

The Voice

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THE VOICE

FREE

VOLUME 5
ISSUE 2
DEC 02

Canada's Queer Views and Culture



The Rudolph Effect
The Men Of Your Lives
Letter To Santa Claus

*Living Out:
Lesbian
Manual?*

*Surfing the Snowy
Peaks of Mt. Internet
in Search of Mr. Right*

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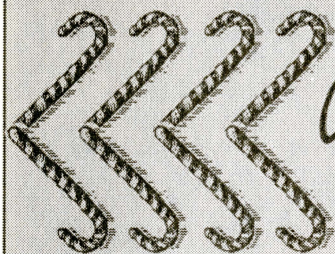
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CHRISTMAS DAY: 2PM-2AM

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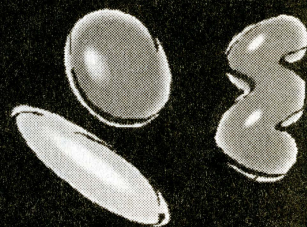
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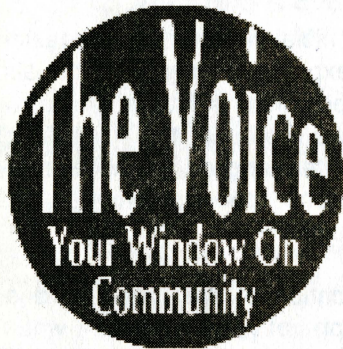
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The Voice Magazine is an independent media source published monthly.

It is an all-inclusive alternative vehicle for all segments of the LGBT community.

Our mandate includes the promotion of tolerance, understanding and acceptance of LGBT culture and alternative lifestyles. We are straight-friendly and accept submissions and issues straight-related, but, we place particular emphasis on our own sub-culture.

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FIRST WORDS



Ottawa Man Murdered Chat Room Killer - a predator?

By A.J. Mahari

On Wednesday December 4th, an Ottawa man, 35 year old Christopher Raynsford, was murdered in his own apartment in Ottawa by a criminal now dubbed the chatroom killer. Was he the first victim of this suspected chatroom killer?



In Kingston the decomposing body of Robert Earl LeClair, 39 was discovered in his apartment. His friends hadn't seen him since mid-November. There have been seven reported robberies by men who have been chatting online recently. Raynsford had apparently confided to friends, a few weeks before his death, that he had been the victim of one of those robberies.

Quite coincidentally, and perhaps somewhat ironically, our cover story this month is about gay men surfing online in chat rooms. It was planned and written before recent tragic events. "Surfing the Snowy Peaks of Mt. Internet In Search For Mr. Right", (page 14) relates the experiences of some online chatters and really asks questions of our readers as to whether or not this is a "safe" reasonable thing to do.

The sad thing is that on top of this tragic loss of life, people judge. Straight society judges harshly, but, so does much of our own community. The blame the victim mentality is more often than not exercised in tragedies like this.

Police have referred to a possible "predator" and that this may not be such an isolated incident.

Raynsford was a part time actor, in an ironic twist of fate the last role he was able to play was in "The Laramie Project" (Com-

ing to Waterloo - see page 21).

Raynsford submitted the following note at the Matthew Shepard Memorial Web Site: *"To all who have taken the time to sign and read this guestbook, thank you! To know there are people in this world who still care for someone that (they have) not even met is inspiring. We are doing the play The Laramie Project in May here in Ottawa and I for one will be honored in telling this story to the family and friends. My heart goes out to you and it must be a comfort to know that people still care. God bless."*

Now our hearts must go out to Raynsford's family and friends.

Raynsford was an actor looking forward to honouring the memory of Matthew Shepard by his planned role in "The Laramie Project". We must remember Matthew, certainly, but also Aaron Webster, so very many others and now Christopher Raynsford and Robert Earl LeClair. They are not just statistics. We can't afford to bury our heads in the sands of denial. Gay-bashing and hate crimes are real. They take away precious, vibrant, meaningful lives for senseless and sick reasons.

We are losing too many. If it's not the tragic situation of gay-bashing murder, it is often the shame of gay-bashing (verbally or physically) and homophobia that sees queer lives (often so young too) lost to suicide. I would be remiss here if I didn't also include the huge numbers of our brothers and sisters, and now heterosexual men and women that are dying of AIDS. The numbers are steadily on the increase. The numbers of people dying with AIDS are stunning and staggering.

Meeting online for sex, can be deadly. It can be deadly, right away, as may have been the case for Christopher Raynsford or it can be a slow, long, and painful process if one contracts AIDS. The denial that is largely pervasive when it comes to anonymous pick-ups for sex, be they from the internet, at bars or baths, or in parks or washrooms, leaves many wondering why so many seem to believe that the worst can't or won't happen to them.

Think about it. Make wise well-thought choices. Value yourself. Be careful. Be safe.

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HAVE YOUR SAY

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

I just read Lee Jameson, M.A.'s, letter to the editor (October 2002 Voice) in response to the (September Voice 202) 'Livin Large' column. I want to thank her for her nice and very true words.

I keep saying I'm too fat and poor to be gay, which cracks people up. And skinny gay women always say, "Ah, April, don't cut yourself down. You're a gorgeous bountiful woman." None of these women would date me, though. The hypocrisy in the lesbian community irks me to no end.

Lee is right that people will so willingly fuck a fat woman (something to hold onto in the night) but will not be seen with this same person in the light of day. It's their problem, not ours, but it still hurts.

One day, my dear Lee Jameson, women of substance will be back in style. Until then, I salute you and the rest of us.

---April O'Flaherty, Hamilton, Ontario
Big and Beautiful, Dammit!

I just had to write in and say I loved the article about ex's (Voice November 2002 - vEXations Part One) and living with them or getting rid of them - getting them to move out that is. I don't have too many ex's, I feel kind of lucky there but I sure do have to listen to friends go on and on when they break-up and they break-up a lot. I am so looking forward to part two. I really love your magazine. It's great. It's so different and original from all others I've read. The editor sure has some gift for what she does.

-- Thomas Warren, Toronto, Ontario

I picked up the November issue The Voice recently. I support your decision to go from glossy to newsprint with the cover and I LOVE the indepth articles on lifestyle and challenging opinions with in the gay community itself. You've done a great job! But, where's the voice girl and boy gone????? You can't omit that, c'mon!

-- Jennie Boss, Kitchener, Ontario

I was so glad to see the information and article on/about AIDS that were included in your last issue. (November 2002) There just isn't enough out there that is really talking about the issues. Too many gay men I know are in so much denial about AIDS and other STD's. Bravo Voice!

-- Deiter Wilhelm, Kitchener, Ontario

We just love the writing of Sally Sheklow. It's brilliant, touching, funny and oh, so true. Please be sure to keep up your lesbian content. We love your magazine.

-- Nancy and Debbie Richmond,

I've had the pleasure of watching Damien Atkins perform. He is very talented. I very much enjoyed the interview with him. (Voice, November 2002) Pictures were just great too! I really enjoy the in-depth nature of The Voice as well as the diversity of content too. Keep up the great work.

-- Donnie Stylecki, Guelph, Ontario

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POOL TOURNAMENT

COMING IN THE NEW YEAR

Thursdays

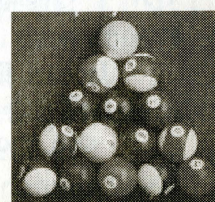
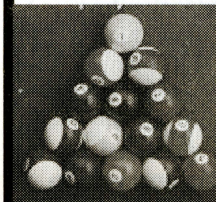
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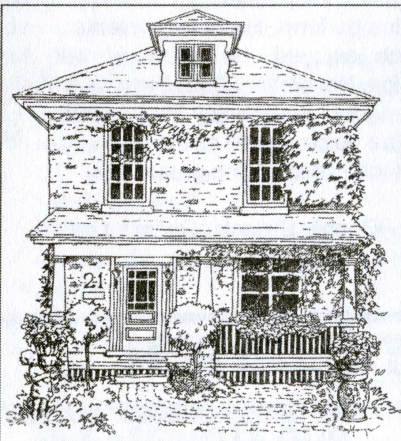
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LIVING OUT



By the Book Lesbian Manual?

By Sally Sheklow

Rosie. Ellen. Chastity. Candace. Melissa. kd. Martina. A veritable romper room of famous, out-of-the-closet role models for young lesbians. When I was coming out in the mid 1970s, all I knew about how to be a lesbian was the instruction manual inside my head.

According to *The Manual*, dykes were tough. They wore rugged clothes, cut their hair short and knew how to spit. They acted like the mean prison matrons in old black and white movies. Those burly bull daggers were so sinister they intimidated even the men, which was exactly what I wanted to do.

I needed rent and grocery money so I was selling my house trailer. I'd paid \$500 for it back when I thought living alone in a trailer out in the boonies was what lesbians did — not the only time *The Manual* steered me wrong. I needed the \$500. A guy called, interested in the trailer. We arranged to meet at a sandwich place near where I worked.

How could I be the kind of tough woman he wouldn't try to cheat? I relied on *The Manual*. I wore my 501's and work boots and a plaid shirt from the men's department at Penney's. My hair was one inch long — hand cut by me using my Swiss Army knife scissors. I looked as much like a prison matron as any college kid could without the advantage of cinematic shadows and lumbering cello music.

According to *The Manual*, lesbians walked like John Wayne, so I swaggered up to the restaurant nice and slow like. For the benefit of my trailer-buyer or anyone else who might be watching, I drew up my saliva and aimed for the asphalt. Good thing *The Manual* also said dykes carry bandanas. I was just tucking mine back into my pocket when I saw him — husky, neatly trimmed beard, balding. His big hairy hand waved me in. I tried not to be discouraged by how much he looked like a prison matron.

I reached out and gave him a firm handshake, the way *The Manual* says dykes do. I ordered a steak sandwich, the most unlady-like item on the menu. Our food came and I slathered on the horseradish — something only very tough

women eat, another tip from *The Manual*. The guy wanted my trailer. It was time to talk money. I had rehearsed saying "Five hundred firm," in the tough, no-nonsense way I imagined a prison matron might say it. Surely this guy wouldn't expect anyone who could handle a sandwich like that to settle for less than her asking price. My plan was to wolf it down, prove I was no wimp, and get my \$500. For maximum effect, I posed like John Wayne fixin' to eat a rattlesnake; then I opened my mouth and took a bite.

"I'll give you \$350 for it," the guy said

Just then the horseradish hit. My throat locked down like a scared sea anemone. Horseradish vapors ignited in my sinuses and exploded behind my forehead. I tried to tough it out, but no amount of will power could keep my eyes from filling with tears. I looked away, tightened my lips and held my breath.

Apparently that is the exact same nonverbal communication device men use to signal agreement. The guy's big hairy hand slipped his check across the table. He got up to leave. I should have said something. No dyke in *The Manual* would just sit there and let some guy call the shots. But what could I do? I didn't want him giving me mouth-to-mouth. I needed him gone before I exhaled, or expired, whichever was going to come first.

