by the Nazis.

You know that persecution of Jews started with words. Words became infused with intolerance, which became laws. The law became institutionalized hatred. Institutionalized hate became persecution. And persecution led to the destruction of millions of Jews.

You know that there is a link between demeaning the words we speak, developing an atmosphere of intolerance, and subsequent brutal behavior.

You know that it is natural to assume that people think your doctorate is in psychology, which gives undue credence to your ideas.

You know that you are responsible for fueling self-destructive acts among LGBT people and causing others to hurt us.

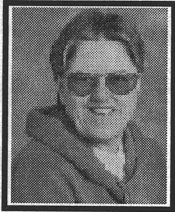
You know the truth. It's time to start telling it.

If you agree with this letter, feel free to send it to Dr. Laura Schlessinger, c/o Premiere Radio Networks, 15260 Ventura Blvd., Ste. 500, Sherman Oaks, CA 91403 and cc: Paramount Pictures, attention Frank Kelly, co-President, 5555 Melrose Ave., Hollywood, CA 90038. If you send Paramount a letter, be sure to let them know why you don't want Dr. Laura on the air.

Jeffrey Chernin, Ph.D. is an author and psychotherapist (who actually has a doctorate in Counseling, has been licensed in Texas since 1994 and is an MFT intern in California) residing in Los Angeles. He can be reached at [REDACTED]. This article was submitted to The Voice by Dr. Jeffrey Chernin.

The Fallacy of Normal

By A.J. Mahari



Normal -- what is it? What does it mean?

The following all fall under the umbrella of "normal": natural; average; standard; usual; regular -- but -- according to whom?

More often than not normal is attributed to what the majority of any society or group measure as meeting with their own experience thus rendering it "normal". Increasingly, majority groups use their definitions of normal to control or to cast out those who are not "the same", perpetuating the cognitive distortion that life is to be measured by opposites. If one thing is bad, it is therefore not normal. Whereas if something is deemed to be "good" by a majority than it is "normal". Here, within this black and white, narrow-minded view lies the fallacy of normal.

If one adheres to the majority view of what normal is one may well be operating on the premise of an error in reasoning. Errors in reasoning defy logic. If any thought process that attempts to define "normal" takes place to any degree outside of the realm of reasonable logic it is bound to fall into an abyss of irrelevance. Logic implies a valid deduction based upon correct reasoning. Of course in most areas of life, the criteria for correct reasoning, would most certainly be up for debate. Simply put, most

who, more often than not, believe they are normal, or possess whatever normal is, believe that based upon personal opinion and experience as opposed to any imperical and independent source of information.

What one believes normal to be is one thing. It can be a very damaging thing nonetheless. However, the real danger comes in when anyone tries to impose his/her own value judgment upon what he/she perceives as normal or the lack of same in someone else or in his/her life.

So much of our lives are experienced and perceived in individual ways. Our individual perceptions and experiences are often then subject to group interpretation. This is another major source of the fallacy of normality.

Outside of my individual truth and your individual truth there lies this collective area that the strongest, loudest and most controlling will dominate (at least externally) in an effort to manipulate "normal" to be what they need and want it to be.

Oh, woe to the one who does not meet with the afore mentioned definition of normal. Not meeting with that definition is not a passive place one can necessarily peacefully and equally co-exist within -- NO! Often if you are not considered "normal" by the "powers that be" in any group you are then labelled and or considered abnormal.

Abnormal is an intolerant way to describe difference. It is an often socially-acceptable way to render the different to an outcast position under whatever rationalized guise is chosen.

Each of us needs to continue to challenge ourselves to be much more respecting of the diversity that can and does exist within the logical realm of difference.

The fallacy of normal is that too many people think that what they do, say and value is normal and that

anyone who does, says or values differently is not. This is an exclusionary way to relate to the world. It reflects the level to which one likely feels insecure with the beat of their own drummer and then turns the condemnation of "abnormal" onto those who freely flow to the music of their own drummers and who do not need to be so bound to any "normal" outside of self.

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

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Odd Facts About Jewelry

Pinchbeck - in 1732 Christopher Pinchbeck, an English watchmaker, developed an alloy of copper and zinc that looked like gold. His new metal was used to make imitation gold jewelry and watchcases in England. The secret of pinchbeck died with him, but his name continued to be part of the English language. Many types of imitation gold metals are referred to as pinchbeck. Coral - Coral was particularly popular in Victorian times for beads. The color ranges from white to orange-red to

deep coral red. The darker the coral, the better the quality. Coral is thought to protect babies from danger, and many small necklaces of coral beads were made for children. Amber - comes in many colors, ranging from a cloudy light yellow that was popular for beads to a clear brownish-red that has been the most desirable. Amber beads were popular in the 1880's and are still in fashion. Come see our large selection of unique and interesting jewelry.

Third Gender -- Lady Man

By Gwyn Ogison

Gwyn, the story so far...

I was not born with the name Gwyn, I adopted it quite recently in fact. I was born apparently male, that is, according to the biological appearances, however from the age of five I displayed behaviour quite definitely female.

One of my earliest memories was of my mother telling me 'don't stand like a girl.' I didn't know how to react at that time, and today, I still don't know how to react to it. I preferred playing with girls, and thoroughly enjoyed any doll that came my way. My father, an English policeman, did his very best to socialize me as a boy, with football lessons (soccer) and war stories.

I was emphatically indifferent to sports, and appalled by the effects of war, which seemed to be a wholly male pursuit. From an early age I was confused. When it came to sexual experiences, until recently I was still confused. I was more often approached by boys rather than girls. Several occasions of sexual assault occurred during my formative years, and when I was old enough, and big enough to choose for myself who I would sexually relate to, invariably boys won out.

So, you're gay! Right? Wrong! I have no interest in straight acting or looking gay men sexually, nor straight women for that matter. There's something about the energy of straight people that does nothing for me in a sexual sense. In regard to males, I find I am most comfortable with those of a bisexual

orientation. When relating to females, I am also most comfortable in the company of those who are bisexual or lesbian.

This is not a preference, it is an orientation, and this is where the language becomes inadequate. There are various labels I have tried on, transsexual, transgendered, etc. but the truth is, I feel neither male, nor female, and therefore am tempted to conjecture a third gender. There is no word in the English language for a third gendered individual. In the Far East, Thailand to be specific, people like me are called Butterflies, or Lady Men and this is certainly more poetic and less clinical than transgendered!

I am not a drag queen, which to me is a form of entertainment, one which I admire greatly, but it is not me. I am not a 'cross dresser', although if I feel like it, I will wear nail polish, dye my hair, or wear sarongs and tights. This is how I feel most comfortable. I have managed to accommodate my feelings by appearing in public with quite an androgynous demeanor. I am also a pop musician, a profession which makes allowances for various forms of eccentricity, and I am definitely eccentric. I maintain it is my heritage, one in a long line starting with English dandies, Oscar Wilde and Quentin Crisp and even Mick Jagger and David Bowie!

