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OUTVIEWS

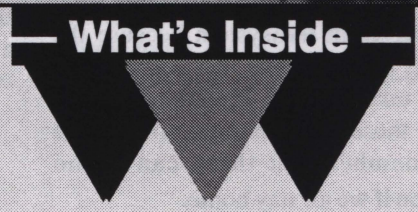
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listen hard

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Melissa Ferrick at The Lucky Bar, March 26



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UP FRONT

Our community really pisses me off sometimes. I'm not talking about the everyday 'men don't shop there, women don't have sex, bisexuals just can't choose, trannies don't exist' crap either. Oh no! I am talking about the soul-deep, 'how can this community EVER get anything done' kind of anger. What sparked this tirade? I'm glad you asked. Bet you thought I wasn't going to tell you, right?

On February 15 the Bleeding Rose and this magazine were part of an AVI forum on Violence and Safety. It as very well thought out and put together by Jim Oliver of the Men's Wellness Program. The forum was designed to be open mike in the beginning and then we broke into groups that were facilitated by different members of the community that talked about specific issues. Then we came back together to share final thoughts. Though it was the first forum we have had here to address this problem I doubt it will be the last. The feeling there was that we have only begun to scratch the surface. But it was a start and we have members of the Victoria Police force that seem sincere in their desire to be part of the solution. We lead a group and having done so I ended the evening feeling as though we have turned a corner and hoping to help build on the momentum.

Imagine my surprise when just 2 days after the event I was visited by another participant who had been at another event and had some alarming and infuriating things to say. There were those in this community who did not go to the forum, which had a good but not great turnout anyway, because they were trying to "prove a point". I guess, from the way I hear it, we were all just doing the cops bidding by being there. How I don't know.

I understand that many of us have had problems with the police in the past, we even discussed this during our group, but let me tell you something. We can never get anywhere by doing nothing or by judging the future by the deeds of the past. The officers who were at the forum were there because they wanted to be and they listened to some very harsh words and painful stories. Most of the open mike part of the event seemed directed at them. I was not in their group but I was told that they 'heard' what was being said and had what

was perceived as a genuine interest in real change. Our groups seemed the same, wondering how we as a community can take better care of each other and have a safer city.

How can we as a community ever get anything done if our attitude is to complain about everything? How can we expect to be taken seriously if we don't act concerned? How can we expect the police to become what we need if we don't educate them to our issues? How can we expect to maintain and improve upon the involvement of the police and other public figures if we don't act like we give a damn? Will we lose what little ground we have gained if we don't use it? How can we convince people that we want change if we don't care enough to get involved? How dare we criticize those who are out there and doing their best to make a difference?

I hope that this forum will be the start of an ongoing dialog between the community and the rest of the world. It is a dialog worth having and a future worth pursuing. A future where we get what people have been fighting for - where gender and sexual orientation do not matter and violence is dealt with equally. I hope next time that those who want to participate can and those who don't will at least be aware of the hard work and dedication that goes into these forums. Maybe instead of complaining and staying away, some people will come and have their voices heard. You cannot possibly know what the real motivation is for people unless you can look them in the eye.

I am sure that there are those of you out there who disagree with what I have said. I've probably made a few of you angry. That's good. I hope I've also made you think. Visibility is the answer not invisibility, no matter what the reason. Can you imagine what would have happened if the choice by those at Stonewall had been to go home and never come back because the cops didn't like them? If no one went to court to fight the system because the system is corrupt? At some point we all have to take a stand, have some faith, embrace those who are trying to embrace us. Remember that there can be no revolution if we all stay home.

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editor's note: in light of my editorial I thought this was a very relevant story to showcase here.

Chief & Gay Community Make Peace

by Jack Siu

365Gay.com Newscenter



The often-chilly relationship between Toronto's gay community and police Chief Julian Fantino has begun to thaw.

Fantino was invited to speak to the congregation at MCC Toronto on March 4th. Rev Brent Hawkes said Fantino had made significant moves to towards bringing policing and the community closer together. Hawkes said it was time to publicly thank the chief.

PC Judy Nosworthy, the first lesbian officer to come out, and her partner and six-year-old son joined Fantino and his wife in a front row pew. Nosworthy is one of the reasons the church invited Fantino. The chief appointed her as his liaison to the GLBT community; an appointment regarded as a major achievement in building bridges.

Fantino's appointment as chief in 2000 was marked by skepticism in the gay community. As chief of the London, Ontario force, he had spearheaded a Child pornography cleanup that many in that community regarded as a veiled threat to gays. Following his appointment Fantino began reaching out to the community. While he was initially rebuffed, he has slowly gained respects.

Rev Brent Hawkes said that for him the proof was a new understanding of the community in the force came last year when he and church received threats when Hawkes announced he would perform two gay marriages in the church. Hawkes said police moved quickly to ensure there were no problems. "The police were proactive in ensuring peaceful services, and they didn't seem resentful (having to do it)," Hawkes said. "I've never felt so safe and so protected."

"We know we're not perfect," Fantino said in his brief address to the congregation. "We need to ensure we're sensitive to all ... diversities and offer the best possible services, including the gay and lesbian community."

Arson Forces Lesbian Family From Home

Attempted Homicide Due to Role in Equal Benefits Lawsuit

Matt Coles,

Director of the ACLU Lesbian & Gay Rights Project

"Shortly after 3 a.m. one morning in February, a lesbian couple's home in Missoula was gutted by fire because they were part of a lawsuit filed this week seeking health benefits for same-sex partners of lesbian and gay University of Montana employees.

"Adrienne Neff and Carla Grayson took their infant son and headed for the front door - only to find a wall of fire. Back in the bedroom, Adrienne passed the baby out the window to Carla, then struggled to escape herself. The house was surrounded by fire, which officials said was almost certainly the result of arson.

"Whoever set this fire did not intend to simply frighten or intimidate this family. They meant to kill them. Two days after the case was filed, all of the plaintiffs received anonymous death threats in the mail that said, 'die dyke.'

"We are shocked, sad and angry. On Monday, Carla told a room full of reporters and supporters that she was a plaintiff in the ACLU's lawsuit against the university, where she is a professor, because Adrienne needs to have health benefits in order to stay at home and care for their baby. 'I'm doing this to protect my family,' she said about the lawsuit on Monday.

"Today, we redouble our efforts to protect this family — and continue fighting on behalf of others like them. We are working with local and university officials and law enforcement to ensure that this heinous crime is fully investigated and prosecuted - and that the families involved in this lawsuit are not vulnerable to further attack. The case is being handled as a triple attempted homicide, and federal officials have become involved in the investigation.

"This is not the first time in our history that people have been attacked - and burned out of their own homes - for trying to get justice through our court system. But we want everyone to know that this does not represent Montana. We call on everyone in this state to rally around these women and make sure they're able to live safely and with dignity."

"The day will come when homosexuals will be equal with heterosexuals. At that moment, harmony will be returned, and the individuals of the group to which I belong will walk in the light of day and under the stars at night without fear."

Sen. Laurier LaPierre.

BLEEPED OUT OF THE STORY

by Joan M. Garry
Executive Director

Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD)

I bet you saw the footage (or photos) of the Mike Tyson/Lennox Lewis brawl — oops, I mean press conference — a couple of weeks ago. It was on the front page of many newspapers, and heavily bleeped video ran on CNN, ESPN and local television stations across the county. And sports commentators, of course, had a field day with it.

Not that this was really news. Mike Tyson biting someone and being generally loutish is pretty much a given whenever he appears in public. But there's another side of this incident you may not be as aware of.

After the brawl, Tyson hurled a series of epithets at a reporter who sensibly (if a bit too loudly) observed, "He should be in a straitjacket." "Come here and say that to my face, you faggot!" was just the beginning of Tyson's violent outburst, and what followed was a stream of slurs, threats and unprintable obscenities — including the threat of rape toward the male reporter and repeated use of the word "faggot." Tyson has since offered an apology for the incident, saying he doesn't consider himself a "role model" and sees himself as "politically incorrect."

Yet in their focus on Tyson's brawl and its fallout (including the Nevada Athletic Commission's decision to deny him a boxing license), the sports media machine has carefully avoided examining the anti-gay content of Tyson's outburst. Sports commentator Keith Olbermann quipped during his guest-stint on CNN's "The Point": "I'm just worried [by] reports that the only damage Mike was able to do is to leave a slight strawberry on Lewis' leg. I mean, that's a problem. Apparently Cousin Mike still has his jab but he's lost his bite."

Clever? Sure. But accurate reporting? Hardly. And Olbermann wasn't alone in downplaying the "other" part of Tyson's press conference performance.

Why don't sports writers want to run with this? Maybe they think reporting such epithets will offend people in gay community? (News flash: too late!) Maybe they've become so accustomed to casual homophobia in sports that it just washed right over them? Or maybe there's some unwritten rule where news that casts a too-revealing spotlight on the reality of sports industry culture simply goes unreported.

Sometimes journalists do break the mold and report on homophobia in sports, although generally it's in response to a controversy. Last May, we saw a media frenzy at the mere hint of an unnamed gay professional baseball player. In December, chaos erupted when "Sports Illustrated for Women" printed a piece about a new women's football league and one of its players came out. And the marketing challenges faced by the WNBA have been fodder for features on whether lesbians are a desirable part of a sports team's fan base.