Gone was my hope of getting \$500. Also gone were my trailer, my trust in *The Manual*, and most of my mucous membranes. Fluid seeped from every hole in my face. I managed what I doubt was a very tough-looking nod. So long.

*Sally Sheklow is a Pacific Northwest writer who dances with women. She can be reached at sally@rio.com. Submitted to *The Voice* by Sally Sheklow.*



MY LETTER TO SANTA CLAUS

By Charles W. Westfall

Dear Santa,

You are my last resort. I am so confused I am turning to you to help me figure a few things out. I guess the gift I want most this year is the gift of understanding.

When I look at how people are labeled and want to be labeled, I have to wonder how necessary a label is in terms of personal identity. I have to wonder if a label actually adds something or takes something away.

Santa, I live in a world filled with labels and they are proliferating every day. All the colour labels, the religious labels, the gender labels, the national, cultural, social, age, professional, physical, temperamental, political and legal labels. Sometimes, I feel lost in the maze. Sometimes, I forget who I am, altogether.

As a Gay man, I am particularly confused by the stress on labels within what should be a supportive and cohesive group of people, working to achieve acceptance and, at least, mutual support.

Instead, I find that labels abound and I'm not sure that I totally accept or feel part of any of them. For example, there are GLBT's, LGBT's, Gays, Bisexuals, Transgendered, Transsexuals, Queers, Lesbians, Butch Dykes, Fem Dykes, Alternatives, Deviants, Drag Queens, Cross Dressers, S & M's, Bears and Cubs, Twinks, Fem guys, Macho guys, Bois, Grrls and more and more, every day. I recently mentioned Intersexuals in the same sentence as another group and got royally trounced for it. I never know who's who anymore and certainly can't seem to learn how to label correctly.

I worry about the rate in which exclusivity is being used as a stepping stone to privilege and, without forgetting the importance of minority rights, the degree to which "minority" and "superiority" are considered synonymous. I don't have the words "Gay Man" either tattooed on my chest or embroidered on my underwear. I, personally, don't see why that is important. To some people, it obviously is.

Santa, you've got to help. The way labels are multiplying the cultural and social tapestry that makes human life so vibrant and so challenging is rapidly beginning to resemble an endless skein of tangled yarn.

Surely something can be done before we have labeled ourselves out of existence. At least before we have labeled ourselves into invisibility.

Don't get me wrong, Santa. I respect the desire of individuals to claim certain characteristics, values and enterprises as their own. I guess I get worried when I see that tendency becoming the defining element in both personality and life. I know that I am more than any label. I am worth much more than any social or political trend. That is why I object to and fight against any effort that works against that sense of self worth.

My concern, Santa, is that the stress on labels seems, as it continues, to demand more and more that those who accept them do just the opposite. If I allow myself to be labeled, I allow myself to be stripped of a significant level of personal identity and of uniqueness.

I am who I am. If that sounds familiar, it was said by a very well known individual many years ago. His life changed the course of history. Of course, if he were alive today, the story might be different. If anyone asked, "Will the real Jesus Christ please stand up?", he might well be wearing a label, or worse still, a number.

Santa, if nothing else, this year give me sufficient understanding of and confidence in myself so that my name alone will be the thing that makes my life worth living and my person worth fighting for. I am who I am. That means that, primarily, I am a member of the human race. It means that I have a lot in common with a lot of other people. It means that I have a lot more in common with others than I don't. It means that my first and most positive contribution to my world is to promote, support and participate in efforts to spread that realization. My sexual orientation is part of who I am, nothing less, no more.

Santa, I'm tired of the necessity of having



to claim membership in a specific group, even if it is a "gay" community. I'm tired of having to distinguish myself from members of similar groups. I'm tired of efforts that are essentially disruptive and divisive masquerading as some kind of unified and positive enterprise. I'm tired of self-interest and self-service undermining what should be a healthy environment for personal development and growth.

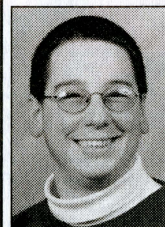
So, Santa, help me understand that who I am is not a bad person, not a lesser person and not a selfish person. Help me see myself as someone good and loving and concerned. Help me love myself even when it appears that no one else does. Above all, give me enough understanding to escape the need for labels.

I'll be waiting for you on Christmas Eve, Santa, with a shot of Vodka and a Smoked Salmon and Caviar Canape. Please, don't disappoint me.

Your friend and very, very good boy,

Charles

Charles W. Westfall is a Hamilton based writer. He can be reached at weschar@sympatico.ca. A Voice Exclusive.



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The Friends Of Dorothy

By Diane Kilby

WHO?

Once upon a time, in a world not so very far away, gay men used coded language to identify each other. A positive answer to "Are you a friend of Dorothy?" guaranteed some measure of safety, when our existence was illegal and our love dared not speak its name.

Today in Kitchener-Waterloo, the Friends of Dorothy is a recreational bowling league for

men and women who are gay or lesbian or who are our friends, families and allies.

In September 2002, the Friends started their fourth year of bowling. Four years ago there were eight of us (two teams) and now there are more than fifty bowlers (and twelve teams) bowling on a regular basis. *We are open to recruits!* All are welcome because Dorothy can never have too many friends.

WHAT?

We bowl three games of 10 pin cosmic bowling with great music each week.

WHEN?

Every Sunday afternoon from September to the beginning of April at 3:00 p.m. We bowl from 3:15 but you will need some time to get your shoes and ball and throw a couple of practice shots. We pay \$11.00 a week.

WHERE?

We bowl at Frederick Lanes, 385 Frederick Plaza in Kitchener.

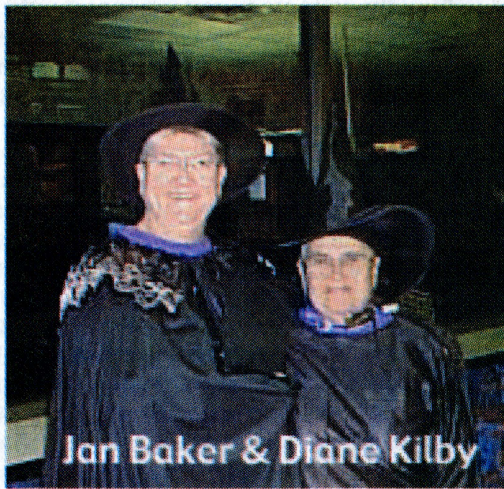
WHAT DO WE DO?

We bowl. Some of us are novices and some of us bowl very well. Most of us are duffers trying to improve our games while having fun with friends and new acquaintances.

We have awards and fabulous prizes at our year-end banquet in April. We eat well

too.

We raise money for Breast Cancer and HIV/AIDS through our Dorothy's Best Tournament. We invite other gay leagues and supportive groups and individuals throughout Southwestern Ontario. It's a fun-filled day of bowling, great food and fabulous prizes donated by local businesses. This season the tournament will be held on Saturday March 8, 2003 at Frederick Lanes.



Jan Baker & Diane Kilby



Jack

All Are Welcome!

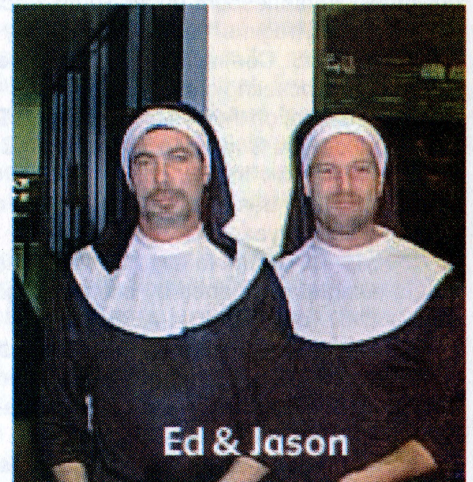
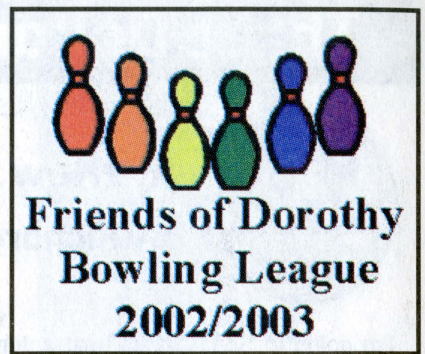
We have special prizes that recognize holidays and special events like Thanksgiving and the upcoming year end celebrations where we reward a turkey (3 or more strikes in a row) with a turkey.

We donate to the food bank. We dress up at Halloween as you can see in the pictures included here.

CONTACT US

We would love it if you were to come out and bowl with us. January is a good time to start. Call Paul Curzon at 579- [redacted] or Diane Kilby at 745- [redacted] for more information.

Diane Kilby is a resident of Kitchener. A Voice Exclusive.



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Three Dollar Bill



The New Apartheid By Richard Burnett

I'm going to South Africa next autumn after years of refusing to go, since under that nation's old apartheid regime my Creole mother and white father were not even allowed to hold hands in downtown Johannesburg under South Africa's "pass system."

Now the old regime has been tragically replaced by the new apartheid, AIDS. Contracting HIV has become more feared than Jo'burg's skyrocketing crime rate.

That's because, on the eve of World AIDS Day, which was December 1st, 2002, the South Africa Research Council reported one in nine of all South Africans has HIV. AIDS is now South Africa's leading cause of death, killing 40 per cent of all those aged 15 to 49 who died last year.

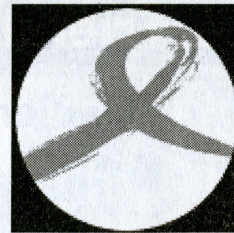
"There is still a terrible stigma attached to HIV in South Africa that is being strengthened by our stupid government, a complex stigma that's evolved from AIDS being a gay disease to being a white disease to allegedly being a disease of promiscuity," says Mark Heywood, head of the AIDS Law Project at Jo'burg's Witwatersrand University and deputy chair of the AIDS-activist organization Treatment Action Campaign.

"It's a stigma built up through fear because AIDS is the disease of death. In my country there are over five million people with HIV and only a handful of them are public about it. And if you can't break that stigma, it makes it difficult to respond to it effectively even with treatment."

South African authorities claim the AIDS plague has been linked to rising poverty and crime, since it kills off family breadwinners and leaves in its wake a nation of impoverished orphans. But even South Africa's own president, the increasingly reviled Thabo Mbeki, continues to deny HIV causes AIDS.

Now - with the quiet support of Nelson Mandela - a coalition of Anglican and Catholic churches, the 1.8 million-member Congress of South African Trade Unions and Heywood's Treatment Action Campaign are challenging Mbeki. Ironically, their hard-fought campaign to educate a nation has been made more difficult since 39 of the world's most powerful pharmaceutical companies dropped its anti-generic drugs class action lawsuit against South Africa last year.