There has been a great deal of confusion in the Gay and Lesbian communities regarding those of my orientation. Many people regard me

as a bisexual male but this is not the case. When I am with a bisexual man I feel submissive and very much comforted by the male energy, my sense of who I am becoming blurred in a wonderful way, and it is the same when I am with a lesbian.

All my partners have recognized that I am in fact very womanly, and this includes men and women. Physically there are biological anomalies, some of which have only recently been brought to my attention by intimate partners, and I am capable of many types of ecstatic states, a blending of both male and female response. What does this make me? Perhaps 'Lady Man' is indeed the best description, or as the subject of 'Ma vie en rose' (My life in pink) called him/her self, a girl boy. Why don't we go with one of those...they are so quaint and may suffice while we are waiting for some wag to coin a new term! The spectrum of human psychology is so rich, it is quite obvious that black and white definitions are entirely inadequate!

In case you feel that I am suffering in some manner, let me assure you that those days are over. This is due in large part to excellent therapy,

supportive friends and intimates, and my interest in Buddhism. Through specific practices, I have learned that nothing is written in stone, appearances and emotions are deceptive, and that ultimately all is empty, that is, impermanent, so why get hung up over what is a temporary situation! Happiness is largely transitory, although freedom from anxiety and worry is the benefit derived from a correct view of the multiverse and my place in it. Even words like I, my, me, mine, etc. are ultimately false concepts from this point of view. Whatever "you" think I am, 'I' am not the "I" that "you" judge me to be. Therefore is it any wonder that 'others' have an uncertain view of what is 'me'.

This is the first article I have written for The Voice, and I would like to contribute more in the future. If anyone is interested in forming a group to discuss this issue, I would be amenable to such a creature. Perhaps some would like to respond to the magazine...either way, welcome to my world, I am at last beginning to relate to it in a balanced and integrated fashion.

Gwyn can be reached at: [REDACTED]

This article is a Voice exclusive.

Jean-Paul Pilon

Barrister and Solicitor, Notary Public

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Same-Sex Partners & Proposed Tax Legislation

by Darren Kregar (Economical Tax Services)

As a result of the recent Supreme Court rulings regarding same-sex partners, the following is information regarding tax implications. The information in this article is subject to passage into law of the Modernization of Benefits and Obligations Act. (Bill C-23) Any amendments to the proposed legislation may change the information in this article.

General Tax Implications

The proposed tax legislation definition for same-sex common law couples will be referred to as 'common-law partners' which is defined as two persons regardless of sex, who cohabit in a conjugal relationship and have done so for a continuous period of at least 12 months.

Same-sex common-law couples will be treated the same as opposite sex common-law spouses. This will allow same-sex couples to be eligible for the same tax benefits and subject to the same obligations as married couples and opposite sex common-law couples.

The proposed changes will be effective for the year 2001 and subsequent taxation years. As a transitional measure for taxation years 1998, 1999 and 2000, same-sex common-law partners will be permitted to jointly elect to be treated as common-law partners for all purposes of tax legislation. For Canada Customs & Revenue Agency to update their records for the tax years that have already been assessed, a request must be made in writing by April 30, 2001, or by June 15, 2001, if at least one partner is self employed. This letter must be signed by both partners and must include the name and social insurance number of both partners. An election made for a past taxation years will establish their status for all subsequent tax years, providing that the common-law partnership still exist.

If you should decide to update your records to include a common-law partner for any of the tax years between 1998 and 2000, a reassessment may be required to one or both returns to adjust credits or deductions claimed. In some situations, a recalculation may be required to the goods and service tax credit (GST credit), provincial tax credits as a result of revised family incomes or the Canada Child Tax Benefit.

Under the proposed changes, spousal amounts and other tax credits such as medical expenses, the disability tax credit, tuition and education credits, the age credit and charitable donations may be transferred to the other partner.

So how do you determine who is living in a conjugal relationship? CCRA

has a self-assessment system in which clients are expected to tell the truth and in which persons who make false declarations can be penalized. Whether or not two persons (opposite-sex or same-sex) are living in a conjugal relationship is a question of fact, and this can include whether or not the couple presents itself publicly as a conjugal couple, has claimed status of a couple for the purposes of a pension or health plan or shares a joint bank account. If you fail to correctly declare your status in order to avoid losing benefits, because of the higher net income of the other partner, you may be re-assessed and asked to repay the benefits received.

The proposed legislation begins with the taxation year 2001. (The deadline to file your tax return for the year 2001 is April 30, 2002) You will be required to correctly indicate your status in the identification section on the first page of the tax return by checking off the common-law partner box. You will be required to indicate your partners name, social insurance number and net income in this section.

Tax planning is recommended if the proposed legislation is passed to ensure that any changes that you may elect do not result in tax owing as a result of a reduction to credits and refunds you have already received. Canada Customs & Revenue Agency may charge penalties and interest if tax is owed as a result of electing to be considered common-law partners. CCRA does not usually consider a request to cancel arrears interest and penalties when the amount owing is created as a result of a choice exercised by a client.

It should be emphasized that the above information is 'proposed' tax legislation and in filing of your 1999 tax return, common-law partners is still considered as two persons of the opposite sex.

Darren Kregar is the owner of Economical Tax Services which is located at 22 King St S (Lower Level) in Uptown Waterloo. Economical Tax Services provides affordable tax services for individuals and business. If you have any further questions you may contact Darren at (519) [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] This article is a Voice exclusive.

Brad Douglas *Sales Rep.*

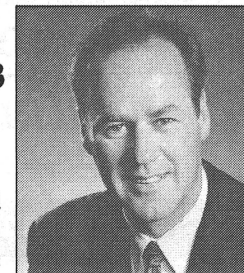
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GAY MONEY

by Bonnie J. Babin,
Investment Planning Counsel of Canada

10 TAX-SMART INVESTMENT STRATEGIES

1 KNOWING YOUR MARGINAL TAX RATE

Are you aware of the tax rate that will apply to your various sources of investment income? *By knowing one's **marginal tax rate**, an investment can be assessed based on individual after-tax expected rates of return.*

2 AVOID YEAR END MUTUAL FUND PURCHASES

Do you purchase mutual funds at certain times of the year? *Avoiding mutual fund purchases just before distribution dates can defer tax.*

3 INVEST IN GROWTH INVESTMENTS OUTSIDE YOUR RRSP

Do you randomly choose which investments are held inside and outside your RRSP? *Equity investments that neither pay dividends nor distribute income or capital gains held outside an RRSP are a means of tax deferral.*

4 SHOULD YOU BUY BOND MUTUAL FUNDS OR BONDS

Do you like the fixed-income aspect of bonds? *Both bonds and bond mutual funds provide fixed income, but one may be more suitable for you based on your needs and expectations.*

5 ACQUIRE SHORT-TERM INVESTMENTS TO MATURE AFTER DECEMBER 31

Are you considering purchasing short-term investments, such as bonds, GICs and treasury bills that will mature close to the end of the year? *By selecting maturity dates that extend into the next year, tax can be deferred.*

*Investment Planning Counsel
of Canada*

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BONNIE J. BABIN - Financial Planning & Tax Consultant - Phone (519) [REDACTED]