But these reports aren't enough to tell the whole story of homophobia in sports. Anti-gay and sexist put-downs are still the most common way for athletes to humiliate their opponents and



even for coaches to "motivate" athletes. Tyson of course didn't break any new ground with his use of anti-gay slurs. Not surprisingly, it turns out that Tyson himself had been taunted in a similar manner before the press conference began by former boxer Mitchell Rose, a Lewis supporter. Rose had screamed, "[Tyson's] a homosexual, a faggot, and someone needs to do something about him."

Pretty vicious cycle, isn't it?

All this reminds me of the words of another gay-bashing celebrity: Eminem. He justified using the word "fag" by saying, "The most lowest degrading thing that you can say to a man when you're battling him is call him a faggot and try to take away his manhood... 'Faggot' to me doesn't necessarily mean gay people. 'Faggot' to me just means taking away your manhood." I don't doubt that Eminem's take on the word "faggot" ranks among its common, popular meanings (it certainly helps explain Tyson's use of rape threats against a male journalist who criticized him). But that doesn't make the word any less damaging.

Tacit acceptance of these attitudes, behaviors and words nurtures homophobia in junior high and high school locker rooms. And as we saw in the Tyson incident, homophobia isn't just targeted at gay people. When young athletes learn they can conflate being gay with being less than a "real" man or woman, they discover a powerful weapon for pummeling their peers into conformity (and, in the case of gay youth, shaming them into the closet). So when authority figures — whether they're coaches or media professionals — downplay this harassment ("boys will be boys," after all), young people learn that they can act out on homophobia with impunity. The results: an enforced, profession-wide closet in sports and public behavior like that of Mike Tyson to reinforce it. And then the cycle begins anew.

Whether he or anyone else admits it, Mike Tyson's visibility translates into influence — particularly on young people and athletes. The sports media's myopic fixation on Tyson's physical brawl and relative blindness to his homophobia send a disturbing

(continued next page...)

message: that highly visible media figures (like Mike Tyson and tennis champion Goran Ivanisevic before him) who publicly use words like "faggot" will not be held accountable for their overt displays of bigotry.

The "boys will be boys" defense is a convenient excuse for those who would claim that Tyson's homophobic epithets are a non-issue, but the sports media that cover Tyson's every move owe us more than a collective wink and a shrug here. They have a responsibility to examine the sports culture that told Tyson it was OK to say those things in the first place.

Joan M. Garry, executive director of the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation, came to GLAAD following a seven-year tenure as vice president of business operations at Showtime Networks, Inc., where she managed the pay-per-view division and was responsible for the network's relationship with Don King Productions.

Millions of Genders

By: *Tathra Street*

A perspective of:

Nomy Lam – Gender Apocalypse – an end of Finalities

Tranny fag, Drag queen/king, bearded woman, genderfuck, gender variant, girlboy, fagV, ze, hir, trans, words, words, words, all sorts of words. Words that confine us, words that refine and define us, too many words and not enough.

Nomy Lam's multimedia presentation at UVic's Grad Lounge February 26 left me with all sorts of words going thru my head. Most of them I was familiar with but her discussion brought new light to the issue of gender. "I feel like you guys' are beyond this" she said at one point, once she finished her historical/personal introduction. She was getting into what trans is all about but read the audience pretty well, so instead of an explanation she launched into a discussion of gender diversity and the fluidity of gender expression.

It reminded me of some of the ideas about labels that came up at AVI's Panel Queerly Incorrect 3, last summer, highlighting author Bert Archer. The ideas from his book 'The End of Gay' proposed sexuality without labels as liberation. The forum ended up being a bash-Bert session creating an air of defensiveness. Nomy's ideas were met with greater success. Why? Instead of using academia and a privileged perspective without analysis, she used her own experience, humor, song, costume and queer feminism to make her point. People could relate to it and feel their minds and hearts expand. Sure, the audience was predominantly queer and dare I say female but so?

Nomy takes common ideas and adds her own bent, brining new meaning and a greater richness to the context. The handout was adorned with stars and swirls, x's to dot her i's, overheads were hand drawn (giving a DIY feel), some with lots of words, some with really simple messages, caricatures, cartoons, of herself and other gender variants. Never boring. Great for those of us in the audience with short attention spans. Every few minutes there was something different, a new overhead sheet, a song, a story. I loved that there's this big beautiful pink princess at the front of the room talking to us about gender and the nuances of it's evolution, revolution and amazing apocalypse. That being her vision of an end to the constrictive binary and a rise to the concept of a million genders for a million people. Instead of ridding ourselves of labels, the idea is to make more and make room for people to try on different labels, genders, expressions of gender. She told a story about some of her friends in Olympia WA who transcended gender; made it fluid and fully rejected even the burgeoning norms of transgenderism. One person she described changed pronouns several times and Nomy advocated for hir right to change again and again, that gender need not be fixed. My imagination soaring with visions of a society where people are encouraged, no, expected to transcend gender regularly, where pan-genderism or omni-genderism inspires all sorts of creativity, where binaries are confined to elemental chemistry, not gender. Where 'all genders' means more than M, F, and T. Imagine a million genders in a million people...what will it take?

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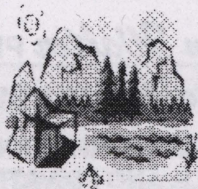


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Life as a Tropical Fruit

By: Ignacio Rodriguez

Feeling Gay

Back in Venezuela my friends used to say that climbing into my car was like entering a musical Bermuda Triangle: you could not foresee what you were going to hear. Easily Madonna, Ute Lemper, La Lupe or even Maria Callas could sing in the middle of the day without a problem. For a few months, the only thing that was constantly playing in my car was "The Three Penny Opera" by Kurt Weill. He wasn't gay, but I really like the harshness of some of his songs and the mellow rhythm of others.

After arriving to Canada, I discovered Dawn Upshaw's voice precisely because of the CD where she sings some of Weill's songs. As an added bonus it contains the song "I Feel Pretty", so I played it very excitedly and following the chords I sang with her: "I feel pretty, and witty and... WHAT???" I knew that something was wrong. Yes, I was feeling as gay as usual, but she DIDN'T SAY THAT! I played it again almost in a state of frenzy. "I feel pretty and witty and bright?" BRIGHT? She wasn't supposed to feel bright, but like a fabulous drag queen singing in the middle of a gay bar!

I know that Dawn Upshaw changing the word gay in the song is not exactly a life changing experience, but that made me remember painfully an Internet forum about gay marriage I'd read months before where some guy was accusing homosexuals of stealing nice words like "gay" and "queer" and according to his conspiracy theory now trying to rob the world of the good meaning of "marriage".

Yes, lately it's not usual to hear someone saying "he's feeling gay" to express that "he is happy", but did we – the homosexual community – label ourselves as homosexuals, gays, queers, lesbians, dykes, sissies and fags? It seems that some heterosexual people think that when the Fathers and Mothers of the Queer Movement started to recruit nice men and women to their cause they also included in their mandate "to steal the meaning of nice and cherished words from the straight population".

I think that straight people themselves promoted the use of these words to refer to homosexuals. I know this is only my opinion (after all I wasn't there!) but that's the way stereotypes operate.

According to the online Wizard's Gay Slang Dictionary By Robert Owen Scott, Jr. the use of the word "gay" to refer something other than being happy began back in the 16th century theater world as the name tag for the young boys who played the female parts in the Elizabethan era – let's remember that regardless of Gwineth Paltro's role in Shakespeare In Love women weren't allowed on stage back then! Post Kinsey, during the 1950's, the term was resurrected to label young males attracted to other men.

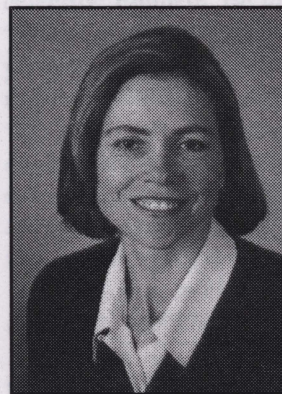
Curiously enough, this man that complained about us stealing the meaning of nice words didn't mention fag, faggot or bitch, three expressions that over the past two centuries have



been used to insult and label us – but after all, who misses calling a cigarette a "fag"?

At some point of history we recognized ourselves in the words and stereotypes that we were supposed to be and we began to call ourselves gays, lesbians, fags, dykes, queens, kings, and this unashamed identification destroyed the offense in those words, just as it happened with the Nazi Pink Triangle: comfort killed the abuse.

When I was in the University, on one of those "black cloud days" when everything seems to be against you, I was walking to the cafeteria and passed a classmate who said in a tone of voice loud enough that I could hear: "There goes that fag!" I realized there and then that I had been looking for someone to make a catharsis with, someone on whom I could spit all the poison I'd been carrying within me, and with that sentence he became the perfect victim. I turned around and said in my most calm, but strong, voice: "Yes, I'm a fag, a queer, a queen, a sissy, a fruitcake (and all the synonyms to "gay" I could find, in Spanish of course), but at least I don't deny what I am like you do!" I left him behind, speechless and pale, trying to recover, as I gaily returned to my walk in a much better mood, and singing to myself: "I feel pretty and witty and GAY!"