"The lawsuit was wrong, immoral and mistaken, and the public realized it," Heywood explains. "The court case gave us a focus.



Without the court case - and this is partly why the drug companies pulled out of it - it took the issue out of the news. My feeling is we need to change global morality, change the way the international community looks at medicine, and I think it's possible in the short-to-medium term.

"Clearly the drug companies still don't seem to recognize that they produce commodities that are not the same as MacDonald's hamburgers or motor cars, but are fundamental to the lives and dignity of a lot of people. They continue to exploit their patents to get the maximum amount of money out of them."

Heywood also fears the United Nation's \$2 billion (US) Global Fund to Fight AIDS has simply become a subsidy for the pharmaceuticals. "What's happening in the UN is a kind of pussyfooting around the core of the problem, which is the right-of-access to generic medicines. What we need is a global fund that can purchase the cheapest, most cost-effective, quality-guaranteed medicines."

And if you're gay, it's worse. "If you have a serious epidemic among the heterosexual population, you have a catastrophe amongst gay men," Heywood says. "Because everyone has painted the South African epidemic as heterosexual, there have been no messages and no resources targeting gay men, and gay black men particularly. Therefore I believe you have rates of infection among gay men in the region of 60 to 70 per cent and literally no one is doing anything about it."

You'd think a nation with one of the world's highest rates of HIV would scare me more than my plan to go shark-diving east of Cape Town, where divers celebrate one of the highest concentrations of great white sharks in the world. Instead, like many gay folks around the world, I've become jaded witnessing AIDS decimate gay life the last 20 years.

"It's hard not to become jaded - you're driven by feeling constantly angry," Heywood winds down. "Though you do become used to death, life doesn't become cheap. Because everybody wants to live."

Essential buttplug: Support Doctors Without Borders' international Campaign for Access to Essential Medicines at www.accessmed-msf.org.

Richard Burnett's column will be featured monthly in The Voice. He is the Editor-at-Large for HOUR, online at www.hour.ca He can be reached at rburnett@hour.ca



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Freedom and Remembrance

Unique Queer Lives By Mary Ann Moore

My friend Ulli was honoured for her birthday by a circle including her partner and her partner's family members. It went on for two hours Ulli said - maybe more - and the voices of honour were all directed to her. A talking stick was passed - actually a tall walking stick - and as it was handed to each person in the circle, they had the opportunity to tell Ulli what they loved, respected, valued about her.

If someone interrupted, probably out of sheer enthusiasm for their subject, they would be reminded that it was not their turn. In the end, the stick was given to Ulli as a gift to represent all she meant to the circle. It's now a gift of memories that will remind Ulli of how important she is to those people whose lives she touches.

The gift Ulli gave to the circle was to have brought the people together on that particular occasion and on several others. The family members said they weren't getting together so much anymore and Ulli has been instigating and encouraging those gatherings.

Among many other gifts I have received from Ulli were group get-togethers at her house such as a Friday Dyke Night dinner or on other special occasions such as Thanksgiving. When I lived on my own in Toronto and there really was no home to go home to, I would always be welcome at Ulli's. Just knowing she was there, usually in her kitchen, comforted me. I wouldn't call her Hestia though, Goddess of the Hearth, because Ulli is so many other goddesses too. I guess it's her multiplicity that welcomes so many people into her home: straight and gay, women and men, children and seniors, anarchists and bakers, painters and sailors, social activists and filmmakers, all of various races and ethnicities.

The most important lessons I learned about love have been in my friendship with Ulli. That's something to celebrate. Among the friends I had about 12 years ago, Ulli was the one I expected would not have much time to give to a new friendship. She had a young child, a job and a house to look after which she shared with a gaggle of others. Because I didn't have high expectations of our new friendship, it was from Ulli I received the greatest gift. Any time we had together was special time. She knew that just giving me the option of going to her place on a grey Sunday afternoon was all I needed to settle down with a good book and know she was a phone call (or about six subway stops) away.

We supported one another for the special things like her daughter's birthday or a reading from a play I was writing. When I moved to Guelph, she helped me pack and said she'd be coming with me on the day I moved. It was a long weekend in July and she used



Ulli

her precious time off work to come, early and cheerful, to help me say goodbye to the apartment I had lived in for seven years and to the city I had lived in much longer than that. She spent the day with me while the movers set up my furniture in my new apartment. We sat in the sunroom and appreciated the new home I had found, an apartment in an old stone mansion surrounded by trees. Around 7 p.m., I drove Ulli to the bus station so she could return to Toronto.

We don't appear at every special occasion for one another. We attend if we can. By doing that we know we're really present when we do show up. It's okay to not be present at those high moments, because we're always in one another's hearts. I am reminded of one of the four laws of respect I use in the writing circles I facilitate which is: Ask for what you need, offer what you can. What a difference it makes to a circle, a gathering, a friendship when you know people are looking after themselves! We have had enough of do-gooders and martyrs with our parents and their parents. It's so refreshing to know people are there for you when they can be, and they are always there for you in spirit.

I love that Ulli keeps a binder of my writing and she finds my aging, wrinkles and all, beautiful. The mutual appreciation, lightness and flow learned in our friendship was something I wanted to emulate in a life partnership and I did. I wanted that commitment that has a boundary but so much freedom inside it. The freedom to say "no", to be fully present for "yes" and know you can grow together and yet separately in a garden of creativity and possibility.

Thank you Ulli, brown earth of the rainbow

collector of rocks and leaves/feathers and fish bones/sage burner/who brought your German roots to plant/on home and native land/friend through thick and thin/not fragranced over/natural as air.

Mary Ann Moore resides in Guelph and can be reached at [redacted]@interlog.com. www.retreatsonline.net/flyingmermaids. A Voice Exclusive.

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The Rudolph Effect



The Journey Of Difference

By Brian Alan Hill

There is a common thread that all non-heterosexual people share, and with that thread comes a journey. This journey can be described in many ways. It may be totally different for each one of us. The rewards of this journey can be life-changing. A sense of freedom, peace, and liberation can emerge. The journey begins before most of us know it. It's only at the darkest point when we begin to realize it.

This dark period can be so damaging to us that we can not even imagine a life of freedom, peace, and liberation. When does this dark period begin, and how do we know that we are in it? I believe one of the greatest parallels to a non-straight person's life is the simply story of "Rudolph, the Red-nosed Reindeer."

Well, at first, everything was all right. Rudolph was accepted and liked by all the other reindeer. Then, it happened. Rudolph became alienated! His nose was red! It was different; the other reindeer didn't have red noses. They were all alike, and Rudolph was different. We have all been where Rudolph was right then—the painful realization that we are not like the

majority. No, we are different. Do you remember the first time you felt alienated? The fear that overcame your whole being and made you just want to hide?

Rudolph became alienated from the other reindeer. He was thought to have something wrong with him. They didn't even want to be around him. So many times, each one of us has been a "Rudolph" in our schools, churches, and at our jobs. We have been alienated because of our sexuality. We were told we weren't welcome, we weren't needed, and we had nothing to offer.

This is the part of the journey that none of us cares to recall or honestly wants to discuss while it is happening. It can be the most important part as well. It's at this point that most of us get struck. We begin to accept the lies we hear from society (or the other reindeer). We give up. We accept things that are bad for our emotions, bodies, and souls. We may even physically injure ourselves or worse.

How many stories do you know or have heard about a person who attempted or completed suicide because of problems

resulting from their orientation or sexuality? The pain of alienation can be so overpowering that we just don't want to face it any more.

But wait, what happened to Rudolph? Well, come to find out, Rudolph's source of alienation, his difference, served a grand purpose that nobody could have imagined! Rudolph's journey is very much like ours. If we can possibly make it through the painful effects of society's alienation and see the other side, the side Rudolph saw as he saved Christmas, we can begin to heal and our-esteem can be put back together. Harder than a one thousand piece puzzle, granted, but as we begin that self-restoration, we begin to discover our own special purpose.

We can start to feel the freedom, peace, and liberation, but more importantly we begin to feel we deserve those things. We all have unique, God-given gifts to be explored and used. Gifts that can enrich our lives and the lives of all around us. We may go through different journeys, but we all have been a Rudolph!

Season greetings!

Brian Alan Hill is a monthly columnist for The Letter, Kentucky's gbt newspaper. Brian can be reached at his website, www.barnonebhill.com. Submitted to The Voice by Brian Alan Hill.

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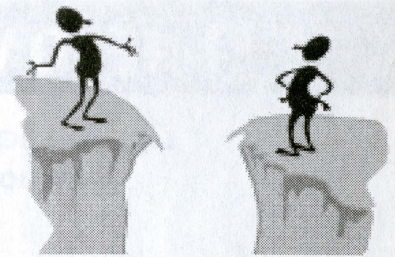
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Surviving living with an EX – Part two

By Gordon Husk



We are a strange species for sure. As much as some in our “community” like to emphasize our normalcy or sameness with hetero-relationships, the reality is that for as long as man has desired man (or woman, woman), we have in effect developed our own queer ways of defining those relationships. Consequently, living with someone you now consider your “EX” seems (dare I say) “common” (not in the vulgar sense, but in the not-strange to hear about sense). But I wander needlessly, and divert from this month’s emphasis upon TIPS in case you or a friend is living with an EX!

DON'T DRAG out the leaving

In my previous (hetero) relationship of 18 years, we decided the splitting and moving-out within weeks. One week we were talking splitting (my naïve suggestion about living in the same house was nixed), and I was gone! In my homo experience (a relationship of 5 years), we stopped sleeping together, and shared adjacent rooms for 1.5 years. Then once we started the over-nights, “house-mates” became a little more untenable. He, having become my “tenant”, gave me the legally required two months notice --- more than enough time to “get used to the idea”, watch the gathering boxes, hear about new possible places, figure out who owns what, and in essence, tear the house apart! Leaving way too much time for drama (strike theme song Mary Bligh’s “No More Drama!” which I literally played for weeks on end. Decide upon the leaving and get it done as soon as possible.

LEAN ON YOUR FRIENDS

First, note the term “lean” not “squish” nor “bury” your friends! You might need them for your next break-up (remember we are gay, dears). Now I know this is complicated, especially if you are deficient in terms of friends (note major mistake in relationship: building your whole life around your lover). They usually can take it, to some extent, unless you go on endlessly about it. Try to vary which friend you moan on (and on) to, giving at least a week’s rest, before returning. Try as hard as you can to realize that they think that you were nuts in the first place to be with the guy, and saw the break coming way before you did. If they gloat, burst into tears! Long distance phone friends are better in

that regard, especially if they haven’t met your EX and you haven’t called them in a long time. They will relish even your crying and screaming on the phone, if they like you. Oh, make sure that you pay for the long-distance, as it’s not considered good form to call collect and then take up 90% of the time talking about your sorrows and pains. A benefit to you (at a time like this), which you’ll probably only realize after the transition, is more free comfort meals.