6 INVEST CAREFULLY OUTSIDE CANADA

Are you interested in diversifying globally? *Remember that foreign dividends do not receive preferential tax treatment.*

7 UTILIZE A BUY-AND-HOLD INVESTMENT STRATEGY TO DELAY PAYING TAX

Do you reinvest the returns generated from equity investments? *By exercising a buy-and-hold investment strategy, tax can be deferred.*

8 HOLD TAX-DISADVANTAGED INVESTMENTS INSIDE YOUR RRSP OR RRIF

Do you randomly choose which investments are held inside vs. outside his/her RRSP? *Fixed-income investments become tax effective when held inside a registered plan.*

9 INVEST TO FIGHT INFLATION

Do you invest primarily in fixed income investments? *Adding equity investments to a portfolio can help you keep up with inflation.*

10 CONVERT SOME OF YOUR INTEREST INCOME INTO DIVIDEND INCOME

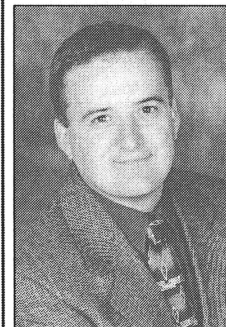
Do you require steady cash flow from your investments? *High dividend yielding investments produce regular cash flow and are tax effective.*

Your comments and suggestions are welcome. Please respond to e-mail address:

[REDACTED] - Fax (519) [REDACTED] This article is a Voice exclusive.

Bonnie will be holding the following seminars this Spring, with guest speaker Lynn Archbold, Barrister and Solicitor:
April 5th. - Non-Traditional Families
May 24th. - Understanding Investment Choices
June 7th. - Asset Protection

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THE CHASE

By Tricia D. Brubacher

I have this game; I don't know what else to call it, where I imagine my emotions are outside of me, assuming physical forms. When I'm saturated in anxiety, I can see a red figure slinking in the shadows, Her eyes slicing through the darkness, and I can almost feel Her claws in my throat. Some would call Her Stress, but I know Her by a different designation; She is Karma. And She's waiting to retaliate as soon as I start weaving my life with the same thread into the same pattern. Right now I know you're hoping She won't come, because I'm not strong enough to fight Her, and I have to talk to you today.

I'm unsure what to say to you though. I'm sort of stuck, waiting for a response, but I know that you're doing the same. Actually, every time I create possibilities in my mind to try to understand your intentions, I'm always embarrassed by how wrong I am. Wouldn't it be beautiful to reach across this big table to touch your face, not only to feel the reality of your being but to know your thoughts as well? I've always been a dreamer though, haven't I?

Wrapped up in myself, I'm hopeful for the ultimate transformation of Narcissus into the compassionate creature I know that she could be. I know that this means very little to you, I can see it on your face. Actually, I haven't told you any of this, you're just sitting there; expecting. Why do we still expect anything from each other anyway, when all we've been able to give one another is the desire for something more . . . even something else altogether.

"Ok, I have to tell you . . ."

I couldn't stop the embarrassed grin from popping up.

"You aren't . . . what I imagined I would want when I was little. You know how I feel about my childhood dreams; I don't know if I can let go of this one too."

This seems to cross my lips so quickly but the words are stranded in the air between us, until they're drifting slowly, dripping into your waiting ears. Your pause is expanding, warping into the shifting moments, until I'm unsure whether I've spoken the words yet.

"Um, what are you thinking? I didn't mean that the way it sounded, but what were you expecting? It's not like we're . . . you know . . ."

I'm plowing through the silence trying to make my first words less garish in their blatant honesty.

" . . . expecting."

Your voice comes back to me without colour or intonation, but I know there's a maelstrom behind it. I don't want to play this one out to the end. I can feel the harshness of the possibilities raging towards me, hurting me in all kinds of ways. This can't be worth the pain it's going to cause me. Do I really need you to understand this tiny drop of honesty, to take such a small glimpse at what lies behind the curtain? I need a reminder of the worth of intimacy again. I can't see it; I'm lost behind the foliage of my warped logic. I can't help but think of the bars that come with being loved. Why ever would a caged bird sing?

Christ, this is such obvious proof of my fear, leaping in and manipulating my thoughts. I can't help it; I desire infinitely more. I'm glad that you took my words the way they were intended instead of making me explain. I know that you understand my full meaning and I know that my slightest comment spins you around even though you refuse to show it.

"I want to explain this to you, but I don't think I can. You probably know more about the whole psychology of my 'problem' than I do anyway."

"I know this; you are a coward, friend."

I feel the wave of that comment slamming into me, but it doesn't stop, it is unending. I can't get over how loud you are to me, what an illusion you're drawing with your simple words. So many layers of meaning are enfolded in that savagely driven phrase.

I remember the evening I introduced you as my friend even though we were infinitely closer. You withdrew your soul from mine, staring at me with the eyes of a stranger. I felt the full weight of what I had bought into from society then, and I feel it now. You told me that night that I couldn't side step the snare that the allure of acceptance holds. If I buy into society's games I'll end up selling something of myself in return. The truth in your stinging words is what kept me with you then and keeps me here now. I know that even if I convince myself that I do not need you, I will be hunted down by self-loathing from the innumerable times that I've sacrificed my identity for even just a taste of acceptance.

This is only the beginning of our end though, isn't it? You look at me without an ounce of compassion even though we've broken through the protective armour of our minds a hundred times together. How many layers do you have to experience before you can wade through my lies to find the truth in my heart? I need to get off this looping path, to move past this obstacle, but how do you move forward when you're hanging on to the edge of life by your half-bitten fingernails, naked and waiting for the inevitable nothingness?

"Help me. You used to be enough of a foundation for me, but I just . . . Fuck! I don't know what I'm talking about . . . ever. If you try really hard, could you think of this as another bump in our relationship? I don't know how to make this work but I don't think that I can get through this without you."

"Sorry. I'm all out of sympathy. You want to know what I'm thinking, right? Well, I'm wondering if I've ever known you; congratulations . . . you're an enigma. I'm a fool for loving you so desperately when all you can give me is your pain. You are so much more selfish than you think, sweetie."

I know that I've done this to you, by oozing my darkness onto you, enveloping your brightness with these maggot-covered insecurities. Everything in me is screaming to run, to leave you and heal in solitude, I'm breaking. This is my pattern, here it is, and Karma is anticipating my surrender so that She can come back to teach me the same lesson over and over again. Even though it's in my face, I can't find a way around it, I'm not strong enough, not without you. The irony of it!

"You're right . . . you always are . . . I'll see ya."

I can only imagine what this severance will do to me, especially the next time around. If I look over my shoulder I know that I'll see Her crimson figure slinking in the shadows, nails extended, waiting for me to fall.

Tricia D. Brubacher is a writer who lives in Elmira. This short story was submitted to The Voice by Tricia D. Brubacher.

Suicide in Surrey, BC

In mid-March, Hamed Nastoh, a 14-year old student in Surrey, jumped off a local bridge and killed himself. He had been the object of teasing, bullying, name-calling, and derogatory comments about being gay. If anything illustrates the critical need for gay-straight alliances in schools, his tragically-timed death does. We have to reach our youth with the message that it is not OK to abuse each other by making derogatory, demeaning, and humiliating comments about one's sexual orientation.