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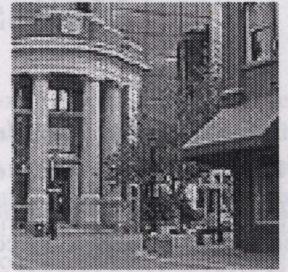
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Parents Want TG Student Barred From Girl's Washroom

by Rich Peters

365Gay.com Newscenter, Vancouver



Adopt an MP

Canada's national gay rights organization, EGALE, this month launches an Adopt an MP programme. Gays and lesbians across the country are being encouraged to take a member of parliament under "their wing" to help educate them about GLBT issues.

"Some MPs are very committed to gays and lesbians," said John Fisher, the executive director of EGALE. "Others are problem children who need patience and persistency."

Fisher said that "With a number of anti-gay contenders vying for the leadership of the Canadian Alliance, matching MPs with caring, supportive parents has never been more needed." The Alliance is the only political party in Canada with a set policy defining the family as heterosexual. The party, Canada's official Opposition, will select a new leader this month. EGALE has published a booklet on the caring and nurturing of MPs. Called "Caring for your MP", it is available from EGALE at <http://egale.ca>

A parents group is demanding that a high school, in Nanaimo, British Columbia, bar a transgendered student from using the girl's bathroom. The grade 12 student is undergoing sex reassignment. She dresses as a female and has adopted a female name. In December, she asked the principal for permission to use the girls' washroom.

"We have medical documents saying the student should now be referred to as female," said Nanaimo-Ladysmith school superintendent Carola Lane. "She is at a phase in her transition when it was appropriate for her to make the request to use the girls' washroom."

But, that isn't enough for Vicki Podetz, chairwoman of the school's parent advisory council. "This is happening way too fast," said Podetz, whose son attends the school. She said she has concerns about "the comfort level of the female students. These are young girls, some as young as 13 years old." The student has been working a flexible schedule and spending a lot of time at home. Lane said school officials have met with the student's family in an effort to support the teen. She said the student is "already under a great deal of stress. This kind of transition is certainly very difficult for any person, but given the student's age it would be especially difficult."

Podetz said she will press other parents and may take the board to court. Legal authorities say such a suit would likely fail. Courts in the past have upheld the rights of the transgendered.

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Melissa Ferrick Live at The Lucky Bar

During the last decade Melissa Ferrick has toured, promoted, and released five critically acclaimed albums. She has single handedly pushed her demand at the club doors across the country and is currently selling out five to eight hundred capacity venues in twelve major markets and sees no reason why she should stop there. Ms. Ferrick opened Right On Records in the winter of 2000 and released her first album on the label, a double live CD *Skinnier, Faster, Live at the B.P.C* in March 2001. Right On Records then moved right on towards preparing for the much-anticipated release of a new studio album, *Valentine Heartache*, released May 1st of last year. Her new album, *Listen Hard*, hit stores on March 14th. Look for a review of the disc and her upcoming concert as well as an interview with Ms. Ferrick in the next issue of *OutViews*.

Melissa has received numerous awards for her work over the years and is currently riding the wave of winning this year's Boston Music Award for Best Singer/Songwriter and being a finalist for Best Female Vocalist and Best Indie Song, all in support of April 2000's *Freedom*, which has already sold over 20,000 units. In previous years, she has won the B.M.A. for Outstanding Female Singer-Songwriter (2000), and Best Folk Rock Band (1999).

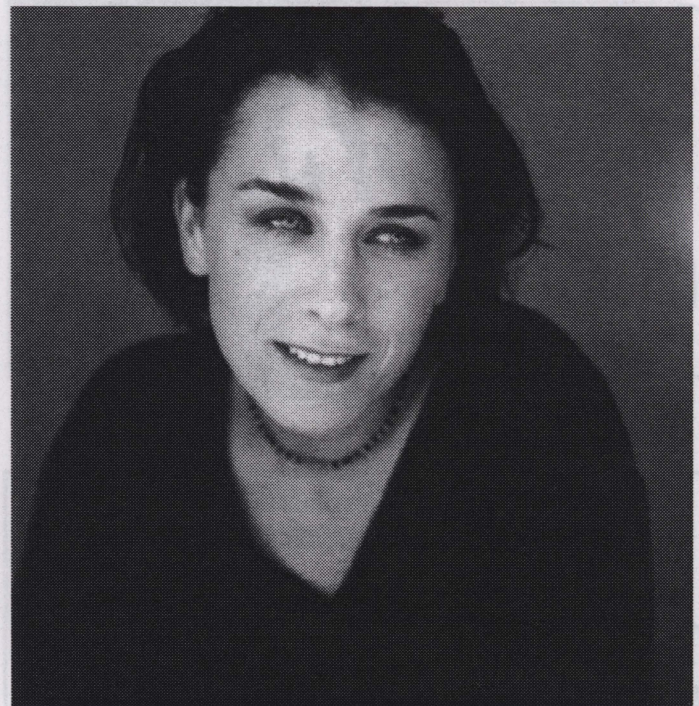
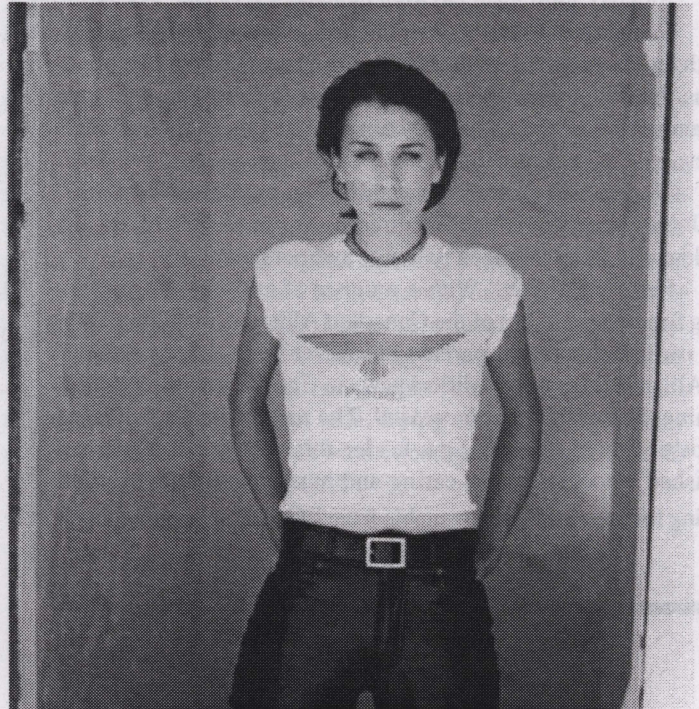
In this day and age, surviving as a working musician without the backing of radio, TV, and press is not an easy task. As an artist who is indeed thriving under those circumstances, Melissa Ferrick is a living working inspiration.

With her talent and desire there is no denying her existence and impact on the current music scene. She is a testament to why people get involved in the music business in the first place, because we love to sing along and we love to feel as one with something bigger than ourselves.

Melissa currently tours with her drummer Brian Winton. The addition of drums to Ms. Ferrick's live shows has not only opened up a new audience for her but has in many ways allowed Melissa to come into her own even more. With Brian creating the rhythms that always haunted her head, she is free to embrace her own words and guitar playing in a way that she wasn't before.

Melissa plays and sings music from her feet. There seems to be no stopping this woman who has now moved into the arena of owning and running her own record label from her home in Cape Cod.

You can catch Melissa Ferrick live at The Lucky Bar, 517 Yates St., on March 26. Show starts at 9:30, doors open at 8.



LANDMARK ACLU CASE CHALLENGING FLORIDA'S GAY ADOPTION BAN REACHES FEDERAL APPEALS COURT

For the first time ever, a federal appeals court is weighing the constitutionality of banning gay adoption, in the American Civil Liberties Union's case against Florida's law prohibiting all gay people from adopting children.

"In the state of Florida today, there are 3,400 children in foster care who could be adopted right away if qualified parents came forward," said Matt Coles, Director of the ACLU Lesbian & Gay Rights Project. "They wait while Florida uses the child welfare system to make a political statement about lesbians and gay men."

In a 43-page brief filed this month at the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 11th Circuit in Atlanta, the ACLU asked the appeals court to reverse the decision of a lower federal judge who dismissed the case before it could reach a trial. The state has 30 days to file a response, and oral arguments in the case will be scheduled for later this year. The ACLU initially filed its federal lawsuit in 1998 challenging the Florida law - marking the first time a federal court was asked the fundamental question of whether a state can broadly block gay people from being parents.

The ACLU represents three families in the case. Steven Lofton and his partner Roger Croteau are raising five children, including three Florida foster children. Although the kids — ages 14, 10 and 14 — have never known another family, they cannot be adopted by Lofton or Croteau because of Florida's law. Doug Houghton has raised a 10-year-old boy for six years but also cannot adopt him because of

Florida's law. The same court that dismissed the lawsuit last year said that Houghton and the boy are just as close as biological parents and their children. Wayne Smith and Dan Skahen provide foster care to various children as needed, but cannot adopt any children because of Florida's law.

The ban on gay adoption was passed by the state legislature in 1977, in the midst of Anita Bryant's anti-gay crusade. The bill's sponsor in the State Senate told a local newspaper at the time that the new law was intended to send this message to lesbians and gay men: "[w]e are really tired of you. We wish you'd go back in the closet."