GIVE WAY

There are just some things not worth fighting about. Ask yourself, “is this really important to me?”. Don’t get into the ‘I know I’ll like it after he leaves’. Let him have it (provided it’s not too valuable, and especially if you know it’ll cause him irritation in near future, e.g. breaking down, cuts, etc). Don’t be afraid to negotiate and suggest something of his that you would like. Then you might get it! Keep him from knowing that you don’t care about the item in question.

GET HELP

If you can’t seem to discuss difficult matters, there are some people who can help. Often a third caring and neutral party (best friends are not great for this), like a common, not-too-involved friend, can help. If either of you are not comfortable with this, there are professionals, for example mediators (hey, did I mention that I’m a gay mediator) who specialize in helping you work through delicate matters in such a way that both of you feel reasonably well satisfied. Yes, I guess you can get lawyers (note I used plural), although once you move into advocacy model, direct negotiation almost ceases, and the process ends up more and more out of your direct hands (in essence you’re paying someone to argue for you).

LEARN TO BITE YOUR TONGUE

You’ll notice the next time you French kiss a skilled EX-lover (not yours) that they have shorter tongues. Through time and experience, especially if they have gone through a lot of lovers, they have learned to “shut up”, and just ignore a lot of the vitriolic and petty things said in break-ups. Just remember that most of it is from insufficient sexual release (no matter how great they tell you sex is now). So, bite down firmly, smile (as best you can), and

shut off your hearing, nod and make an excuse to exit.

GO AWAY WHEN HE IS MOVING

Don’t help your EX move, no matter how short of friends he is. You need to be away during the final dismemberment of the house (if he’s moving out). You don’t need to see the excitement of him moving into new digs, and hear about how he’s going to remodel it. Besides, if you stay around you’ll only be tempted to sabotage his moving away.

EX ‘S SHOULD’N’T MEET NEW LOVERS

Major mistake, unless you are seriously into S&M. You’ll find it’s rather infuriating to see your former intimate making out (and probably even more so for your benefit) with his new beau. Should you finally come to your senses and decide to leave, try not to give into his begging to wait for you. Be strong, tell him you’re leaving, and then keep to your word. Not that anyone I know would have gotten himself in this situation!! Also, should you commit this obvious blunder, don’t tell this to your friends. It’s not nice having them laughing at your obvious embarrassment, poor judgement, and still moaning stance.

DON’T SLEEP WITH YOUR EX (TOO MUCH)

A last fuck is good, especially if done in a supporting and caring way. Careful not to do “I just knew you missed my touch” kinda talk. Just enjoy and maybe you might even be rewarded later, when you are more clearly EX’s.

I hope this has been helpful for you as a preparation should a break-up happen to you (quite likely possible many times on your way to Mr or Ms Right -- but that’s another story). Remember 5 years is a long time in homo relationships. You can start practicing some of the tips now if you like. Although I suggest that you read well, and start doing some preventative stuff. Get your own friends, pierce your tongue (to prepare for pain of biting), and enjoy the sex that you are having now.

Gordon Husk, MSc (psycology) is mediator who specializes in helping parties work through difficult matters. He operates Creative Re-Solutions at 519.884.3883 or can be reached at GoHusk@respeption.com

NEED WOOD?

Tips for Getting Timber By Woody Miller

Hey woody!

You caused a five-fire alarm here when you called HIV positive guys who top guys without a rubber "rapists." I've read all the letters and I'm not sure whose side I'm on. In fact, it just reinforced my personal policy of not getting tested, because that way I don't have to get stuck in sticky moral dilemmas. I don't want to lose a hottie because I disclose and he doesn't like the answer. If I don't know then I don't have to disclose and I get to fuck without a condom guilt-free. Agree?

-- Found the Answer

Dear Found:

Your thinking's so crooked I'd swear you worked for Enron. Ignorance of your HIV status could kill you. Ask my ex-boyfriend Jack, who refused to be tested and ended up on his deathbed with double pneumonia.

Now, no healthy—and did I mention hot—32 year old gets double pneumonia. Well, you didn't have to skywrite "AIDS" over the hospital to get the doctors to suspect HIV. They tested him and they put a "+" on his forehead.

Let me ask you something. Do you really want to transmit a disease you may not know you have to somebody you care about? Willfully "not knowing" is a convenient way to escape your moral obligation. Even if you don't have the intent to commit

harm, you're still negligent. And negligence is a violation of the most basic moral principle in society: Do No Harm.

Technically called the "principle of non-maleficence," the Do No Harm credo applies to everyone, although exemptions exist—for editors, literary agents, record producers and the like. "Nonmaleficence" binds members of a community to each other by agreeing not to bring harm on each other, either through acts of commission or omission.

Do you really want to live in a world where people don't care about each other? I don't. So I really wish you'd leave and join the elite Republican Guard. The one in Iraq, I mean, not the one in Washington. We've got enough Republicans causing harm here at home.

Hey, woody:

It took doctors 3 months to determine what exactly was causing a sharp pain deep inside my rectum. The diagnosis? Rectal herpes. I have had safe sex with 3 different guys. Even as mortified as I was, I confided in them about it before we hooked up because I didn't want to accidentally infect them.

Since I technically have herpes but don't have breakouts on the outside of my anus or genitals could I pass it to someone else while the virus is dormant?

The thought of having to discuss this with a



potential mate makes me a nervous wreck and is keeping me from getting out and meeting someone special. I have scoured the Internet for info about my particular problem and found next to nothing about it. The last thing I ever want to do is infect someone.

-- Feeling tainted

Dear Feeling:

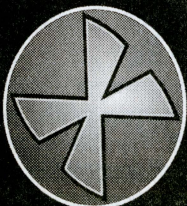
Ahh, at last, a letter from someone who really does give a damn about his fellow man. Thank you for restoring my faith.

Yes, you could pass it on and no, you don't have to disclose--as long as you take the right precautions. Obviously if you get fucked without a condom you're going to expose someone to the virus. So don't get fucked without a condom. Also, you can't let anybody finger you without a glove. If somebody digs a finger up there and touches his genitals...well, there goes his health, along with your conscience.

Monitoring the virus is important. Go to your doctor twice a year and get him to check your ass out. Make sure he does the exam, too. And bring the guy who wrote the first letter, too. He's got his head up his ass so far he could probably use a doctor's help in pulling it out.

Need Wood? Ask woody how to spice up your sex life -- needwood@attbi.com. Submitted by Woody Miller.

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The Men of Your Lives



By Mark Weiser

I am relaxing under the hot Cuban sun right now (don't lie, you are too sick with jealousy) and even though I have had quite a number of beverages, I have some advice. See, I can still help while miles away. Here is how you are to interact with the men that are in your world. Like sands of the Cuban beach, these are the men of your lives!

Father:

As a good son, you have to understand that Daddy may not be cool with the whole gay thing. If the old man is alright with it, then you're set. If not, the best way to do this is to educate him. Teach him that gayness is nothing to be ashamed of and that you are still his son and always will love him. There are many sneaky ways to do this, but you're a fag so I know you are creative and therefore I don't need to tell you how. Make sure he thinks you are an angel, and not because there are angel wings hanging in your closet. To do this you must proclaim innocence at all times. This means ensuring that he thinks his little boy is not a leather-strapping, "E" popping, ass-smacking pig, even if you are. Leave Daddy with a loving impression of you, that you are still his little boy, but you just happen to like men. If you buy into the whole "it's hard to be gay in this world" sob story to him it's usually good for a few bucks, especially around Christmas cause he just got his bonus. And if he makes you feel like shit for who you are, assuming he is not totally accepting, simply remind him that if he had taken you fishing more often that you would be straight – how's that for a mind-fuck.

Boyfriend:

His role in your life is an important one. You can learn so much from the person that you involve yourself with, like all about compromising, reciprocating, sharing, and trusting. However, make sure this dude doesn't own you. Believe me, the minute you start to fear you may lose him he's as good as gone as far as your mind should be concerned. Unfortunately, hearts get crushed like bugs every single day, so get used to the idea that your happiness may

not last forever. In the meantime, relax, enjoy his company, and be good to him, you never know, he could be the one. And don't cheat on him, because apart from being wrong for all the obvious reasons, he will eventually find out and you'll be known as a nasty whore forever.

Fuck Friend:

In and out...no pun intended. You are not supposed to fall for this man, you are not supposed to inquire as to whether or not he is always sleeping with other people (you'll naturally get jealous), you are only to nail him and that's it. This kind of man serves his purpose in the bedroom only, or the living room, kitchen, car, wherever you might feel creative. You are both horny and sexually compatible and that should be your only concern. And be thankful you have him, 'cause you're probably getting laid more than those who are in jail... .unlike poor me, who last week officially grew a hymen!

Homophobic Co-worker:

Careful with this man, 'cause you never know what he might do. He might try to get you in trouble, make your life hell, beat you up, and/or treat you like shit. If you act like all gay around him. It's really not supposed to matter who we are, but having the wisdom to know when to jeopardize ourselves and when not to shows greater intelligence than screaming "I'm gay, I'm gay. You have to accept it!" Chances are he knows anyway, but thinks you are cool because you haven't thrown it in his face. This is exactly why I took a woman to my senior prom, not a man. However, last year I worked for company that I was trying to get fired from. I took my boyfriend to the up-scale Christmas Party. I was in hysteria, watching people's mouths drop open and being the topic of every whispered conversation. I didn't get fired, but we both got hammered for free, and the homophobic co-workers avoided us.

The Ex:

An ex is an ex for a reason. You are not to continue going on little dates, you are not to become best friends. You are not to sleep with him. Be nice and civil at social

gatherings, and always make a point to say "hello" first, but that's it. And never let him have a second chance – he fucking blew it with the best thing he could have had (that's you I'm talking about, insecure faggot!)

Beer Buddy:

This is your party buddy. Don't confuse things. See, his job is to accompany you to the club where the two of you effectively cause shit. You do shooters, make fun of people, dance, and arrange an introduction between him and the man he has been eyeing. Also, you must ensure that every hottie in there knows that you are not together, so sometimes it's good to travel in threes. Just be careful with this man. You are not to trust him with any dark secrets, even if you get drunk and somehow think it's a good idea. True, he is your friend, but you are 'boozin' buddies, and if you ever have a falling out, the whole world will know every nasty thing you have ever said and all the tricks you've had.

Best friend:

Okay, you already know what this is, the only thing I would like to emphasize is that you are not to tell his secrets and you are not to have sex with him!

Mark:

Yep, me. I am so in your life! You know you read me once per month for fuck sakes, and you should always treat me nicely when you see me. Do you realize that I blow a psychologist regularly so that I can get info on how to help you with your day to day struggles? See, I love you lots!

Anyway, I know I've helped you but hold back your tears. Besides, my martini is empty so I have to go. Happy Holidays!