Suicide probe begins:

Teachers required to report all bullying under the school's zero-tolerance policy. "Never again" is a

Surrey school board's vow as it investigates Hamed Nastoh's suicide.

Teachers and students at Enver Creek secondary are being questioned about what led to the 14-year-old's deadly jump from the Pattullo Bridge.

"They will build up some sort of idea of what happened, and develop a model to prevent it from happening again," said Mary Polak, the vice-president of the school board.

"It's a sad thing, but we have procedures in place for situations like these. Whenever there is an incident involving a student — fortunately it is rarely something as tragic as a suicide — our staff go thoroughly into the background of the student for clues."

Hamed left some clues for them to chase. In his five-page suicide note he blamed the bullies at his school for tormenting him to death.

Polak wouldn't comment on whether Hamed's alleged bullies would be sought out and punished.

Hamed didn't name the bullies, but wrote: "You know who you are."

Enver students were not surprised that Hamed pointed to bullies in his suicide note.

"Bullying is a problem, a big problem, even to me," said Jessica Breton, 13, a Grade 8 student at Enver. "I hang around with geeky people, that's what they say.

"But I like them. They're people who are nice. If someone doesn't like you, they go with the crowd and

the majority and say things."

Hamed was called a faggot, gay, a geek and uncool. Those are standard put-downs, and don't have any deep meaning, said Jessica.

"Even if they're not gay, they just say it. It's something that pops into their head," she said.

"He wasn't gay. He had a lot of girlfriends, just not a lot of guy friends. For boys, it's gay; for girls, it's slut. Gay is a term for people who are uncool."

The school has a zero-tolerance policy for bullying. Teachers are supposed to report all incidents or suspected incidents immediately. The investigation will uncover whether any reports had been made in the past.

The Surrey Teachers Association this week released a resource guide for elementary-school teachers called *Moving Beyond Silence, Addressing Homophobia in Elementary Schools*.

"It's common knowledge that the suicide rate for homosexual teens at the high-school level is fairly high," said association president John Wyndham. "I don't think anybody is disputing that.

"There certainly is a need to address it, and that's what [the resource guide] is really all about, gaining acceptance for people, so that they're not harassed and not bullied and not made to feel unwelcome.

"It's probably the most common slur that's out there.

"Lots of kids are being abused, and harassed and discriminated against based upon their sexual preference or people's imagined view of their sexual preference."

Schools, he said, are the proper place to teach tolerance.

"If it was being taught at home we wouldn't have as many teen suicides . . . [and] we wouldn't have so much hatred being directed at individuals."

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SECTION: News

PAGE: A3

BYLINE: Sarah Papple, Mike Roberts, Jack Keating and Keith Fraser,

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



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Sundays

Westminster United Church (an affirming congregation): Services are held each Sunday at 10:30 am. The Church is located at 543 Beachwood Dr. in Waterloo. (See page 43)

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

KW-Friends of Dorothy, 10 Pin Cosmic Bowling, meets every Sunday at 3:45pm at the Brunswick Frederick Lanes. 385 Frederick St. Kitchener. (behind Frederick Plaza) Cost: \$12.00 (shoe rental included) For more information contact Phil at [redacted] or [redacted]

Mondays

Coming Very Soon: Lesbian Discussion Group and Lesbian Reading/Writing Circle. For more information call The Voice at [redacted] or email: [redacted] or [redacted] www.thevoice.on.ca/lesbian.html

Tuesdays

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

Wednesdays

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

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

Women For Sobriety

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

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

THE COMING OUT DISCUSSION GROUP

Wed April 5 - "Leading a Double Life"

Wed April 12 - "Gaydar"

Wed April 19 - "Heterophobia, Homophobia, Biphobia, Transphobia"

Wed April 26 - "LGBT Issues in the Educational System"

RAINBOW COMMUNITY DISCUSSION GROUP

Topics not available at time of printing.

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

Thursdays

Hamilton Transsexual Peer Support Group (FTM - MTF) If you are post-op or pre-op transsexual or are dealing with gender dysphoria, come join this bi-weekly peer support group. Meetings begin February 4, 1999 from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm at the Hamilton AIDS Network, 512 James St. N. For further details, please call (905) [redacted] ext.43, or e-mail Janet at: [redacted] www.geocities.com/WestHollywood/cafe/8922/

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Saturday April 22

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Info Line: 519-570-2406

Toll Free: 1-877-635-2352

Sunday April 2

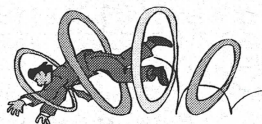
Waterloo-Wellington Region Pride Committee Meeting at 3 pm. Location: Conference Room, Davis Centre Library, University of Waterloo. The next committee meetings are Sunday, April 16 & 30. Inquiries can be directed to: rpc@rainbow.on.ca www.rainbow.on.ca/pride2000/

Wednesday April 5

Non-Traditional Families - Bonnie J Babin, IPC - Guest Speaker Lynn Archbold, Barrister & Solicitor. **Educational Savings Plans For Your Children.** This is the third of a five-part Seminar Series For Same-Sex Couples & Singles, presented by Bonnie J. Babin, sponsored by the Investment Planning Counsel of Canada. There is no admission cost for these workshops. If you or any of your family or friends would like to attend, please R.s.v.p. to Linda at (519) [REDACTED]. Future seminars in this series are on May 24 and June 7.

April 10-11-12

K-W Little Theatre: Auditions for "Jeffrey". Cast 7 men and 1 woman, technicians and production. Prepared monologue is required. April 10-12 from 7-10pm. (You do not need to show up each night, however there will be callbacks.) Performance dates are August 3-5, 10-12, and 17-19 at 8pm. Call (519) 886-0660 for more details.



Friday April 14

Ferron Waterloo concert at 8pm, Emmanuel United Church, 22 Bridgeport Rd. West, Waterloo. Tickets are general admission: \$18 advance, and \$22 at the door. Tickets are on sale in Waterloo at Words Worth Books Phone Orders (using Visa/MC): 519-884-2665. www.sentex.net/mja/ferronweb.htm mjaitken@sympatico.ca

Rainbow Chorus Easter Dance Friday April 14th, 2000 - 611 Silvercreek Parkway North, Guelph. Doors open at 9pm

Saturday April 15

Rainbow Chorus Millennium Freedom Concert in Guelph. (details N/A at time of printing)

Friday April 21

PFLAG (Parents, Family and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) meet at 8:00 pm. For more information, call Evie at [REDACTED] (Kitchener) or Sue at (519) [REDACTED] (Cambridge) or email them at pflag@rainbow.on.ca

May 5, 6 & 7

9th Annual London Lesbian Film Festival will be held at the Western Theatre, Friday May 5th to Sunday May 7th, 2000. Friday and Saturday screenings will be for women only, with the Sunday screenings open to men and women. For more info about the festival, call Yvonne at (519) [REDACTED]