In sworn depositions for the case, the state's leading official overseeing adoption policy was asked, "Do you know of any child welfare reason at all for excluding gay people from adopting children?" The official, Carol Hutchison, answered, "No." She was then asked if she believes children's best interests would be served if lesbians and gay men were allowed to adopt. "As I previously stated, I think it's contraindicated to rule out such a large population of people who quite possibly could meet the needs [of] awaiting children," she said.

The ACLU told the appeals court that it's unconstitutional for the state to have a law with no basis other than expressing disapproval toward gay people. "There's no question that's what Florida is doing — and it's exactly what the Constitution meant to prevent," Coles said.

This month's court filing includes information detailing the potential jeopardy Florida's law poses for some existing families. On June 21, 2001, according to the legal papers filed today, the state told Lofton it was looking for another family to adopt his nearly-11-year-old boy. When the ACLU asked for assurances that the boy wouldn't be removed from his family until the case is over, "the state refused, saying only that [the boy] would not be taken away until the state found someone else to adopt him," the ACLU brief says.

In an affidavit excerpted in the brief, Lofton makes clear his relationship with the boy: "I have been his parent in every way. For example, every day I wake him up in the morning and help him get dressed and ready to go to school; I help him with his homework when he comes home from school; we have a family dinner every night, cooked by Roger ... I make sure he is safe. He calls me 'Dad.' ... I love [him] deeply and want to protect him. But I cannot protect him unless I can adopt him."

Editor's note: this is the case that has propelled Rosie O'Donnell out of the closet. Look for an in-depth report in the next issue.



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OUT ON THE TABLE:

Dating Tips for the Naïve and the Jaded

By Monica Kendel

The Pleasures of a Well-buffed Boot!

Ever sent back to an occasion by a mere waft? Does boot polish ring any bells? Any tingles at the mention of such an elixir? Mix that with pheromones and you're off to a good start.

Since this article is supposed to be about dating tips, might I suggest footwear as a good clue to compatibility. Those of you who are already into this need no coaching, but there is a whole world of foot fetish neophytes who may fall over the abyss with a tiny nudge.

You might ask, what is there about shoes that could turn me on? Well, there's the smell of leather, sweat and polish. Did I mention the smell of leather? Oh, and then there's leather. Shoes are the gateway to Nirvana... the cornerstone beneath the pillars of the body... the balance of the human form... the shell over the most erogenous zones of the body! What isn't sexy about shoes, I ask you?

Consider the foot as the beginning of those long sinewy legs... that go all the way up! Or the foundation of the sturdy chunky legs that you've been dying to sink your teeth into. Toes can be dexterous (practice makes perfect – so practice peeling a leechy nut with those tootsies and report back would ya?), and in their dexterity, can perform many obscenities under the tablecloth at that very sheeshee restaurant. Shoes innocently lined up on the floor beneath your chair... how proper is that?

Feet are rather tender members that react strongly to a variety of sensations. Try a little tonguing between the toes, nibble of the heel, draw your teeth up the instep, take a big chomp of that quivering calf...you've got the idea.

Gross! Feet can really stink, this is true, but then there are other parts of the body that stink too! N'est ce pas? We seem to manage just fine with a variety of flavours, it's really a matter of

compatibility – if you're getting the wrong whiff, then that boot's not for you.

Consider shoe style when sizing up your next date. Do you have a weakness for the black pump, or are you the hiking boot type. Docs? Fluevog? Army issue. Dress shoes anyone? What about the ever tantalizing thigh high cat woman boot? Meow? Sa me rend folle! Personally, I'm a black leather man myself... Now, as I'm bordering on oversharing, I would like to close with an invitation to the first annual...

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Queen's Rant

By: Geena Smirnoff

Looking Outside the Box

The bar was crowded, the mood seemed festive and people were full of good cheer. I was wearing a stunning red skin-tight dress, and gold tiara with matching jewelry. Schmoozing with lovely local queers I was having a good ol' time until a tipsy lass came my way.

"You make a mockery of women!" She said to me in a tone that was half accusatory half scared. At first I took offense. "Excuse me?!" I asked, knowing very well what she had just stated.

"I said: You make a mockery of women!" She said, this time with more disdain. This confirmed a confrontation. The verbal battlefield was set, this was war. I saw red, and my first instinct was to bitch slap her. 'I am not a violent person.' I told myself.

"You shouldn't speak of things you don't understand!" I said loud enough to speak over the music. She was ready with a rebuttal, but I interrupted her. "And furthermore, if you knew me at all you would realize that I don't mock women. I celebrate women, and I don't appreciate your tone of voice!" At which point I looked around for a bouncer, just in case this got ugly.

She muttered something inaudible, as I walked away. A part of me wanted to shake some sense into her. But who is the bigger fool? The fool, or the person arguing with the fool?

What really concerns me the most about this little tat a tat was not so much what was said, but that there are people out there who actually think this way. People who think Drag Queens are just a bunch of flighty, self-serving bitches that mock women and have nothing really to add to this community.

I don't have a rule book in front me that dictates proper protocol. I do happen to have been mentored by one of the best Drag Mothers this side of the Juan de Fuca. I have had inspiration, from other Drag Queens, both local and abroad. They have set example of unusual, unspoken poise, a high level of what to expect from myself and have influenced what kind of performer I have become.

For example, Miss Rita One More Time has raised well over \$50,000 for charities and has donated her time to better our community. Miss Irma La Douche has raised over \$20,000 with her Drag Queen Bingo alone. Not to mention all the other countless charity and community functions she has hosted and I have hosted and the thousands upon thousand of Drag Queens in North America who have done the same. Not to mention Stone Wall.

I hate to sound preachy, and I do realize that we have the tendencies to have little ego moments. We do like the attention. But I'm Sagittarius, so what do you expect!

We all have different ways of expressing ourselves. And some of us who try and better our community have different approaches. There are Bitchers and there are Doers. Which one are you.

Yours truly,
Geena Smirnoff
Your Reigning Miss Gay
Vancouver Island

P.S.

The women mentioned, in the above rant has since apologized for her statements. We hugged...if you'll excuse me...I'm having a moment! Talk amongst yourselvesJ



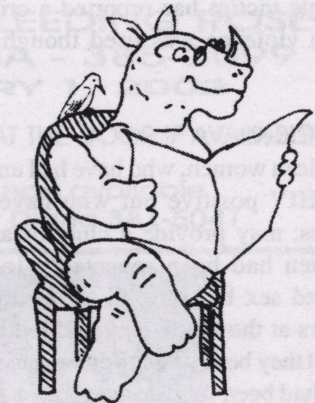
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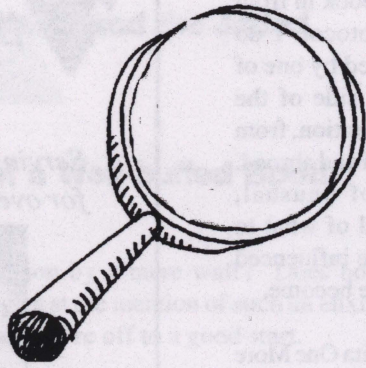
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Through a Queer Lens

Queer News that never makes it to the front page



Toronto Police Issue Warning

Toronto police issued an alert to the gay community after receiving reports from business owners in the area who were told by their customers of robberies by a gang of teens targeting young gay men in the Village. PC Duncan Aldridge said that one or two youths will approach a man in the Church and Wellesley area and ask if he wants to buy drugs or sex. If he says yes, he is lured to an alley where the rest of the gang is waiting and he is robbed. Aldridge said he believes the thieves have netted thousands of dollars. But, not a single victim has reported a crime to police. There is no indication violence was used though that could change in the future.

AIDS Clue?

18 African women, who have had unprotected sex with partners who are HIV positive but who have not contracted the virus themselves, may provide a clue towards developing a vaccine. The women had been repeatedly told it was unsafe to have unprotected sex but refused to heed the warnings. A team of researchers at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey said they believe the women have immune systems behaving as if they had been vaccinated against AIDS. Researchers said the women have key immune cells which work in various ways to block the HIV virus from multiplying in their bodies and infecting them.

Murdered Cop's Partner Denied Benefits

Tampa's Fire and Police Pension Board has rejected an appeal from the partner of Lois Marrero for pension and death benefits. Officer Marrero was shot and killed July 6, 2001 by a bank robber, just days before the board changed its policy to allow unmarried officers to name beneficiaries.

Marrero's death heightened public awareness about same-sex couples in the police department and touched off a debate about their lack of legal standing in pension and other matters. Florida law doesn't recognize same-sex partners as spouses.

Her life partner Mickie Mashburn is also a Tampa police officer. She had appealed to the board on compassionate grounds. If they had been a heterosexual couple, Mashburn would automatically receive Marrero's pension and other benefits totally about \$50,000. The board has awarded the money to Marrero's family which has claimed the relationship between Mashburn and their daughter had ended before Marrero was killed.