Mark Weiser, of Kitchener, is a Mortgage Underwriter in Toronto. He can be reached at v_flytrapp@hotmail.com



Internet – Surfing for Sex



Surfing The Snowy Peaks of Mt. Internet in search of Mr. Right

By Brad Lister

Got the urge? All 'fired-up' but alone?

Fire up your computer and head to a gay chat room anywhere on the internet and you will find an abundance of 'bois' surfing the space-age snowy peaks of this new-age mountain of hope, dreams, and sexual fantasies fulfilled. Do men really hope to find Mr. Right? Surfing for Mr. Right and love, or searching for a sexual encounter? I set out to try to find out from the source, men in gay chat rooms on the internet.

Cruising through the space-age snow with a penis and a prayer. It has new-holiday song sort of sound to it, doesn't it? Many guys log on to the internet and surf to gay websites/chat rooms looking for sex. Holding their penises in one hand, praying that they will make a connection and meet up with a hottie, while typing with the other hand surfing the internet is a contradiction in and of itself. It is through an increased sense of anonymity that men are attempting to get very familiar very fast.

I logged on to Gay.com recently. The fact that nobody wanted to admit to being there to pick up for sex was a common thread among all the surfers I chatted with. Maybe they were all thinking like Sting, a 37 year old professional who says of the internet, "You can remain totally anonymous, just in case of stalkers. It's easier to also ditch somebody by closing their chat window and blocking them."

A lot of Sting's friends also surf. "We compare notes and share pictures." He makes a point of telling me that some of his straight friends have heard about his exploits and they get a charge out of them.

Most people had many good things to say about picking up off the internet.

"Surfing on line makes it easier to meet gay guys and is more affordable than meeting at bars. There isn't that booze influence," says Sean Ontario. Nick Fenton, (pictured in centre of his page) says, "It's fast and easy and certainly cheaper than going to the bar and you can avoid a lot of the bullshit." CJ, a twenty-one year old, says, "Picking up online is always fun cause you have the whole thing with being mysterious." He adds further, "I would only be meeting the guy, it's not like I would be having sex with him the first night. I guess that is why I don't get to meet many guys that I talk to cause I don't look for sex."

CN, a 23-year-old Asian student, finds that, "the whole experience is just a crapshoot." CN sees the chat room as a place to maybe meet some friends but, "I'd find any long term boyfriend



through other sources, like friends or classmates."

Most of the guys I talked to didn't seem to indicate that cruising in the chat room was about being mysterious per se, or even anonymous. "It's very telling, if they have no picture or profile."

according to Sting. So, in order to make that love connection you do have to have a photo, a real one at that. The problems guys also encounter when they meet an on line encounter in real life include guys who act very differently from their on-line persona. "Most don't even sound like they did online and that makes for a big turnoff." according to CJ.

The sex that these guys believe to be safe, However, the AIDS Committee of London is trying to make sure these cruising guys know about safe sex. Not everybody is that safe as CJ says, "You don't pick up sometimes because of the diseases that run so rampant."

I have a lot of friends that have caught just about everything as the result of having sex after meeting guys online."

Okay, so the reason for surfing the space-age snow of Mt. Internet is not difficult to figure out or confirm. Still though there are a lot of concerns about the safety of it. Convenient though it may seem, in the long run, is that convenience worth all the potential cons of this avenue of sexual exploration and conquest?

Some of the surfers I spoke to weren't so sure about the pros and cons. Others were very clear that while they realized the risks involved they believed that the risks were worth it. Simply put, the need for sex is a very powerful thing. Being gay, often times, makes the conquest a little more difficult and time-consuming in real life, especially in smaller communities, and perhaps more so

if you're fat, or older.

We all understand why guys are surfing. So, I asked them a bit more about how they go about it and what the twists and the turns involve on this slippery slope of sexual hills and valleys.

Sean Ontario says, "I like to give my stats and photo, in exchange for the other guy's. That way you can get a little more of a feel for the guy who you are chatting with. Exchanging pictures makes it easier to break the ice." For Sting the picture is an absolute must. "I need and want that visual. I won't go out with anyone who doesn't provide a picture. Pictures don't always help though. I have many a guy who sent what he said was his picture only to have it turn out, upon meeting them, many guys didn't look at all like "their" pictures. They lied, desperate souls. Sting adds another fact about surfing Mt. Internet, "It's better than phone lines because you can quickly ask an online friend if they know a given person." CJ doesn't like to do the picking up himself. "I don't pick up usually. I wait to see what kind of people are going to respond to me. When all they do is talk about their dick size and how sexy I look then a lot of it is bullshit, cause I don't consider myself sexy and I sure as hell don't want to hear about the size of the guy's penis." Sting also talks about the things that make him ignore the rest of any online conversation. "Anybody that opens with a dick size question is immediately dumped and blocked. Get a life! I want to be pampered first darling! I don't play with married men or bisexuals -- they're too confused and they have too much baggage. Bois that come to play with bois want to be with bois, so thus they must be bois! This ain't Kansas Dorothy!"

A lot of picking up on the Internet also comes down to some gut instincts. Sean Ontario says, "I won't pick up for any reason if I get a negative gut feeling. It is good to be physically attracted to a person whether you are on looking for the right guy, or just sex. Gut feelings play an important role and usually pan out to be right."

Among the surfers I chatted with there are differing opinions on where to meet for the first time. "I will usually meet at a public place or sometimes my place. You have to keep safety in mind because there are a few sickos out there," says Sean Ontario. He adds further, "Being in a common place or on your own turf makes it that much easier. I never go against my gut feelings either." CJ concurs on the meeting in a public place. "I usually will meet in a very busy place, like a donut shop or a bar. This way if he turns out to be a dud I can leave. If it is the person I have been looking for then great and I will talk with that person, and devote all my attention to finding out who he is."

Not everybody is into meeting in some coffee shop somewhere. "I don't do coffee. As if I'm gonna walk around a coffee shop asking every cute, single guy if he's so and so from Gay.com. Besides that, I don't want to be stuck through a boring chat when I'm desperately trying to dump him," says Sting. "If I trust the person, which is the only way I'll agree to meet him, I prefer to meet at my place or their place. I don't like public meetings. I'm a big boy. I can take care of myself. I've ditched people at the door, if they lied to me and didn't send me their real picture. They're gone--they're told to get a life and f--- off! But if they're real cute and were what they said, they're definitely coming in for a good time."

What do these guys say to the people who can't believe that they are picking up off the internet? "I see nothing to be embarrassed about. It's just another way of meeting people. I think it's perfectly normal. I don't really care what people think about it," says Sting. "It's their problem not mine," concludes Sting. CJ says, "If I was to pick up in a chat room then, yes I would tell my friends. My friends would not care they encourage it actually. Meeting people is harmless. I have nothing to be ashamed of. I know that I am not the one who is looking for that piece of ass. I just want to make friends."

Surfing the snowy peaks of Mt. Internet in search of sex or more than just sex, even is a growing in popularity. It's an avenue for the pursuits of many gay men. Health professionals are concerned about the risks involved. Everyone thinks that they can take care of themselves. And yet, even the surfers I spoke to freely admit that there is a big crapshoot element to this. They also admit that they take chances. Over and over again these men shared with me that it is not uncommon to be sent fake pictures. Is there any rational sense to sending a fake picture of some guy that looks way better than you do and then showing up as you are at someone's door? Why? Do these men lack esteem in themselves? How do they expect to have any positive outcome if they start by being deceitful?

There are more questions than answers when it comes to surfing for sex. Sex is a compelling need. The question remains, how much should a guy know about a guy he's going to have sex with, and whatever you think that is, can it be found out through internet chat and then arranging a get-together that amounts to nothing more than a pick-up? It takes time to get to know someone. Talk can be cheap. Typing, perhaps, even cheaper. Or is it? Maybe it's way more expensive than most guys realize.

Continuing our commitment to reach and serve as many at-risk men as possible, an ACOL educator has begun a trial project to provide information and referrals to the online MSM community in the London Chat Room at Gay.com This real time service is provided every Monday and Thursday morning from 10:00AM to 11:00AM. To access this service, visit www.gay.com/chat. Select the **Men - International** floor, and go to the London area. For information at all other times contact acoleague@gay.com.

Brad Lister is a St Thomas/London based writer who can be reached at bradjason@sympatico.ca. A Voice Exclusive. Photo of Nick Fenton by Brad Lister. Chris Geary's photo by Chris Geary -- www.ChrisGeary.com

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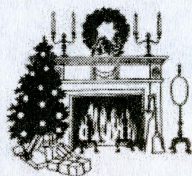
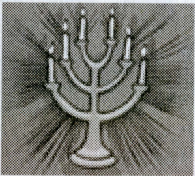
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A great big thank you also to all of our writers and contributors.

The Voice would like to wish all of its readers, advertisers, and contributors a very Happy Holiday Season and a very Happy and prosperous New Year.



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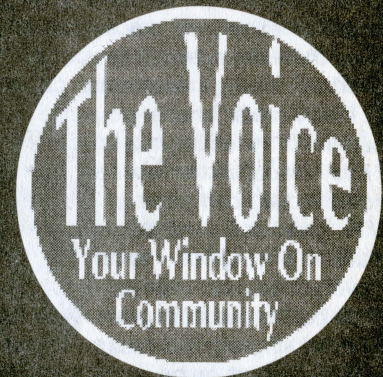
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SPIRITUAL LIFE: The Quest For Freedom

TIME TO LIGHT CANDLES

By Noel Springwood

It's the time to be merry and to light candles.

Many traditions celebrate light at the outset of the darkness of winter. Candles figure prominently in these celebrations.

I'm reminded of the wonderful Walter De la Mare poem, *Old Susan*. "When Susan's work was done, she'd sit with one fat guttering candle lit." In that lyric gem, the candle represents the twilight of a life remembered in nostalgic moments.

The festivals of light those many celebrate at this time of year represent much more than mere nostalgia. They represent a positive belief in a nurturing life force that animates and directs human destiny. In all of these celebrations, the candle is a fitting symbol of hope, of life and of love.

From time immemorial, humans have celebrated life and light and warmth in the depths of the cold and darkness of the winter months. That intrinsic response to what seem to be recurring challenges to human existence and the continuance of life is a valuable indicator of what we as humans need ensure our own existence.

What we need is celebration. It is celebration that reminds us of the good things we have in common. It reminds us of the wonderful times we can enjoy when we decide to get along and enjoy one another's company. It reminds us of the common life and nature we share. It reminds us, in effect, that we are all brothers and sisters who are, basically, good at heart.

So, this year, when the Hanukah, Kwanzaa and Christmas candles are lit, let them be a reminder of our commonality, not our differences.

Hanukah celebrates a time when the Menorah, the candles kept burning in the Temple as a sign of God's presence, ran out of oil. It kept burning in spite of the fact and remained a sign of hope and reassurance for a people who had already suffered much abuse, oppression and rejection.