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

KITCHENER-WATERLOO

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

WOODS: Women Out Opening Doors Socially is a social club for lesbians and lesbian-positive women in K-W and area. (No contact for Kitchener was made available at time of printing) In Guelph the contact person is Debbie at [REDACTED]

G U E L P H

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CAMBRIDGE

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

BRANTFORD

The Pine Tree Native Centre

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

HAMILTON

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Community Education 546-3541 to book a presentation or consultation

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

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

Narcotics Anonymous Hamilton: (905) 522-0332
Brantford: (519) 759-2558
St. Catharines: (905) 685-0075

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

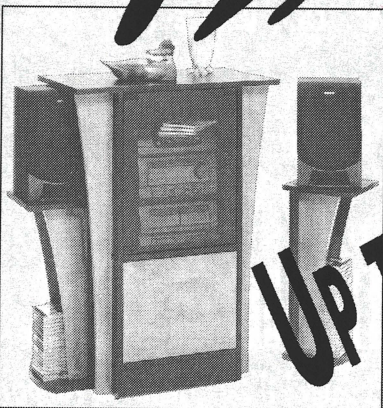
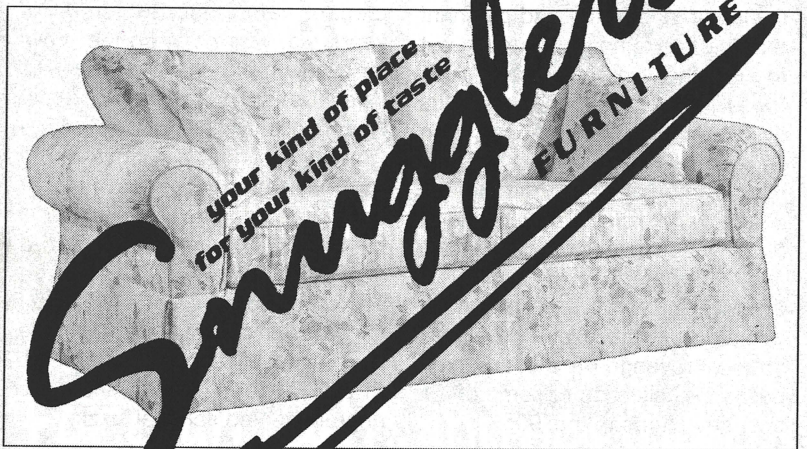
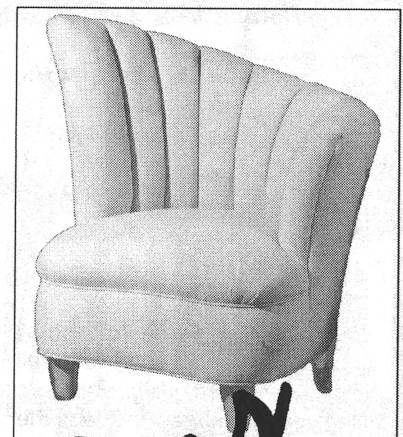
Sexual Assault Center:
Hamilton.....(905) [REDACTED]

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

Street Health Centre-- Wesley Centre 777-7852

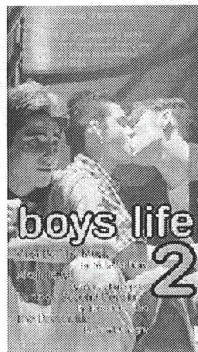
The Golden Horseshoe Leather Association (Hamilton) Monthly meetings are held on the first Wednesday of each month & there is a bar night on the second Saturday of each month. Men interested in the Leather/ Denim lifestyle are invited to attend both. For more information email Bill at: [REDACTED]

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



30 Weber Street North, Waterloo 519-746-4268

Boy's Life 2



(1997, 74 min,
US)
Dir: N. Perry, T.
DeCerchio, M.
Christopher, T.
Donaghy

A four-short
compilation all
focusing on

being young and gay. Includes the exceptional *The Dadshuttle* by Tom Donaghy, a knowing and poignant drama of a young man coming out to his father while in a car; *Alkali, Iowa* by Mark Christopher, a serious drama of a young rural man accepting his homosexuality (from the director of *54*); *Must Be the Music* by Nickolas Perry, a tale of four teenage friends out on the town in L.A.; and the witty *Nunzio's Second Cousin* by Tom DeCerchio about a gay detective who gets his unusual revenge on a young gay-basher. A collection of some of the best gay shorts of the '90s.

The Hunger



(1983, 99 min,
GB)
Director: Tony
Scott
Starring:
Catherine
Deneuve, Susan
Sarandon, David
Bowie, Cliff
DeYoung, Willem
Dafoe

Catherine Deneuve stars as Miriam, an icy, elegant vampiress, hundreds of years old, who goes on the prowl for a new mate after her 200-year lover (David Bowie) quickly ages. Her affections find their way to Sara (Susan Sarandon), a doctor who has written on the subject of accelerated aging. *The Hunger* is both a chilling vampire tale and a sensuous drama of lesbian attraction and desire. The two romp, fall into each other's arms and make love -- and, of course, share blood. The two stars create unprecedented sensual sizzle.

No matter what your front door looks like...



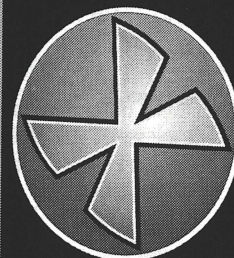
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Conway Is Ellen's New Leading Man

Veteran funnyman Tim Conway is joining leading lesbian Ellen DeGeneres in her new comedy pilot for CBS. The addition of Conway will add credibility to the new series, which has a "show-within-a-show" format that follows the on- and off-screen adventures of a TV variety show host played by DeGeneres. Conway was featured



throughout the '70s on the long-running *Carol Burnett Show*. His other television credits include *McHale's Navy* (in the '60s), as well as a guest stint on the final episode of *Ellen*. The new series is expected to air next season.

In other TV news, hunky *Murder One* star Anthony LaPaglia has snagged the much-cov-

eted role opposite John Goodman in the *OddCouple*-like sitcom about a gay dad and his straight roommate. The Fox series is currently titled *Don't Ask*.

Bette Bets on Bette

The Divine Miss M has a damn good chance of getting her new CBS sitcom *Bette* up and running by the fall. In a real character stretch, Bette Midler will play a famous performer with a startling resemblance to - you guessed it! - Bette Midler. Five-time Emmy-winning writer Jeffrey Lane (*Mad About You*) has been hired to pump out a script and whip the show into shape; the star had considered scripts from three different top TV writers. If *Bette* isn't ready to debut in the fall, it's a frontrunner for mid-season.



A DAY IN THE LIFE
"EVERY DYKE FOR HERSELF."
IT'S BEEN MORE THAN SIX MONTHS SINCE WE DECIDED TO BE JUST FRIENDS. IT'S TIME TO GET ONWARD.

WHILE OUT AT THE LOCAL BAR WITH HER EX, TABBY, AND HER BEST FRIEND TRACY, FINNIAN LEARNS A MOST AMUSING LESSON IN THE WORLD OF CRUISING WOMEN.