Vatican To Oust Gay Priests

The Vatican has declared war on gay clergy. In the first public comments on the growing scandal of child abuse by priests, the Pope's spokesperson, Joaquin Navarro-Valls, blamed "homosexuals in the priesthood." Despite more than thirty years of evidence that homosexuality and pedophilia are not linked, Navarro-Valls said gay priests must be removed for the good of the church and children. Author and former seminary rector Richard Sipe scoffed at the idea of a gay purge by the Vatican. "If they were to eliminate all those who were homosexually oriented, the number would be so staggering that it would be like an atomic bomb."

"We Have No Homosexuals"

Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni stunned human rights activists at the Commonwealth summit in Australia, on the weekend, telling the other heads of government "Uganda has no homosexuals". He made the comment after accepting an award for his government's work in slashing the incidence rate for HIV from 28 per cent to less than 10 per cent of the population.

The Queen and Commonwealth leaders are meeting in Coolumb, on Australia's Sunshine Coast. In accepting the award, Museveni listed the ways that the AIDS virus spreads in Uganda. "First, it goes through unprotected sex. We don't have homosexuals in Uganda so this is mainly heterosexual transmission," he said.

In June, Amnesty International condemned Museveni and his government for persecuting gays. Amnesty said that it had documented cases of gays being tortured in Uganda. Despite the award, Commonwealth leaders are trying to distance themselves from Museveni. A spokesperson for Prime Minister Jean Chretien said the award was given for Uganda's fight against AIDS, not for its human rights achievements.

Africa's other homophobe, Zimbabwe President Robert Mugabe failed to show up at the conference.

Shock and Outrage Over Gay Killing

Gay activists and community leaders have expressed outrage at the killing of a Santa Barbara actor. A 38 year old man has been charged with murder after gasoline was poured over Clint Scott Risetter and then set ablaze. Police said Risetter, 37, had moved to the coastal city north of Los Angeles from South Dakota more than a decade ago in the hopes of becoming an actor.

Martin Thomas Hartman calmly waked into a Santa Barbara police station and confessed to the killing. Police labelled the killing a hate crime. If convicted, Hartman faces the death penalty. Hartman told police he had known Risetter for about six months, but was shocked to find out he was gay. Police Sgt. Mike McGrew said Hartman, who admitted to killing Risetter because he was gay, at first said he set the man on fire because "the victim was unhappy and depressed so he didn't need to be around in the world."

Computer Crash and OutViews is Lost

By: April Grant

As most of you already know, we had a devastating computer crash here at OutViews last month. We were just about to put the February issue to bed and that is when it happened. We lost everything. I know I should have backed up but how many of you actually back up the important files on your computer?

What you hold in your hands is the product of much stress and frustration. It took quite some time to get all the graphics and stories recovered from all corners of the globe it seemed. On top of that as we moved closer to March we realized that it would have to be a combined issue for both months in order to not foul up the printing schedule too much. That meant changing some stories and tossing others. It also meant that you could cut the tension around here with a knife on most days!

So, now you have the Feb/March issue and we tried hard to make it worth the wait. As for April, it looks like because of an impacted wisdom tooth (which made me worthless for a few days to say the least) and a long over due vacation to Florida, that the next issue will come out around April 22 and be a combination April/May issue. For those of you who have subscriptions they will be extended by two issues.

If you have any questions, complaints, barbs, retorts, compliments or stories you would like to tell us...please feel free to e-mail me at bleedingrose_april@telus.net

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clockwise from left: editor April Grant and NDP MLA Joy McPhai, interesting sign at the rally, Tim Perry, Sally Calich and April Grant marching among those opposed to the liberal governments slash and burn policies.

If you have pictures from the rally can you please send them to us so we can include them in our rally coverage in the next issue.

Homosexuality "Detestable", Lesbian Mom Denied Custody

By Doreen Brandt

365Gay.com Newscenter in Washington

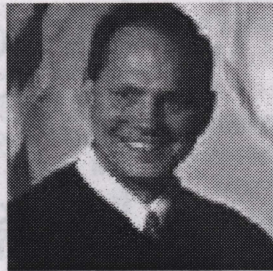
In denying a lesbian mother custody of her three daughters Alabama's chief justice used a litany of homophobic adjectives that has gay rights advocates calling for his removal from the bench.

Chief Justice Roy Moore wrote the decision for the nine-member state Supreme Court. The lesbian mother had petitioned the high court for custody to take the children, aged 15, 17 and 18 to live with her and her partner in southern California. The nine judges ruled unanimously in favour of her former husband, a Birmingham man. The names of the parents were withheld by the court.

Justice Moore wrote that homosexuality is "an inherent evil" that should not be tolerated. His decision went on to say that the mother's relationship made her an unfit parent and that homosexuality is "abhorrent, immoral, detestable, a crime against nature, and a violation of the laws of nature." His ruling quoted the Bible, historical documents, and earlier court rulings that he claimed backed his view.

The chief justice made headlines a year ago when he became chief justice and placed four-foot high replicas of the Ten Commandments in the state judicial building. As a district court judge, he fought to keep a plaque of the Biblical commandments in his courtroom and earned the nickname the "Ten Commandments judge".

Lawyers for the mother have not commented on the ruling. David White of the Gay and Lesbian Alliance of Alabama, called Moore's comments shameful. "It's obvious he cannot judge a gay person fairly, and he should be removed from office," White said.



"We Were Wrong"

Former Legislators Regret Voting To Ban Gay Adoption Nearly 25 Years Ago

Florida's ban on gay adoption, already facing increasing scrutiny, now is under fire from several of the former state legislators who helped pass the law nearly 25 years ago.

Nine former members of the state House and Senate signed written statements saying, "In 1977, we were among the state legislators who helped pass Florida's law prohibiting gay people from adopting children. We now realize that we were wrong. This discriminatory law prevents children from being adopted into loving, supportive homes - and we hope it will be overturned." A former Speaker of the State House of Representatives and a former President of the State Senate, both of whom voted in favour of the law banning gay adoption, are among those who signed the statements

Homophobic Judge "Only Doing His Job"

By Doreen Brandt

365Gay.com Newscenter in Washington

The lawyer for Alabama's Chief Justice says gays should stop carping and change their ways.

Stephen Melchior, who is representing Moore in a complaint filed by Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund said, "They want to kill the messenger. The message, that is, the law, is not popular to a particular group of people because of their conduct." Lambda filed a complaint against Moore with the Judicial Inquiry Commission, after Moore wrote in a child-custody case that "homosexuality 'is an inherent evil'".

Lambda's complaint said the judge's written argument demonstrates that Moore "harbours bias and fixed attitudes toward a significant segment of Alabama citizenry ... and that he cannot set aside his personal prejudices and religious beliefs to impartially and diligently decide each case on a case-by-case basis."

The Judicial Inquiry Commission investigates complaints of ethics code violations by state judges.

Melchior said Moore was just stating Alabama law. "It doesn't matter whether Moore agreed with the law. It is his duty to report what the law is."

Alabama had decriminalized homosexual acts law, but in 1977 the Legislature amended the law to make homosexual conduct a crime, and consent is no defense, Melchior said. Melchior called the complaint by Lambda a frivolous political effort to remove Moore for doing his job. He wants the Commission to drop the case.

Civil Rights Group Calls for Resignation of Alabama Supreme Court Justice

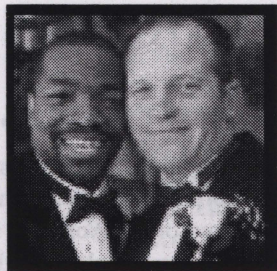
Equality Begins at Home Chairperson Ken Baker said, "Judge Moore is entitled to his beliefs but those beliefs exclude him from being able to fairly judge cases involving the nearly half-million gay and lesbian citizens of Alabama or the remainder who have gay and lesbian family and friends."

In a letter to Judge Moore, Baker wrote, "The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) has endorsed homosexual adoption, saying gay couples can provide the loving, stable and emotionally healthy family life that children need. The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and the American Psychological Association also support homosexual adoption. Same-sex couples are no better or worse parents than opposite-sex couples. They are just parents who have the same concerns about their children's safety and nurturing."

He continued, "I believe that the inflammatory language that you are reported to have used is very irresponsible and will incite even more violence against gays and lesbians in Alabama. Due to your inability to judge cases involving gays and lesbians as well as their friends and family members, I ask that you immediately resign your position as Chief Justice of the State of Alabama."

Hospital Sued For Refusing To Let Man See Dying Partner

Story illustrates why gay marriage is foremost to many



Told by hospital staff in that he could not visit his dying life partner because he was “not the man’s family”, Bill Flanigan, was first hurt, then angry. Now, Flanigan has launched a civil suit against University of Maryland Medical System in Baltimore City Circuit Court.

Flanigan’s partner of five years, Robert Daniel, had been admitted to the medical system’s Shock Trauma Centre in Baltimore on October 16, 2000, from complications arising from AIDS. Flanigan and Daniel, both San Francisco residents were on their way to visit Flanigan’s sister in the Washington, D.C. area, when he fell seriously ill. He was initially taken to a nearby hospital and then transferred Daniel to the Shock Trauma Centre, part of the University of Maryland Medical System, because of Daniel’s critical condition.