Kwanzaa, a newcomer in terms of this kind of celebration, began in the United States in the mid 1960's. Borrowing from an African harvest celebration, American Blacks took the opportunity to celebrate major and widespread developments in social and political attitudes that were

changing both positively and radically at that time. Since then, it has continued to spread as a true celebration of community and community endeavour and of personal growth and fruition. A seven-branch candlestick, representing the seven principles contributing to that kind of growth, is an important symbol of this fact.

Christmas, of course and unless you are blind, is certainly a festival of lights. Shining lights and blaring sounds, chiming bells, street corner Santas and the general hoopla turning *Silent Night* into a contradiction.

Don't get me wrong. I think that the Christ child would love it all. I think that the whole message of the incarnation is to affirm and support humanity, in all its weakness, folly and, yes, exuberance.

I usually choose to celebrate alone, apart from all the hype. I celebrate myself as a child of the universe and someone who can be part of a tremendous force for good, if I choose to be part of it. At the same time, I always cook a traditional dinner, in case there's someone who doesn't want to be alone and just may want to share it.

Nevertheless, as we celebrate light for any reason, it's perhaps good to remember that all the bright lights and blaring sounds might, indeed, obscure the most significant reason of all. The beauty of the night sky is certainly obscured by the brightness of city lights. It is best seen from a remote and dark corner of the countryside. The music of the spheres is best heard when there is



silence around us.

My suggestion, therefore, is to take time during this season of celebration, to find a place that is dark and quiet. When you find it, light a candle. Spend just a few moments looking at its flame and thinking about its implications. Remind yourself that it provides light, warmth and a consuming energy: a lot like your own life. A lot like the gift of life, itself.

Ask yourself, how that candle represents you and how you can best utilize the power in your self that it symbolizes.

Embrace the silence and darkness and vulnerability and open all the channels of your heart to the waves of life and energy and love that never leave our world. They are simply drowned or blocked out by the noise, the glare, the hustle and bustle: the 'busy-ness'.

Then, go out and enjoy the festivities and your loved ones refreshed by the realization that you are part of a much greater reality than you ever imagined. You are a new light shining in the darkness.

So, to all you new and bright lights: Happy Hanukah, Happy Holidays, Habari Gani and A Merry Merry Christmas.

Noel Springwood served most of his life as a Roman Catholic Priest. Email him at noelspringwood@sympatico.ca. A Voice Exclusive.

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Tips to Reduce Holiday Stress

By Dr. Jeffery Chernin

Once again, the holiday season has is upon us. A friend of mine told me about a game he plays with friends called Holiday Bingo. To play the game, each player predicts events that will happen during their family get-togethers. For example, for player one "B" could be Uncle Mike getting drunk. "I" could be Aunt Claudia making a homophobic remark, and so on. For player two "B" could be your parents arguing, "I" could be your little brother going out to get high, and so on. Each player predicts these incidents based on the past, and no two players have to have the same events. The first one to witness all 5 events that were earlier predicted calls the other players and yells, "BINGO".

Okay, so, here are more realistic ways to cope with the holiday season:

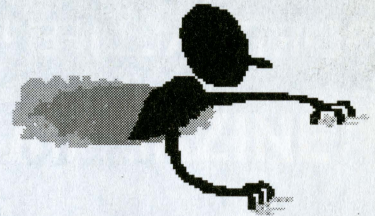
Expect stress to occur

- 1) Be aware that unusual situations will occur this year, so expect the unexpected.
- 2) Prepare yourself. If you're traveling by air, take a book or two and a pillow with you. While you're waiting, instead of getting steamed, be thankful for the delays that are caused by the airport personnel who are keeping things safe for all of us.
- 3) Plan more than usual. For plane travel, find out if there's a later flight to the same destination so you can take a later flight if your flight is cancelled.
- 4) Reduce the chance for inconveniences to become calamities. Take the phone numbers of the people in your destination city in case your flight is delayed, and give them your cell phone number.

- 5) Consider taking public transportation or a cab to the airport.
- 6) Remember that everyone, including mall and airport employees, make mistakes. Flying off the handle makes things worse for everyone. And if you piss off the wrong person, you may be going to New York but your luggage may end up in Miami.
- 7) Make a vow to be calm during stressful situations. Don't make things worse.
- 8) Don't overeat to the point of regret. Make a plan for eating and do your best to stick to it. Enlist your partner or friends to help you.
- 9) Don't drink or use drugs more than your usual amount. Be a designated driver for one or two parties.

When you're going home for the holidays

- 10) Not every homophobic or racist remark deserves an immediate response. Decide ahead of time which battles to pick.
- 11) Become a family archeologist. Observe how your family interacts so you can gather "data" on how growing up in your family helped shape your personality. By staying objective, you can stay out of family dramas.
- 12) If things get rough, do something to take a break. Offer to go to the store, take a walk, or go to a gym which offers daily memberships.
- 13) If you find yourself in a family feud, withdraw.
- 14) Limit visits to two or three days.
- 15) If you're traveling with your spouse, talk about your visit ahead of time. If your



family of origin doesn't want you sleeping in the same bedroom as your spouse, stay at a hotel.

16) Remember that your relationship has equal worth to other married couples in your family of origin. If your spouse is not welcome for the holidays, maybe you should skip traveling home for the holidays. Visit home another time of year so you can spend the holidays with your family (i.e., your partner).

Find ways to cope with the unpleasant aspects of the holidays

- 17) If this time of year is hard on you, enlist the support of others. Talk to a friend. If you're in a 12-step program, go to more meetings and talk to your sponsor. If your sponsor is out of town, talk with someone else in the program.
 - 18) Journal your thoughts and feelings.
 - 19) If you miss a friend or lover who has died, do something in honor of your loved one, maybe something he or she would have wanted you to do.
 - 20) Instead of isolating, make every effort to surround yourself with other people.
- ### Examine the way you view the holidays
- 21) If you think that people must conform to your expectations and standards it only leads to more stress.
 - 22) If you think that the holidays should be less commercialized, forget it.
 - 23) Try to view the holidays with a sense of humor. So many things can go wrong. If something does, laugh! It sure beats throwing mashed potatoes across the dinner table.
 - 24) Infuse the holidays with more meaning, by adding holiday rituals that have meaning to you. Give of yourself.

After reading the above ways to improve the holiday season, there's still one more. If you feel that there's nothing you can do, turn your attention to the coming year. 2003 is around the corner, and you will have the opportunity to forget about the holidays for another year. But since the holiday season lasts from mid-November to the end of December, you might want to think about ways to make it better.

Jeffrey Chernin, Ph.D. is a psychotherapist in Los Angeles and is the author of "Affirmative Psychotherapy of Lesbians and Gay Men." He can be reached at JNChernin@AOL.com. Submitted to The Voice by Dr. Chernin.

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Business Feature: Reiki

By Karen Rendell

Hi! My name is Karen Rendell. I am a practising and teaching Reiki Master in Guelph and area since 1996. That was a beginning of a monumental time of change in my life. It was just the conscious start of "coming out" which to me is a return to my true self. Practising Reiki was a big part of that transition, it helped me in a healing, peaceful way. I often say, "I am my own best client." As I have experienced, first hand, what Reiki can do personally. That is why I practice, teach and offer Reiki to you.

WHAT IS REIKI?

First of all, Reiki can be traced back to about 3,000 BC. It did not have the name Reiki then, the name Reiki was given in the 1940's. The first known written forms of Reiki was found in the Tibetan Sutras of which were written in Sanskrit. Reiki was rediscovered in the late 1800's. It was not until post World War II that it made it's way to North America. I have not given much detail here but there is an interesting story of it's unfolding to our modern day.

The name Reiki is Japanese and is translated to Universal Life Force. Reiki is an energy healing method. It is not a religion. Many people do however, express a growth in their own spirituality. It works on all levels of the Self; body, mind and spirit.

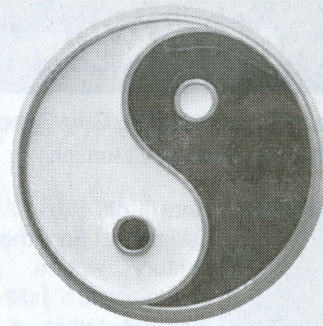
HOW DOES REIKI WORK?

As mentioned above, Reiki is an energy therapy. In this case, the term "energy" is in regards to the Life Force that is a part and surrounds everyone and everything. Reiki healing is facilitated by the life force being transferred through the practitioner to the client. The practitioner helps in the process by applying hands on various positions on the client's body (not in private areas). The Reiki energy then goes to blocked or negative energy areas of the Self (body, mind and/or spirit). The energy works on releasing the block. Usually a client will feel some sort of release during the 48 hours following treatment. It should be noted that Reiki is not a "one time, you

are healed" it is a process of healing, after all, Rome was not built in a day, neither was the block. Reiki is meant to be empowering for the client. Clients have the opportunity to understand themselves on a deeper level, which is true healing.

Reiki benefits everyone including pets too! It is a relaxing, stress reducing method of healing. It also promotes creativity, the list of positive effects is long. You can have a treatment and/or learn it as well. It is simple and effective. I know, I am a client as well. It must be experienced!

If you would like to learn more about Reiki please give me a call.



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BOOKS

Lovers' Legends: The Gay Greek Myths - by Andrew Calimach

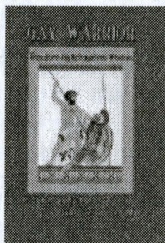


Hats off to Andrew Calimach! For the past century writers, poets, mythologists, historians and the public at large have either ignored the sexual overtones of Greek myths and history, or have distorted or attacked

this valuable body of information to mold their own prejudices. This can be said for those who overplay the significance of the homoerotic aspect of myths as well as those who debunk it as gay delusions of grandeur. In readdressing nine important and 'well-known' stories with fresh insight and with fine scholarly technique, Calimach gives us as clear an interpretation of these foundations of civilization. His introduction to the concept of myths is succinct and illuminating. He wisely threads his tales with a debate (Lucian's 'Different Loves') that places his reassembled fragments of myths as narrative, thus giving a sense of timelessness of reference to his subject. Scholars and psychologists and philosophers and theologians and gender studies veterans have argued their

perspectives ad infinitum. Calimach has the good graces to simply piece together all the varying fragments of information about these nine myths and presents this reconstruction for us to interpret. No preaching here, just a request for open minds, for acknowledging the fact that love between males can be documented as timeless.

Gay Warrior: Transforming Betrayal into Wisdom - by F. Jim Fickey, Gary S. Grimm



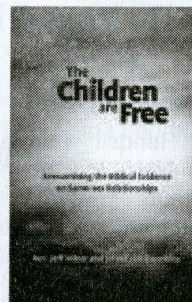
What makes a gay boy into a gay man? This book helps to identify and articulate dead-end detours. Valuable primer for clinicians and a must-read for anyone who loves a gay man.