I DON'T THINK THIS IS SUCH A GOOD IDEA, I'M A LITTLE OUT OF MY ELEMENT HERE.

THE ACTION IS HOT TONIGHT! I'M READY TO CRUISE.

WHAT ACTION?

THE CHIC ACTION OF COURSE. IT'S TIME TO PUT OUT THE VIBE.

THE VIBE? YOU CAN'T BE SERIOUS?

WHAT, YOU'VE NEVER CRUISED BEFORE?

NO.

YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE MISSING.

YEAH. MEET SOME NEW PEOPLE, HAVE SOME FUN.

TAB, LOOKS LIKE WE'RE GONNA HAVE TO SHOW HER HOW IT'S DONE. LESSON ONE. THE STRUT.

BE SURE AND MAKE EYE CONTACT.

ACT CONFIDENT

LESSON TWO. THE PASS.

SEE THAT WOMAN OVER THERE?

YEAH?

FOLLOW US.

OMG!

I'M SO SORRY!

I JUST TRIPPED ON THAT GIRL. THAT'S WHAT I GET FOR WATCHING YOU TWO

WHAT THE HELL WAS THAT?

LESSON THREE. EVERY DYKE FOR HERSELF.

WRITTEN BY: F. COLE
ART BY: [Signature]

Ferron

In Concert!

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

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

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

Emmanuel United Church
22 Bridgeport Road West, Waterloo

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

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

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

The US's Playground of the South

By Julie Casto of Travel Only

The Mississippi Gulf Coast is getting a lot of attention in the tourism industry.

Two Canadian tour operators - Canada 3000 Holidays and Conquest Vacations have begun service to the Mississippi Gulf Coast in April.

Canada 3000 Airlines is operating non-stop flights from Toronto to Gulfport/Biloxi on Mondays & Fridays. Fares start at \$ 2 2 9 . 0 0 Canadian dollars per person, plus applicable taxes.



Located a little more than an hour from New Orleans, the Mississippi Gulf Coast is the fastest growing tourism region in the US. It is the second largest gambling destination in the US next to Las Vegas.

There is much more than gambling. There is 26 miles of sandy beach, some of the country's best golf courses, museums, historical attractions, and plenty of seafood.



This program will run until June - in time to avoid hurricane season for this area.



Julie Casto

Cambridge Area Consultant

Ph 519- [REDACTED]

Head Office

389 COLBORNE ST.
BRANTFORD, ONTARIO
N3S 3N4

Toll Free 1-888-989-9748

www.travelonly.on.ca

CLIA - IATA



The Beau Rivage casino resort opened last March, which features 12 restaurants, a marina, retail space, a spa and 1,780 rooms. It is also Mississippi's home to Cirque du Soleil.

Mardi Gras is also celebrated as its neighbour to the east with numerous balls and parades. Mardi Gras is part of the heritage and tradition of the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

For a week-end getaway, try a place where Vegas meets the Caribbean with a dash of southern hospitality and you've got the Mississippi Gulf Coast!

This is a Voice exclusive.

South Park Creators Shock Shockwave

Doing what they do best, dynamic duo Trey Parker and Matt Stone (who showed up at the Oscars in drag) have crossed the line of tastefulness again, this time on the Web. The pair recently turned in the first of their 39 short films created for Shockwave.com as part of a \$2 million deal, and the company balked at its raunchiness. The flick apparently makes *South Park: Bigger, Longer & Uncut* look like a Saturday morning cartoon. Now the Internet suits are considering either editing it down to make it more acceptable for general audiences or requiring a pay-per-view fee to keep underage surfers under the ages of 18 away. Fortunately for us, Shockwave.com signed a deal with Parker and Stone allowing them to retain creative control of their projects, so it has to air whatever the filthy filmmakers turn in... and their contracts call for 38 more short films. Yippee!

Steve Martin Takes a Walk on the Queer Side

Silver-haired comedian Steve Martin is gonna be the new American Gigolo. He's signed on to director Paul Schrader's latest project, a high society murder tale called *The Walker*. Schrader was the writer-director of 1980's *American Gigolo*, named his latest project after the often-gay escorts of bored and wealthy society wives. *The Walker* script focuses on a *Gigolo*-like character, now in his 50s, who's prized for his social rather than sexual services. Martin will play a successful gay real estate agent who lives in Washington with a young Latino lover. As a sideline, he squires the wives of politicians to various social events, only to be set up as the patsy when the boyfriend of a senator's wife turns up murdered. Director Schrader has explored gay territory before, with *Mishima* (1985), which he also wrote, and *The Comfort of Strangers* (1990). No word yet on when *The Walker* will go into production.

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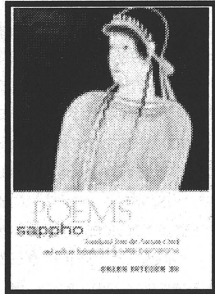
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Sappho - Poems, A New Version by Sappho, Willis Barnstone



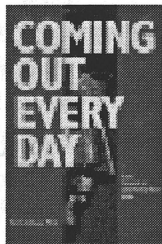
Paperback - 144 pages (September 15, 1999) translated from the Ancient Greek by Barnstone

Elegant in its simplicity

This polished translation brilliantly reflects those spare but sparkling lines from the winsome poet of a lonely isle and heart. I find it still superb after many readings. Highly recommended.

Coming Out Every Day : A Gay, Bisexual, and Questioning Man's Guide by Ph.D. Bret K. Johnson

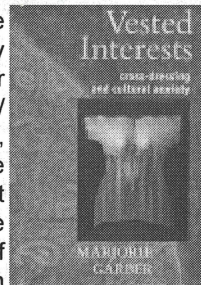
Paperback - (June 1997) 208 pages



A practicing gay psychologist helps men struggling with their sexual orientation come to terms with themselves and with coming out. Johnson sensitively leads the questioning man through an admittedly challenging process of self-assessment, offering a wealth of suggestions for finding support, developing strategies for coming out to others, and building healthy new relationships with families, friends, lovers and partners.

Vested Interests : Cross-Dressing & Cultural Anxiety

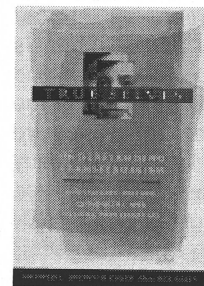
by Marjorie Garber, Margorie Garber



An elaborate theory by Garber (English/Harvard), insisting that the transvestite is at the elusive heart of Western culture. In a century-sweeping book, Garber applies current critical thought to the phenomenon of "cross-dressing" in fact and fiction, high culture and low. Arguing that gender is culturally constructed, she contends that cross-dressing challenges the binary categories of male and female as well as the concept of category itself. It signals "cultural, social or aesthetic dissonances." Garber argues that critics have looked "through," not "at," the transvestite, failing to see what is a Freudian "primal scene." Defined here again and again, the transvestite is "the space of desire," "a space of possibility," a "third." Garber plays out her theory in detailed analyses of countless transvestite figures Shakespearean heroines, Tootsie, Lawrence of Arabia, M. Butterfly, Madonna, and Laurence Olivier (here portrayed at death as "the triumphant transvestite"). There is no shortage of provocative speculation and information, some worth considering and some--like that about transvestite magazines and the politics of transsexual surgery--not. Unfortunately, the sub-flooring of French critical terms sets Garber's argument on a slippery slope ending up too often in a theoretical mire where "the

transvestite is both a signifier and that which signifies the undecidability of signification." A discussion of Elizabethan dress codes and costuming concludes with the typically reductive claim that "there is no ground of Shakespeare that is not already cross-dressed." Also, when critical terms are rampantly applied--Elvis and Liberace, for instance, labeled, like Peter Pan, "changeling boys"--they quickly lose impact. Bound for controversy, this study admirably attempts to cross from the academy to popular culture, but theory here acts less as a window onto cultural evolution than as a screen drawing attention its own overwrought, repetitive pattern. (Color and b&w illustrations--150--some seen.)