Flanigan was told to remain in the waiting area of the Shock Trauma Centre and repeatedly asked staff to allow him to see Daniel and to confer with Daniel’s physicians. He was told only “family” members were allowed to do so, and that “partners” did not qualify as family. Flanigan explained he had a Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care Decisions and that he and Daniel were registered as domestic partners (in California). The Shock Trauma Centre also had the records of the first hospital to which Daniel was admitted, where Flanigan was recognized as family, having spent the night in a chair by Daniel’s bed. For four hours, personnel Shock Trauma Centre kept Flanigan away from Daniel and his doctors, all the time allowing family members of other patients to visit their loved ones and confer with doctors.

Flanigan, on the other hand, was not given the opportunity to make surgeons aware of Daniel’s wish not to have life-prolonging measures performed on him, including the insertion of a breathing tube. After four hours, Daniel’s sister and mother arrived from out of town. Only then did the Shock Trauma Centre provide information on Daniel’s status that had been repeatedly denied to Flanigan, and subsequently allow the entire family, including Flanigan, to see Daniel. By that point, however, Daniel was no longer conscious, his eyes were taped shut, and the two men never had the chance to say goodbye.

“Tragically, gay and lesbian partners too often have to argue their right to hospital visitation with ill loved ones, even in the middle of a family crisis,” said David Buckel, Lambda Legal’s Senior Attorney on the case. “But rarely does it rise to the shocking inhumanity of this case,” he added.

Grace Daniel, the mother of Robert, said she strongly supports the lawsuit brought by Bill Flanigan. “Bill and Bobby were soulmates and one of the best couples I’ve known,” she said. “They loved each other, took care of each other, came to family

holidays as a couple, and Bill still baby-sits for my grandson. If that isn’t family, then something is very wrong. When someone is dying, hospitals should be bringing families together rather than keeping them apart.”

Particularly painful for Bill Flanigan to see, when he accompanied Mrs. Daniel to Robert Daniel’s room, was that the Shock Trauma Centre had inserted a breathing tube into Robert Daniel. When Daniel briefly regained consciousness during one of the final two nights of his life, he, according to a nurse who was with him after visiting hours, attempted to pull out the breathing tube. Shock Trauma Centre personnel, in response, tied down Daniel’s arms which might have been unnecessary had Flanigan been given the opportunity to confer with doctors about Daniel’s wishes.

“When you love someone and make a commitment to each other for good times and bad,” Flanigan said. “There is an awful feeling when you can’t follow through on your promises. I have a huge hole in my heart, and my soul, because I wasn’t allowed to be with Bobby when he needed me most. I can only pray that everyone helps to make sure this never happens to anyone else.” Not only did the Shock Trauma Centre knowingly violate the Health Care Power of Attorney that Flanigan had on behalf of Daniel, but it also violated national hospital accreditation standards for hospitals. Those standards define “family” as the person, who plays “a significant role in the individual’s life,” and this may include a person “not legally related to the individual.”

Flanigan’s attorney pointed out this tragedy would have not have occurred if Flanigan and his partner has been allowed to marry, which they had hoped to do one day. “When the government won’t let you marry, not even protecting yourself through legal documents will guarantee that the person closest to you will be allowed to be by your side during times of crisis,” said Lambda Legal’s David Buckel. “We are a world divided by discrimination in marriage and Bill and Robert paid a terrible price for that discrimination.”

Bill to Make Panic Defence Illegal

A bill has been tabled in the House of Commons that would outlaw the use of the so-called “homosexual Panic” defence. The Private Members bill was introduced by New Democrat MP Svend Robinson. The gay Member of Parliament from Burnaby, British Columbia cited increasing violence against gays. A spokesperson in Robinson’s parliamentary office said that the killing of Aaron Webster in a Vancouver park was one of the reasons the bill was written. Homosexual Panic Defence argues an accused is less guilty because he panicked after the victim made a sexual pass. Robinson’s bill would make the use of the defence illegal in Canada.

The body of Webster, 41, was found in a gay cruising area in Stanley Park last November. Police said he had been hit repeatedly in the head and upper body with a baseball bat by at least three men. No one has been charged in the killing. Robinson’s office said that that if an arrest is made, Robinson wanted to make sure the controversial defence strategy is not used at trial.

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Heche Gives Birth To Boy

Ellen DeGeneris' former partner Anne Heche has given birth to a boy. The baby was 7 pounds at birth. Heche walked out on DeGeneris in a much publicized split and was found wandering near a farmhouse in Fresno, apparently confused and distraught several days later. Last September she married cameraman Coleman Laffoon whom she had met while shooting "If These Walls Could Talk" with DeGeneris. Prior to her breakup with Ellen, the couple had talked of one day having a child.

Michael Douglas has a crush on Eric McCormack

Michael Douglas plays a gay cop who has the hots for Eric McCormack on "Will and Grace" this May. Douglas ("Traffic") will guest star as Detective Sharp, a handcuff-carrying tough guy who's modeled after Douglas' character from "The Streets of San Francisco." Sharp, who's called in to investigate the theft of Will's laptop computer, turns out to be a little light in the loafers and spends extra time on the case just so he can be near Will. Molly Shannon also appears in the episode, which is titled "Fagel Attraction" (a play on "faygele," the Yiddish word for a man of the homosexual persuasion).

HBO buys a Halston original

HBO will broadcast a biopic about gay 1970s fashion icon Halston, and they won't be buying it off the rack. "Simply Halston" will be developed by lesbian producer Christine Vachon ("Hedwig and the Angry Inch") and gay producing duo Craig Zadan and Neil Meron ("Life with Judy Garland: Me and My Shadows"). The project, which was originally developed as a theatrical release for Fox, profiles the rise and fall of Halston, who first gained fame for designing Jackie Kennedy's pillbox hats. By the early 1980s, however, years of partying with the jet set at Studio 54 had caught up with Halston, and he ended up getting thrown out of his own company. He died of AIDS in 1990. No cast has been announced for the telefilm, which represents Zadan's and Meron's first foray into the world of pay TV. Daniel Minahan and "Further Tales of the City" scribe James Lescane are co-writing the screenplay for "Simply Halston," which is based on Steven Gaines' book of the same name.

British Pop Star Comes Out

British pop singer Will Young, winner of the recent "Pop Idol" televised contest, has revealed he is gay. In an exclusive interview with the News of the World, he said: "I'm sure it won't come as a surprise to many people — although I've always been discreet. I'm not a campaigner, when it comes to my sexuality. It's just part of who I am. I'm gay, but it is no big deal."

Barbie Film Banned

A film showing Barbie as a lesbian has been banned in Mexico. "Barbie Gets Sad Too" was due to be shown at Mexico City's Urban-Fest festival. But Mattel Inc., which makes Barbie, obtained a court order banning the film from being shown. The company says the film is pornographic and will spoil the doll's wholesome image. The film, which was made in Argentina, shows Barbie having a sexual relationship with her Latina servant.

Opera Diva to Step Down

One of New York's most powerful fundraisers, influencers, cultural gurus, and most popular and appealing personalities — the great opera diva Beverly Sills — will depart her top post at Lincoln Center come summer. Everyone is still hoping against hope that Bev, who has often squeezed platinum out of oranges, and has always given perspicacious advice to the philanthropically needy, will stay on. This fabulous female, who gave her all as a fabled singer and since her "retirement" has given her all again in helping Lincoln Center survive, now has a monumental book offer to tell all about everything. After a lifetime at the top and behind the scenes of every deal worth mentioning in New York culture, finance and the upper crust, Beverly has nothing to lose.

Alison Campbell

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Queer Spirit

By: Jenny Laing

Shayanda Coleman has grown used to the stares and whispers of others. After all, when you grow up in foster care - without a "real" family - other kids notice. When you live on the street as a teenager, strangers hurry away, muttering. When you get around in a motorized wheelchair, with a beautiful Golden Retriever as your constant companion, people turn and look. And if you're a proud Catholic AND a proud lesbian, both straight and Queer folk shake their heads at the impossibility of such a meld.

But being seen as different hasn't stopped Shayanda yet, and in her newest venture - a Queer Interfaith discussion group - it's a boon. Because Shayanda wants to create a space "where Queer people can connect with a variety of faiths; where they feel safe; where they won't be attacked for saying they believe in God or in their chosen religion."

Shyanda and I sat for two hours at Moka House in Cook Street and attempted to solve the world's problems. We only got as far as figuring out how to get a good cup of coffee, but at least we gave it a good try. In our meandering conversation, we covered the way the world sees us in myriad detail. And one of the things we share (besides a love for bad jokes) is a deep and abiding faith that marks us as outside the norm in Queer conversations. Shayanda spoke eloquently of learning to love - then leaving - the Catholic Church, and that love and leaving both came from the heart. She's back with the Church now, and her hope is that others who feel connected to a belief system will be able to come together to explore their faith in a Queer-friendly atmosphere. Because there is often a closed door in the faith and Queer communities for those who identify with both.

Having always believed there was some sort of Higher Power, Shyanda's faith today is in many ways a response to the foster homes she grew up in. With such diverse outlooks as Salvation Army and native spirituality vying for her attention, Shayanda felt that religion was used as lateral violence. "All foster kids MUST be sinful, so there was religion, the hammer that pounded out the sin." Her quick smile has disappeared, and her eyes are very big. This memory is painful. She started drinking at 13, and was exposed to "colourful sex" at a very young age.