Around We Go by Tonya L. Chatelain



I loved this book. I found one part heart wrenching and even disgusting but it had to be in there. This author isn't afraid to take risk at all. This book was exciting and intriguing, emotionally draining and emotionally lifting all within the same chapters at times. There is no accounting for peoples taste or the lack there of it, some people have it and some don't. I am excited and will be the first in line to order book two. Keep them coming Ms. Chatelain and I will keep buying and reading them.
- Mindy Botts

The Children Are Free: Reexamining the Biblical Evidence on Same-sex Relationships - by Jeff Miner, John Tyler Connoley, David Squire, Rev. Jeff Miner



In "The Children Are Free, Rev. Jeff Miner and John Tyler Connoley offer a comprehensive yet easy-to-read examination of the biblical evidence regarding loving same-sex relationships and God's attitude toward them.

In Chapter One, the authors lead the reader through a discussion of each of the six passages traditionally used against gay, lesbian, and bisexual people. In their friendly and authoritative style, they demonstrate how an anti-gay interpretation is a misapplication of these scriptures.

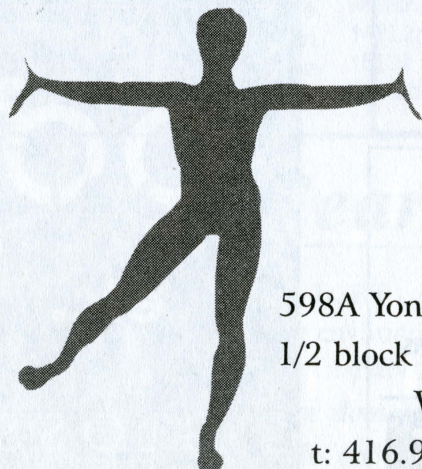
Then, in Chapter Two, Miner and Connoley turn our attention to the biblical stories and passages that affirm loving same-sex relationships. Did you know Jesus once met a gay person? Jesus' loving response is just one of the well-researched stories presented in this chapter.

Chapter Three asks readers to take seriously the call of Jesus to think more deeply about biblical rules. And Chapter Four calls Christians to action, making a connection between the conflicts in the early Church and those occurring within the Church today.

This book belongs in the library of any Christian questioning the role of Scripture in the lives of gay, lesbian, and bisexual people, or the role of GLB people in the Church.

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The Laramie Project

Coming To Waterloo

By Rick Sickinger

In October 1998, Matthew Shepard – an openly gay college student – was kidnapped, brutally beaten and left lashed to a fence. He was discovered 18 hours later, and died in hospital several days after. The murder became an international symbol of intolerance. As the town of Laramie, Wyoming, reeled from the crime, media attention focused on the story and the dialogue began about hate crime



legislation, homosexuality, human privileges and rights, class, education, violence and tolerance versus acceptance.

Four weeks after the murder, Moises Kaufman and nine members of Tectonic Theater Project traveled to Laramie and began interviewing residents. They wondered about the town,

what happened and whether theatre can contribute to a national dialogue on current events. Over the course of a year and a half they visited Laramie six times, conducting over 200 interviews, and collaborated to develop the resulting material. A truly significant, unique, and deeply moving theatrical creation emerged.

Eight actors give voice to the real life testimony of more than 50 citizens of Laramie – from ranchers to University Professors – as they struggle to come to terms with Matthew Shepard's death.

Productions across the United States have met with enthusiastic acclaim. The Laramie project has never been professionally produced in Canada – until now.

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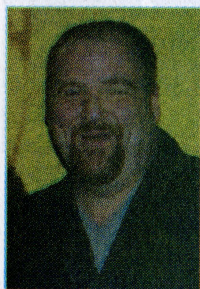
BRUISED FRUIT



Queer Comedy

By A.J. Mahari

On Thursday December 5th, 2002, the Tri-Pride Committee (of Kitchener-Waterloo, Cambridge, Guelph and area) held a fundraiser at Club Renaissance in Kitchener. A "queer comedy showcase" called Bruised Fruit. The show featured four comics. Three gay men and one lesbian, all of whom currently work and live in Toronto.



Richard Ryder (left) was the host. A very witty, funny and fast-thinking comic who not only performed from routine but also ad-libbed with members of the audience. Richard showed a real knack for improvisation with one very out-going lesbian in attendance who proved to be entertaining in her

own right. This woman's participation and willingness to get involved seemed to just give Richard more room to be funny. It was quite enjoyable. The audience really enjoyed how fast he thought on his feet. It reminded me of Howie Mandel's routines with his audiences -- a lot of talent there.

Ryder did this routine with Cher and Rosie dolls and had many entertaining jokes about his life experience, not the least of which involved his name. While his name is Richard Ryder, he pointed out that it's not too far a stretch to be referred to as Dick Ryder -- about the best name in the world for a gay man he figures.

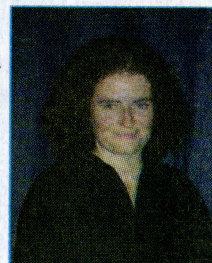
Ryder was an acting student doing improv. "I think, for me, though, up to that point, the audience frightened me. As an actor you always have that fourth wall. Improv helped me realize that the audience was not only there, but that they weren't the enemy." He basically followed a friend from improv to stand-up comedy. He found the transition to stand-up both relatively easy and also educational. He learned to trust himself and to believe that what he has to say are worthy. "You have to trust that the person you are comfortable being with your friends is attractive to everyone."

He is the motivating force behind a new gay-comedy collective called, "Oot and About". With the amount of gay comedy quickly increasing and finding a meaningful voice the timing seems right for this initiative. Read more about "Oot and About" in our January issue.



By far the show-stealer was Fiona MacCool. (right) MacCool has only been doing stand-up for two years and got her start at it after a friend talked her into taking part in a basketball league's talent show.

Her act brought the house down and got the loudest and longest laughter. She gave us all an education on the differences between femmes and dykes in the context of a dating 101 routine, from a lesbian perspective.



"As a thirty something urban lesbian I looked around me and realized that most dykes my age will tell you that they have never been on a "date". They may have had dozens of lovers/best friends/lovers/best friends and lots of good (and bad) sex but they had no concept of the dynamics of lesbian dating...so I decided - given my years of picking up the cheque at dinner with girls, that I would create these little self-deprecating butch femme primers on the trials and tribulations of lesbian dating."

Despite a lower than hoped for turnout to the show, MacCool said, "I was a bit scared coming into town wondering if there were any homos in Kitchener. Given that it was a school night and ten degrees below zero I think it was a fine turnout and most importantly a very friendly crowd. I'd be delighted to come back some day - on a weekend!"

MacCool believes strongly in the importance of supporting Pride. "We have so much to be proud of. In Toronto, Gay Pride Day/Week/Month has become a claustrophobic pain in the ass and an elaborate marketing opportunity for Labatt's Blue and Trojan condoms [among others] but, in a place like Kitchener, getting out and declaring who you are and having fun doing it is an act of courage. I get so mushy about this being from small town Ontario myself."

MacCool incorporates her ability to sing into her act. She confessed that, "As for the singing stuff, the inspiration for that comes in the ridiculous sincerity of 1970's music that lends itself beautifully to campy queer performance. But also, being more of a fag than a dyke musically, I'll admit it - I worship Barbara Streisand".

When asked what she thinks the differences between gay and lesbian comedy are, within queer comedy, MacCool replied, "One



Roberto, Ted, Fiona and Richard
Four very entertaining queer comics

thing I've learned recently is that lesbian comics don't feel as compelled to go on and on about vaginas as some gay men do. And they say we have penis envy."



Ted Morris, (left) was rather interesting in that half of his routine was about the female vagina. I've heard of penis envy but never vagina envy, though this is what Ted reckons that he has. His quiet, more laid back style of delivery lent a paradoxical innocence to the subject matter he produced his clever humour from. In Ted's performance it became clear just how easily and how often the lines of gender are blurred in our community. A focal point for queer humour for sure and also something that Pride reminds us to celebrate about the diversity in our communities.

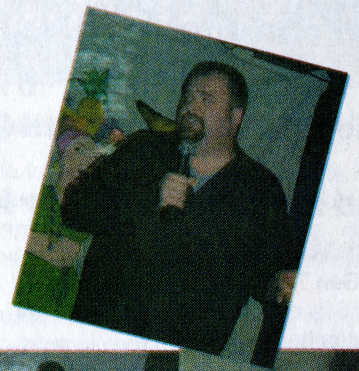
While MacCool entertained with her tales of "femme" encounters with other women from a butch perspective, what to do and what not to do, Morris, entertained the audience with his insightful humour from a more male-femme perspective. Morris' identification with the female gender and MacCool's identification with that of male gender made not only for a very entertaining time but also a profound experience of so much of what we all share as queers. Our community does not adhere to the black and white heterosexual gender roles or identifications. We don't live in any gender-specific boxes, really. We are certainly more entertained when this reality is reflected back to us.

The delight of experiencing "queer comedy", was the way in which, while making us laugh at ourselves, it also provided a sense of comfort and pride in all that being queer means.



Roberto Bozac, (left) who is originally from Ottawa, just recently moved to Toronto. He was a little disorganized at times, but that only added to his humour. He was quite funny and engaged the audience in a very personal way. Despite the small audience for this show, which a couple of the comics commented on during their acts, it was a very involved audience. Everyone who was there was thoroughly entertained by these energetic, witty, talented, wisely-insightful and very engaging comics.

A.J. Mahari, of Kitchener, is editor of the Voice and a freelance writer. Pictures by A.J. Mahari. A Voice Exclusive.



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www.rainbow.on.ca

CANADIAN NEWS

MURDER OF GAY MAN IN OTTAWA

Did He Meet His Killer In Gay Chat Room?

by Ben Thompson
365Gay.com Newscenter in Ottawa
December 6, 2002

(Ottawa) Ottawa police have called in the hate-crimes unit to investigate the killing of a 35 year old gay man. The body of Christopher Raynsford was found in his downtown apartment. Police say he had been beaten to death.

Friends said Raynsford had told them a month before the killing he had been threatened and robbed by a stranger he met in an internet gay chat room. Raynsford did not report the incident to police.

One friend, Michael Fortier, told the CTV news that Raynsford occasionally met men at popular gay chat site Gay.com and invited them home.

"It is a gay bashing incident, certainly," said Fortier.

Raynsford was a waiter and part time actor. In an ironic twist of fate, his last role was in the Laramie Project, a play about the murder of Matthew Shepard.

Before opening night Raynsford placed a note in the Matthew Shepard memorial website.

"To all who have taken the time to sign and read this guestbook, thank you! To know there are people in this world who still care for someone that (they have) not even met is inspiring. We are doing the play The Laramie Project in May here in Ottawa and I for one will be honored in telling this story to the family and friends. My heart goes out to you and it must be a comfort to know that people still care. God bless."

Raynsford's body had been in the apartment for some time before it was discovered.