True Selves : Understanding Transsexualism-For Families, Friends, Coworkers, and Helping Professionals by Mildred L. Brown, Chloe Ann Rounsley



Introduction to many aspects of living as a transsexual provides general information about the dilemma of feeling trapped in the wrong physical gender, about 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. Includes first-person accounts from transsexuals.

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10% - Qtv broadcasts Sunday's at 11:30 PM-Tune to channel 20 in KW, channel 8 in Guelph, or channel 13 in London

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WHEN IT'S TIME TO LEAVE YOUR LOVER

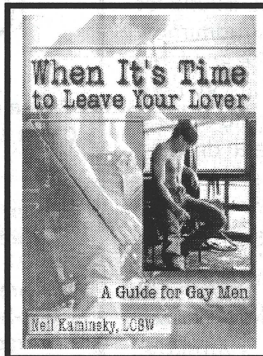
A Guide for Gay Men
by Neil Kaminsky, LCSW
published by
Harrington Park Press

Lately, with the emergence of the gay community from the periphery into the mainstream of North American life, stereotypes of gay relationships are disappearing. The realization that strong emotional attachments, and long term relationships are as much a part of the gay lifestyle as the straight has opened up completely new areas of human interaction. Along with this comes the realization that when gay relationships go wrong they generate the same depth of pain and suffering as straight marriages do. The reality is that very little energy has been spent on dealing with the problems gay men face when confronted with the end of a long term relationship.

WHEN IT'S TIME TO LEAVE YOUR LOVER is a book designed to help men who find themselves in this situation. As Kaminsky states in the introduction,

The book examines — the full gamut of the breaking up process. It addresses the decision to leave, the outer societal and gay community pressures against uncoupling, grieving loss, emotional and social ramifications of a

breakup, "rebounding", coping and healing, and the components of a healthy, viable relationship. Kaminsky does this well. As a licensed clinical social worker, he has had a great deal of experience working with gay men in both New York and San Francisco and from this has gained a wealth of observations, advice and strategies that should be very useful to someone contemplating or dealing with a separation. His knowledge is specifically of gay men and as such limits, as he points out, the focus of the book to this group. However as a useful resource it is probably the best available.



The approach Kaminsky takes is straight forward and easily understood and when psychological terms are used they are well illustrated and explained. Indeed he attempts at times an almost conversational style. This is sometimes not so well handled and perhaps the book could use some careful editing to eliminate awkward constructions and misuse of many words and expressions. However, aside from the grammar, WHEN IT'S TIME TO LEAVE YOUR LOVER is a long-needed resource that will prove a very practical combination of psychological insight and advice to gay men facing this transition.

This review was done by our Assitant Editor whose name must be withheld. This is a Voice exclusive.

Westminster United Church Petitions General Council

Affirm United approached Westminster United Church in January about presenting a petition to the 37th General Council of the United Church of Canada (to be held in Toronto this summer) regarding homosexuality and establishing increased recognition more at the national church level. Westminster United is the only church in Hamilton Conference that is an affirming congregation. There are only about 17 affirming congregations in Canada, so Affirm United would like to see an increased representation of affirming congregations within the United Church of Canada.

Westminster United Church's council approved the petition at their February meeting and it read:

We petition the 37th General Council of the United Church of Canada to:

Encourage courts, congregations and members to find ways to offer healing for the damage inadvertently caused by the historic stance of our church on homosexuality.

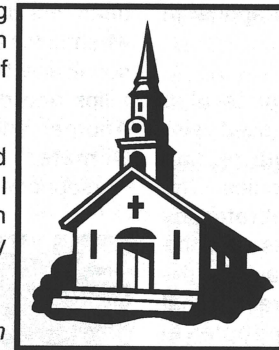
Affirm that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered as well as heterosexual expressions of sexuality are gifts from God, part of the marvelous diversity of creation.

Affirm lesbian and gay partnerships, recognize them in church documentation and Services of Blessing and actively work for their civil recognition.

This was presented to Waterloo Presbytery (the body that governs United Churches in the Waterloo Region) at their February meeting and was approved. The next step is to have the petition presented to Hamilton Conference (the body that governs the Presbyteries over much of Southern Ontario) at their

next meeting, and from there it will be presented at General Council during their meeting in the summer.

Westminster United Church is located at 543 Beechwood Drive in Waterloo. Services are held each Sunday at 10:30 a.m.



This was submitted to The Voice by Paul Warder.

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Eostar

By Mary Ann Moore

As I write this column, there is a full moon brightly shining above the evergreens. March 20 marked the spring equinox named for the Goddess Eostar. The German goddess of fertility and new beginnings is also called Eostre or Ostara.

Easter, coming up at the end of April, took its name from the Goddess Eostar. It's the time of year when the earth is reawakening and we're thinking of new life and planting seeds either outside or in a window sill garden. Small green shoots are beginning to appear in the warming earth.

The Goddess Eostar is also associated with agriculture and ceremonies. She is celebrated by pagans in the lighting of new fires at dawn for the protection of crops, a practice that still exists among people in Mesoamerica and Europe.

Ishtar, the Babylonian goddess of the morning and evening stars is also associated with Easter. And there's Esther, the Jewish queen who is celebrated at the spring festival of Purim.

As for the bunnies and eggs, Eostar's sacred animal is the rabbit or hare. Rabbits appear in the spring and have always been associated with fertility. When you look up at the full moon, you'll see a rabbit



in the moon.

Eggs have long been a symbol of rebirth and regeneration. In Greece, the eggs are dyed red at Easter. Egg dyeing and decorating is a fine art in Eastern Europe where the goddess was once worshipped as a bird goddess. Ukrainian eggs called *pysanky* are elaborately inscribed eggs usually created in a special ritual.

The Christian Easter story is about Jesus Christ rising from the dead. It's a time of year when bulbs buried in the soil in the fall bloom as tulips and daffodils in the spring. Another ancient story is that of Demeter and her daughter Persephone.