Her whole life changed when she was placed in a foster home with caring lesbians. Previously, love had meant sex. Now, she learned that love could be unconditional, and that faith could be gentle. After being exposed to L'Arche, a religious community for persons with disabilities and their allies, and then going to a Catholic retreat, Shyanda came "home" to the religion of her birth father, gaining the tools, guides and power that held through the 10 years she was without a church.

Catholicism gave her a tangible, real sense of the Power in the universe she had always recognized. Now she had physical and liturgical responses to the emotional depth she wanted to portray, and there was a sense of coming back to something that had always been there.

Her joy was short-lived, however, when just a few short years after joining the community, she was outed by a church member. Suddenly, the safe haven she had found was gone, and Shyanda found herself on the outside once again. In 1988, faith communities weren't welcoming or accepting of gay members. In pain, she left the Church and went to the Metropolitan Community Church, where she was delighted to find a Queer Christian community. Unfortunately, that connection ended with the quiet demise of the MCC, and Shyanda wandered for a while, first feeling anti-God, then getting involved with Wicca. Wicca satisfied the needs of her partners and friends, but for her it wasn't spiritually fulfilling.

Shortly after the Tracy Latimer murder, Shyanda was invited to facilitate a discussion on euthanasia and assisted

suicide. The events surrounding the death of Tracy and the controversy it fired, left her feeling there was no morality in the questions asked - that the medical community had imparted its pathological viewpoint of persons with disabilities to the greater community at large.

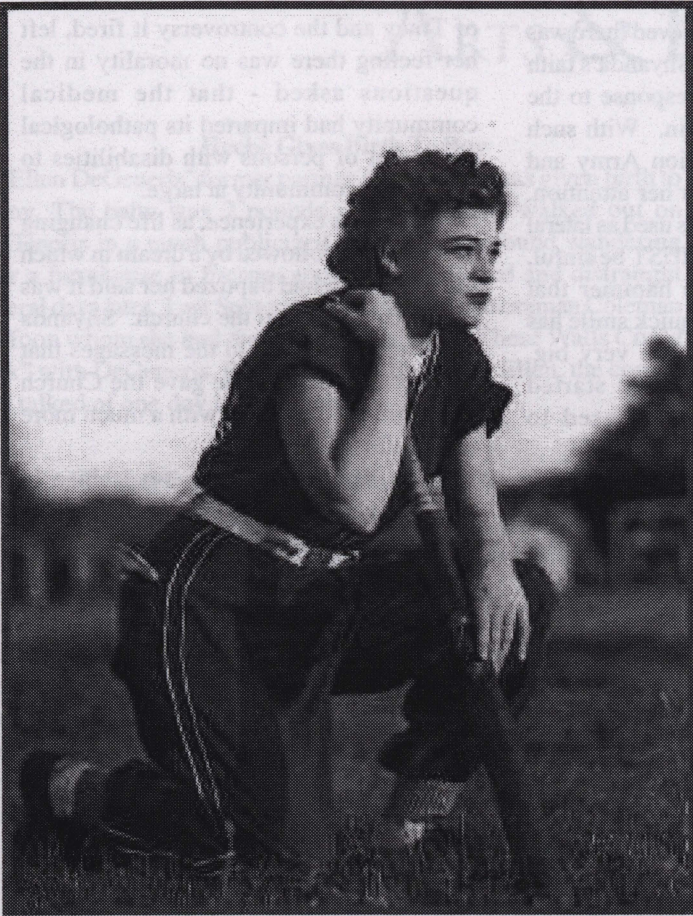
This experience, as life changing as it was, was followed by a dream in which the priest who had baptized her said it was OK to come back to the church. Shyanda has learned to listen to the messages that are there for her, so she gave the Church one more try - this time with a much more successful result.

Walking in as an out lesbian in the first place has meant that there's no fear of being outed, and those that want to talk about sexuality know where she's coming from. And being involved with both advocacy and the Catholic Student Group at UVic has allowed her to let her powerful voice be heard.

Now she's ready to turn her talents to the Queer community, looking for a way to bring people of faith together for fellowship, discussion and community. The experience of being challenged by Queer friends who ask, "How can you be serious about {put your faith here} when there's such a history of oppression?" has made Shayanda painfully aware of the need for a safe space. With simple honesty, she responds, "I know what the Church has done in the past, but I still believe that God is within. I think that most people don't make the full circle journey that I did, but it is possible. I'm tired of talking in terms of the evil the Church has perpetrated. It's time for me to go back to the basics."

The Interfaith Group Shayanda envisions would focus on topic-driven discussion, offering coffee, dessert and issues of spirituality. It would be open to all genders and all faiths, with the common bond being our Queerness, and allies in the form of clergy and professionals are invited. The group would meet monthly in people's homes (being sure there is barrier-free access), and would hopefully provide a spiritual context for people's lives.

Shyanda is ready to roll with this idea, and is looking for other interested people to gather with her. If you have questions, are interested, or even just curious, please contact Shyanda at sjcolema@direct.ca.



“ SHORTY “

She lived against the grain. She couldn't help it. Girls weren't supposed to be strong, they were supposed to be molded. She was a runner, a hitter, a catcher, a pitcher, a woman. Her rebellion, your freedom, Her bravery, your history. Embrace the pride.

“‘Oh, but you were lying,’ the gay Nazis say. ‘You said you liked Tom Cruise.’ I said I wanted him to mow my lawn and bring me a lemonade. I never said I wanted to fuck him.”

“In order to adopt this (3-year-old girl), I would have to perjure myself, would have to sign a document that says in the state of Florida that I am not bisexual or homosexual. The fact that I was unwilling to sign that document meant the child was removed from the house.”

~~statements made by Rosie O'Donnell during a Feb. 25 appearance at the Ovarian Cancer Research benefit at Carolines Comedy Club in New York City



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For more information call 385-3099 or check our website at www.victoriapride.com

You can also join our e-mail list and get updates about activities and meetings at http://groups.yahoo.com/group/victoria_pride_society/

Where the Boys Aren't

Connie Francis sues

Her big hit was "Where The Boys Are", but Connie Francis doesn't want her music where the boys are. The singer has filed a \$40 million dollar suit against Universal Music after it licensed four of her songs to be used in a pornographic video about a gay prostitute, according to her suit.

In court papers filed Monday, Francis said she learned more than a year ago of the use of four of her songs in a "vile pornographic" movie titled "Postcards From America," whose soundtrack was released in 1995. A second film, "Jawbreakers," released in 1999, included her song "Lollipop Lips," the lawsuit said.

The suit also claims Universal failed to properly pay royalties on a number of recordings. Her suit alleges that Universal advantage of her mental illness following her 1974 rape. After the sexual attack she was unable to work for years and was repeatedly admitted to mental institutions, sometimes for treatment that included severe shock treatments. Francis was diagnosed with manic depression and attempted suicide in 1984 according to her lawyers

Development Killed After Builder Learns Neighbour To Be Gay Sauna

by Peter Moore

365Gay.com Newscenter in London

A Scottish land developer has scrapped a multi-million dollar housing plan rather than have it erected beside a gay sauna.

The sauna, which will occupy a former catering company's building, is in a rundown area of the Scottish capital. It will have a capacity of 120, and will be complete with steam rooms, massage, sunbeds, a lounge and spa. Under its licence the spa will have to close at 11:00 pm nightly.

Sundial Properties said the building would become a brothel and it would not be able to sell the townhomes it was planning to build. The company accused the city of Edinburgh of caving in "to political correctness." The Broughton Market area had been earmarked for urban renewal. Sundial was to have built 11 townhouses and a courtyard.

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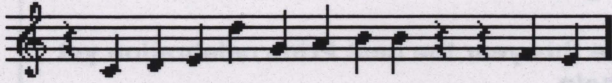
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Notes from musaic

Victoria's GLBT Choir

Musaic began its busiest season in years this past January. On New Year's Day, some Musaic members, with the help of their support team, became Elk Lake Polar Bears. Linda Fraser, Perl Newfeld, Elna MacLeod and Lee Porteous took the actual plunge, but everyone, given the weather, got wet. Toni Mercer, Elaine Lewis, Judy Bell, Lyn Stinson and Toni Collins joined in a rousing chorus of "We're Gonna Keep On Splashing Forward", recorded by VI 12 and Shaw Cable, and provided encouragement and technical support - fortified by steaming cups of tea and apple cider prepared by Pat Ford. Afterward, fans and Bears were spent an enjoyable time at Pearl's getting warm and polishing off Pearl's Christmas cake. Aside from getting on TV, we learned something about singing: when you hit the water, EVERYONE is a soprano!

On January 28th, Geena Smirnoff invited Musaic to sing a few songs at her show at BJ's and presented us with a cheque for \$1024.18 - the result of her hard work over the last months fundraising for us. We are the last beneficiaries of her fundraising at the Tuesday night drag queens' show as she is moving to Wednesday night Bingo. Thank you, Geena! Smooch! What a gal! And a thank you to BJ's for the venue and BJ's patrons for supporting Musaic. Most of us stayed up well past our bed times and watched the whole show, which was great fun - especially for Chris Mion, whose first Musaic performance was also her first time at BJ's and her first drag show! (For some of us, it's hard to remember the first time....)