Raynsford failed to show up for work at his waitering job at Le Café in the National Arts

Continued on page 25

Family Internet Resource

Family Pride/LGBT Parenting Network
<http://familypride.uwo.ca>

If you have a web resource that you'd like to list in The Voice email us at:
web@thevoice.on.ca

ONTARIO COMMUNITY LISTINGS

BRANTFORD(519)

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

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

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

Narcotics Anonymous - 759-██████████

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

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

CAMBRIDGE(519)

PFlag - Sue 650-██████████

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

GUELPH(519)

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

GAY FATHERS' SUPPORT GROUP of Waterloo-Wellington meets the 3rd Monday of every month. Call Jon at 823-██████████ or Dave at 821-██████████

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

HOWL: Hanging Out With Lesbians - social group for women (lbt) 25+ Women may contact HOWL through Outline (519) 836-██████████ or howl@up@trinet.com

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

Rainbow Chorus: Choir and hosts LGBT dances.

Bob Miller at 584-██████████ or Colleen at 836-██████████

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

HAMILTON(905)

Alcoholics Anonymous-- (905) 522-8399.

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

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

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

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

GLBT Centre at McMaster 525-9140, Ext. 27397 gibt@msu.mcmaster.ca

Hamilton Aids Network 135 Rebecca Street 528-0854

Hamilton Aids Network 135 Rebecca Street 528-0854

Hamilton Coming Out Proud Discussion Group 905-526-██████████ toll-free 1-888-338-██████████

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

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

Kindred Spirits - lesbians and bi-sexual women 541-██████████

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

Narcotics Anonymous (905) 522-██████████

PFLAG -- 662-██████████

Sexual Assault Center: Hamilton.....525-4162

Sexual Health Informa-tion - 905-528-5894

Street Health Centre Wesley Centre 777-7852

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

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

KITCHENER(519)

ACCKWA 85 Frederick St. E., Kitchener, Ont., 570-3687

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

BMC (Brethren Mennonite Council for Lesbian & Gay Concerns): Colleen at 836-██████████

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

K-W Distress Line- 745-1166

KWFriends of Dorothy, 10 Pin Cosmic Bowling call Paul at 579-██████████

PFlag - Evie at 742-██████████

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

The Rainbow Par-enting Network - A forum for GLBT parents, parents-to-be, 743-██████████

Tri-Youth Pride - Gail - 743-██████████

YouthDiscussion Group: ages 16-25, 570-██████████

ONTARIO COMMUNITY LISTINGS

LONDON(519)

AIDS Committee of London - 388 Dundas St. Unit 120 - 434-1601

Forest City Bears - Membership info and events on our web site: www.gaycanada.com/fcbears/

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

GLB Student Affairs - U of Western Ontario 661-████

GLOS - Gays and Lesbians of Old South. www.complus.net/glos

HIV Care Program: 646-6207

Homophile Association of London (HALO) 388 Dundas St. 433-████

London Pride Committee - 388 Dundas St. Suite 210 433-3551 ext 3

MCC- 645-0744

NIAGARA(905)

LGB Youth Line 1-888 679-6884

ST. CATHARINES(905)

AIDS Niagara - 111 Church St. 984-8684

Friends of Dorothy Dance Committee - 988-████

Gay & Lesbian Alliance 984-████

Narcotics Anonymous (905) 685-████

STRATFORD(519)

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

Down The Street - 30 Ontario St. 273-████

TORONTO(416)

Affirm United - 466-████

Aids Committee Toronto Hotline - 340-8844

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

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

Canadian Gay and Lesbian Archives 777-2755

Central Toronto Youth Services - 924-2100

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

CounterPoint Community Orchestra - 658-████

Gay Fathers of Toronto - 410-████

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

Gay Partner Abuse Project 876-████

Hassle Free Health Clinic 922-0603

Metropolitan Community Church - 406-6228

Ontario Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce 410-1174

Out! Spoken Advocacy 927-████

Pride Information 927-████

Rainbow Ballroom Dance Club - 363-████ or 534-████

Rainbow Voices of Toronto - 944-████

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

WATERLOO(519)

First Unitarian Congregation of Waterloo 96 Dunbar Road South 742-████

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

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

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

WINDSOR(519)

ACW Youthline - 973-7671

Aids Committee of Windsor - 973-0222

GLBT Book Club 973-████

Lesbian and Gay Council - 973-████

MCC - 977-████

Organization of LG Students University of Windsor - 253-████

PFlag - 973-████

Want your group listed here? Call us at (519-743-████ or email us at:

list@thevoice.on.ca

CANADIAN NEWS

MURDER OF GAY MAN IN OTTAWA

Continued from page 24

ing machine for more than a week. Finally his mother called the superintendent at Raynsford's apartment building. When there was no response at the door he let himself in and discovered the body.

Ottawa police have issued a warning to people who use internet chat rooms to be careful of whom they invite into their homes.

Over the past year there has been a string of unsolved robberies and assaults in Ottawa dating back to November 2001, involving male victims sought out through gay phone sex lines.

Police issued a warning last December that at least five users of gay dating services had been assaulted and robbed by someone they met over the phone. Most of the injuries were minor.

Hunt For Killer Leads To Second Possible Victim

by Ben Thompson
365Gay.com Newscenter in Ottawa
December 7, 2002

(Ottawa) Several dozen people held a candlelight vigil Friday night for Christopher Raynsford the 35 year old gay man whose body was found in his downtown Ottawa apartment earlier this week.

Raynsford had been bound and beaten to death. Investigators now believe that he may not have been the killer's only victim.

Homicide detectives met with police from Kingston, Ontario, south of the capital to compare evidence from the Sunday slaying of a gay man in that city. The decomposing body of Robert Earl LeClair, 39, was discovered in his apartment recently.

Like Raynsford, LeClair's friends had expressed concern when they had not seen him for several weeks, but did not call police. He was last seen alive at his job as a waiter in mid November.

"There are certain similarities," said Ottawa police major crime Staff Sgt. Gerry Sabourin, but each force will conduct its own investigation at the present time Sabourin said. Police spent most of Friday (December 6th) in Ottawa's gay community showing a picture of the man, described as a white, clean-shaven male in his 20s from the Montreal area.

Sabourin also said officers have determined there is no likely link between the killing of Raynsford and string of at least seven robberies and assaults against gay men in Ottawa over the past year.

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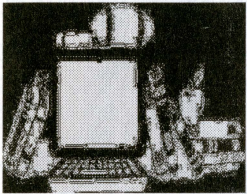
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PERSONALS

Fun guy, 24, looking for, well, fun! New around here so I sure could use a tour. If you'd like to meet to talk or whatever please write.

Reply to Ad G-1

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Reply to ad G-2

PERSONALS

54 year old lesbian needs out-going group of women to enjoy movies, dining and theatre with. I'm just looking for social company.

Reply to ad L-1

45 year old single white lesbian looking for a soul-mate 35-55 years of age with substance physically, spiritually and intellectually. I like movies, dining, reading, deep conversations, the simple things, quite times, honesty, and am an animal lover. I am a proud fat dyke wanting to meet a larger fem. Hoping to find that someone special to have a relationship with that we could build over time.

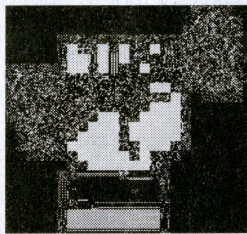
Reply to ad L-2

72 year old single white lesbian seeks companion 65-75 preferably in London, Ont., I am retired, not into the bar scene. I am hoping for a warm hand and a compatible soul with a dash of whimsy, a sense of humour, and a taste for some mild adventure.

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ONE FOR THE ROAD



"If you cannot get rid of the family skeleton, you may as well make it dance." -- George Bernard Shaw

Getting Stuffed

Whatever your religious or cultural affiliation, 'tis the season for frolicking and feasting. It's hard not to get caught up in the maelstrom of festive activity and, especially, the ongoing battle to provide a memorable feast. This can create tension and stress, even in the most organized of households and kitchens.

It's best to relax, do what you do best and feel most confident about, hope like hell that everything turns out and on time and then go with the flow. Whether you go with traditional, innovative, kitchen sink or food hamper cuisine, your feast can still be dressed up appropriately and be memorable in its own way.

'Tis, after all, time to don our gay apparel, too, and setting an attractive table is one of the gayest things we do.

For me, one of the key ingredients in a memorable holiday feast is the stuffing in the turkey. Not all stuffings are created equal and some are definitely candidates for the closest kitchen catcher.

So, I'm happy to provide you with what I think is the best stuffing recipe I've ever found or tried. I use it almost exclusively now, with variations. Anyone who has tried it and survived declares it delicious, memorable and worthy of continuance.

Sausage & Orange Cornbread Stuffing

Orange Cornbread

11/2 cups yellow cornmeal
1/2 cup flour
2 tablespoons sugar
4 teaspoons baking powder
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 cup milk
1 egg, beaten
1/3 cup vegetable oil
2 teaspoons orange peel,

Stuffing Mixture

8 ounces country sausage
1 cup onion chopped
1/2 cup green bell pepper, chopped
1/2 cup celery, chopped
2 eggs, beaten
1 teaspoon dried thyme, crushed
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 1/4 cups chicken broth

finely shredded

Method

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F. Combine yellow cornmeal, flour, sugar, baking powder and salt in medium bowl. Stir in milk, egg, oil and orange peel until just blended. Do not over mix. Pour into greased 9 inch square baking pan. Bake 20 - 25 minutes. Cool. Crumble and set aside.

Cook sausage, onion, green pepper and celery in large skillet until meat is browned and vegetables are tender. Drain well. Combine sausage mix, eggs, thyme and salt in large bowl. Add orange cornbread crumbs and toss to combine. Add enough broth to moisten and toss well.

Makes enough to stuff a 12 - 14 pound turkey.

Variations and Guarantee

For vegetarians, be assured that this recipe works with or without the sausage and vegetable broth works just as well as chicken broth.

Use poultry seasoning, if you prefer, for a richer flavour.

Add anything that you think might enhance the stuffing. I often add such things as fresh cranberries, toasted pecans, mushrooms, red peppers, chopped apple along with peel, raisins and/or sun dried tomatoes. Let your imagination run wild or follow the recipe to the letter. You can't go wrong.

If you're not cooking a turkey, put the whole thing in a casserole and bake it at 350 degrees F. for about half an hour. You've got a great side dish. Put some sauce on it and you've got a great main dish, filled with all the food groups.

The most important ingredient of all, though, is lots of tender loving care. I always keep the persons who will share my food in my heart during the preparation. The smiles I receive when they taste the end result confirm how important this is.

Finally, if you try this recipe, I can almost guarantee that it will not only be the turkey that gets stuffed when you serve it.

Ooops! Double entendres are hard to resist, sometimes. You get the idea, though.

The time for feasting is at hand. Relax and enjoy both the preparation and the sharing and everyone will have a super time.

Happy Holidays from a Happy Cooker, not Martha Stewart. Talk about turkeys.

-- Jonathan Rutledge, Woodstock, Ontario

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