Demeter, Goddess of Grain, known to the Romans as Ceres (related to our word "cereal") had a daughter called Persephone, also called Kore. One day, Persephone was gathering spring flowers with the other girls. Crocuses, narcissus and hyacinths were everywhere. All the versions of the story have the girls gathering spring flowers. Since I've read about textile dyeing, I like to think of them collecting madder root, a plant used as a red dye. They could have been collecting stamens of the saffron lily to use as a bright yellow dye. Persephone discovered a one of a kind flower that she picked even though she knew she



shouldn't. When she picked the flower, a narcissus in some versions, the ground opened up in front of her and a tunnel appeared. Being very curious, she entered the tunnel leaving the light and the bright flowers behind.

When Persephone disappeared, Demeter looked everywhere on the Greek islands and beyond. She ended up at the town of Eleusis. As Demeter sat crying beside a well, she said she was the one who made all things grow but until her daughter was returned to her, no growth would take place. The gardens died as Persephone explored the underworld just as we do in the winter when we take the time to be more introspective.



In the underworld Persephone met Hades. She wanted to go back to her mother but Hades wanted her to be his bride. He told her they were wealthy with gold and precious jewels. Persephone didn't care about the jewels and wouldn't eat or drink. She finally ate the seeds of a pomegranate held out to her. Where once Hecate had been queen of the underworld, now Persephone became overjoyed as she called herself Queen of the Dead. She realized where seeds came from and where flowers were born.



Zeus, the thunder God, said "for every seed Persephone has eaten, she must spend one month each year

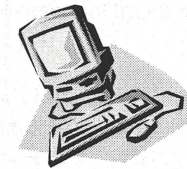
in the underworld. But in the spring she can return to the upper world with the new shoots that rise from the bare ground and bring life and hope and rejoicing to her mother."

(My abridged version of the Demeter and Persephone story came from *Circle Round: Raising Children in Goddess Traditions* by Starhawk, Diane Baker and Anne Hill, Bantam 1998.)

Mary Ann Moore is a writer in Guelph. She will be giving a workshop called *Remembering the Goddess: Mapping Your Spiritual Journey* at *Eramosa Eden* in Rockwood on May 26. Call her at 519-██████████ or e-mail ██████████ for more information. Mary Ann's CD of poetry, *When My Heart is Open*, is available in Waterloo at *Words Worth Books*, in Guelph at *the Book Shelf*, *Maconda Books* and *Ki Design* and in Toronto at *WonderWorks*. It's also available online at indigo.ca and chapters.ca.

THE VOICE MAGAZINE ONLINE

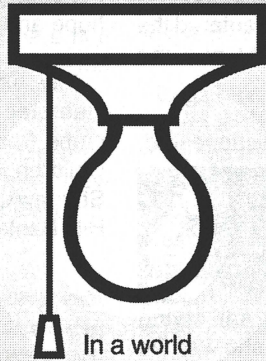
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Limbo

By A.J. Mahari

Limbo can be experienced in many ways at different times and stages of our lives. Limbo is often a place of confinement or neglect. Limbo can be some form of an oblivion. There can be no greater oblivion, in life, than to not be accepting of who and where you are in each moment.

Limbo, to me, is that place between where I've been and where I am going. Therefore, limbo, as I see it is a natural and re-occurring reality. In other words, limbo, can be okay. Living life means learning to adapt as successfully as possible to an on-going series of transformations. Life is not static. The place between places is limbo. Limbo is often a place of great suffering

and pain. All change and growth are precipitated by and motivated by pain and suffering. No one wakes up one day and says, "Hey my life is great — I think I'll change it all". No, we are called only to change what doesn't work and what isn't healthy for us. Thus limbo is always a first step to something better than we've known.

To the religious limbo has a menacing meaning in that it is neither heaven nor hell — according to many this is the temporary state of all holy souls after death.

But in life, limbo, can be an exciting and inviting place because it is a place that is in between our yesterdays and our tomorrows. Limbo is the bridge that spans our journey from one place to another. Perhaps it is a resting place? It is the home of transition. It is the gap between our last thought and our next thought. Limbo is the place from which our last emotion and our next emotion are connected.

If you feel like you are in limbo — if you feel lost — welcome it in. Be there. It is okay to be in limbo. We are all in limbo over and over again. The key think about limbo is to recognize not only its purpose but also the potential that it offers to you.



Limbo is the hole in the donut. Limbo is the beginning of your next step just grazing by the ending of your last step. Do not fear limbo. Limbo, when appreciated, can be the emptiness from which you will again be filled.

Limbo, the hole in the donut — without which a donut would not be a donut — the in between — awaits your determination to discover and re-discover your inner-self and your higher-self over and over again as you reach down deeper within to soar up higher without....

Limbo.....

The Voice Classifieds Page

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If you have something you'd like to submit, please write, e-mail or phone us today!

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or visit our Web Site: www.thevoice.on.ca/

The Voice is looking for experienced advertising help (or ad salespeople). Commission to be negotiated based upon experience. Call The Voice at [REDACTED] between 11am-3pm

Reading/Writing Circle

For lesbians to share the works and writing of other lesbians and or other women. If you would like to get involved in this reading circle for lesbians please contact The Voice at [REDACTED] between 5-7PM or email: [REDACTED]

This circle will meet on the last Monday of each month.

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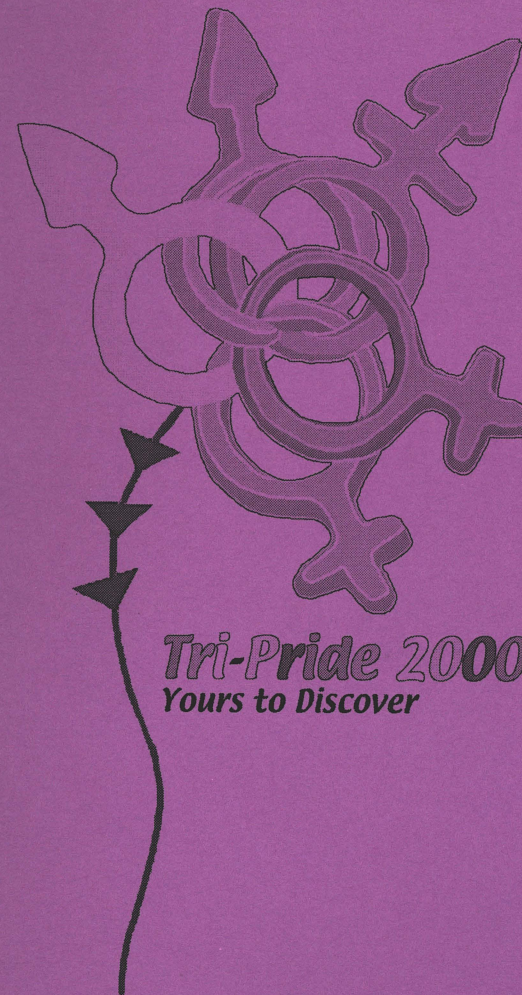
The group will offer peer-support and be a welcoming place for lesbians of all ages and stages of coming out. Discussion topics will be agreed upon by participants.

We will meet on the first Monday of each a month at a time decided by the majority.

For more information or to join please call

The Voice Magazine [REDACTED]

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