The Valentine's mini concert and dance on February 9th was, as usual, a great success. The most amazing thing about the schaltzarama, as we called it, was the transformation that dowdy little activity room went through under the hands of the decorating and set up crew. This year, alumnus David Dubbledam, here on a visit from Toronto, arrived at the Community Centre on Saturday afternoon to help us decorate and to join in the singing and dancing that night. Do you suppose he misses us?

On February 15th Musaic sang at the AVI forum and on February 22 and 23 is traveled to Vancouver to take part, for the first time, in the Unison Concert. Every two years, the GLBT choirs and concert band put on a fundraising concert - this year it was for a GTLB youth group. The Lesbian Senior Care Society was the beneficiary of the most recent one. More about this event in next month's issue. Our hosts arranged billet for us and a Sunday "get to know us when we are not singing" brunch.

Our next Victoria event is the Second Annual Musaic Spring Garage Sale on April 27th. Donations and customers are welcome.

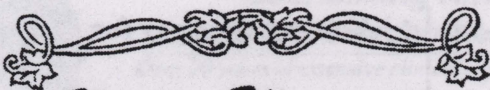
So are singers. If you like to sing and would like to be part of the Musaic family, come and check us out. We practice on Wednesday nights - no auditions are necessary and enthusiasm is more important than experience. We also welcome non-singing members. For information, call 598-2881.

You can also visit our website at www.geocities.com/musaic_victoria.

Thank you Robert Shields and Susan Lee for reviving and updating our cyberpresence!



Decorating party: Will Moyer and Walter Quan, David Dubbledam supervised by Sandra Radford (decorating czarina)



Karen Wreggitt

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Swami Radha

**Susan -Rose
Slatkoff**

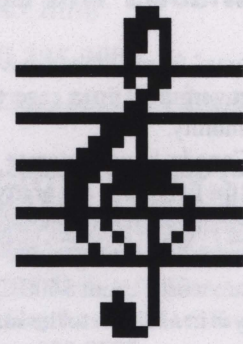
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The Polar Bears: Pearl Newfeld, Elna Macleod, Linda Fraser and Lee Porteous.



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Gay Widows Win Back Pensions

Four gay 'Widows' from Quebec, have won back their pension rights from the government in a case that could benefit many others in the community.

Quebec and Canada have separate pension plans for their citizens, although the two plans are pretty much the same. In 1998 both amended their laws covering pensions to include surviving partners in same-sex relationships.

The pensions are worth about \$400 Canadian (around £280) a month. The money is in addition to the survivor's own government pension.

Both governments, however, said they would only pay gay survivors whose partners died after the law went into effect in 1998.

Four gay men whose partners died before 1998 took Quebec to court, arguing that the benefits should be effective from the date gays and lesbians were given civil rights rights in the Canadian Constitution, 1977, reports Canadian gay site, 365Gay.com.

A Quebec Court of Appeal this week ruled that the four men had been discriminated against.

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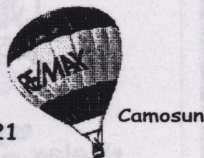
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What's Going On?

Rhino's Web Page <http://members.home.net/lavr Rhino/index.html>

ALL notices are \$15 first 25 words and .50/word thereafter. Call 385-3099.

Deadline the first of the month prior to publication. Email April bleedingrose_april@telus.net

HAPPY HIKES: Guided day hikes on southern Vancouver Island. Gourmet picnic lunches provided. Hikes customized for clients. Call 652-3818. www.happyhikes.com

TAROT AND RUNE: readings, spiritual guidance on how to face challenges in life. 10 yrs experience. \$40-50/hr sliding scale. Joy (a.k.a. Aurora) 361-4680.

FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH: 5575 West Saanich Road, welcomes all to worship together in an atmosphere of inclusiveness, acceptance, and respect on Sunday mornings at 10:30 a.m. Services of Union and other services supporting LGBT life in community are part of our Unitarian tradition. Phone 744-2665 for further information.

INTERESTED?: in forming a support group for lesbians who have a brain injury or have had to deal with a brain tumor. Partners welcome! For more information please call Brenda Vallillee: 479-9602, mornings or leave a message if no answer. Or email brenster@sprint.ca.

GETAWAY TO PORT RENFREW: Explore Botanical Beach, mile long Crescent Beach, hike the West Coast/Juan de Fuca Trails, swim in Fairy Lake, or lay by the woodstove and puruse our little library from this quaint , ocean view paradise. Equipped, three bedroom bungalow rented by the night - low rates: 388-0754

TAROT READING: at the Bleeding Rose. Private and discreet. By appointment only. Call 385-3099

PIANO LESSONS: for adult beginners. Reasonable rates. 388-9517

BODY ELECTRIC: Man to Man massage. Relax. Come to your senses. Integrative bodywork by certified masseur. 595-2098

BUYING GLBT BOOKS & MOVIES: Call 883-3099 and leave message.

SUPPORT GROUP: For Lesbian/Gay/Trans women with Disabilities meets 3rd Sat. each month. Meet new friends and reconnect with old. Comfortable place to network and offer peer support. Call C-Jaye 383-2131

ON SALT SPRING ISLAND Gays/Lesbians/Allies: meet on the third Sunday of the month, from 2 p.m.-4 p. m. at the Seniors for Seniors Building, 379 Lower Ganges Road (across from GVM). Plan social events; get involved in education, exploration & visibility projects. For more info call (250) 537-7773 or e-mail caffyn@saltspring.com.

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SERVICES, ACTIVITIES & CONTACTS

AVI: 384-2366, 1601 Blanchard St.

BJ'S Gay/Les etc. Bar: Broad Street at Johnson 388-0505

Bleeding Rose Books & Afterdark: 101/102-764 Yates St. 385-3099. Mon-Sat 10 to 7, Sun 12-5 <http://www.bleedingrose.com>

Blue Star Consignment: 3416 Quadra St., 477-0055

Dyke Dimensions Radio: CFUV Mondays, 8:00 to 9:00 p.m. FM 104.3 Cable FM 101.9

Camosun College Lesbian Collective. Alternate weeks. 370-3484

FTM (etc) Peer-run drop-in is the First Saturday of every month at AVI, 304-733 Johnson St. Transgender Resource Line at 413-3220.

Lesbian Seniors Care Society Victoria: Reva @ 250 388-4161 Mail P. O. Box 39022 James Bay Postal Outlet V8V 4X8

Mosaic: Lesbian & Gay Choir. Box 8533 Victoria, BC V8W 3S1, 360-1966

Pink Pages: Community Resource Directory Box 5231 St. B, Victoria V8R 6N4 Email pinkpage@gayvictoria.com

P-Flag: Information, 385-9462

Prime Timers Victoria: email victoria@lasvegasnv.net

Restaurants Gay/Les Owned:

Rosie's Diner 615 Johnson St.

Steam Works: Health Club for Men 582 Johnson St. 383-6623

This Way Out: CFUV 10:00 to 1:30 p.m. Mondays 101.9 or Cable 104.3

Victoria Pride Society: 385-3099 www.victoriapride.com

VYPS: Victoria Youth Pride Society (14-25) 413-3177 vyyps@writeme.com

Women's Creative Network:

www.victoria.tc.ca/community/wcn

Women's Outdoors Club: 474-8159 email Kanaice_sls@telus.net Sherry Norie s.norie@shaw.ca

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Queer Parent's Support Group

Support group for parents and parents-to-be of all types. Meetings to resume in May at various locations.

Where are the best schools? What Govt. services are available? Which day care is the most inclusive? What resources are there for adoptive and foster parents? Where can I find a known donor? What about surrogacy?

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Wednesday Coffee Chat

11am-1pm

Come chat with old friends or meet some new ones. All are welcome. a great way to meet people for those new to Victoria.

We buy used GLBT books and videos. Better yet, set up a trade account for use on books, video rental, cards, stickers, sex toys etc. Bring your stuff by or give us a call and we can come by and take a look. Also buying select collections and estates. Bleeding Rose also accepts donations.

QUEER AS FOLK

Every Monday night!
8:30 gather & mingle
9:00 previous week's episode
10:00 new episode
Bring a snack to share soda and popcorn provided by donation

Sunday Brunch

Resuming in May

Come and join us for brunch!
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Rosie's Diner

NEW ON THE SHELVES!

Love Shook My Heart 2 - Jess Wells, Ed.
(lesbian erotica)

stars inside her - Cecilia Tan
(lesbian erotic fantasy)

Tim and Pete - James Robert Baker
(gay fiction)

My Son Divine - Frances Milstead
(biography)

Afterwords - Kevin Bently, Ed.
(real sex from gay men's diaries)

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VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Bleeding Rose is expanding again. We are opening a coffee bar and expanding the bookstore. Volunteers will be needed to help get the space ready by Pride. Also, we are now taking volunteer applications for the adult shop, **Afterdark**. In addition there will also be volunteer opportunities in the main store as well as for workshops and sex-positive parties. It should also be noted that when we are able to hire full and part-time workers we will be hiring from our volunteer pool.

We have a volunteer open house coming up. For more information please call the store or e-mail bleedingrose@telus.net

NEW VIDEOS!

Got 2 B There - history of the gay party circuit

Lost & Delirious (dvd) - lesbian romance

Hedwig & the Angry Inch - gender-bending musical

Passion - true story of an s/m triangle

Legally Blonde - comedy with a message

Sugar & Spice - saucy comedy

Queer as Folk - the first season on dvd