

GAZETTE

No Charge

5/88

**HALIFAX
PRIDE**

88

2 Letters



MEN OF THE PINK TRIANGLE Alan Stewart

The Men of the Pink Triangle is the title of a book by Heinz Heger. In it he describes his experiences and those of other gay men who were prisoners and victims of Hitler's Holocaust.

Today's world is well versed in Nazi atrocities and especially the "final solution" to the Jewish problem. Approximately 6 million Jews died in the concentration and extermination camps. Few are aware that the "master race's" final solution also extended to other undesirables. Did you know that approximately 250,000 gay men died at the hands of the SS for no other reason than their sexual orientation? This figure does not include gays who were Jewish, gypsies, Jehovah's Witnesses, et al.

During Gay Pride Week we must not only think of the revolution that started at the Stonewall Inn in New York, but also remember the

sacrifices, atrocities, and murders from the past to the present. Let us remember those gays who have been murdered and beaten here in Nova Scotia. Let us remember the young gay man thrown off a bridge to his death in Maine. Let us remember Harvey Milk. They, and others, and ourselves are Men of the Pink Triangle.

Prisoners in the Nazi concentration and extermination camps wore coloured cloth triangles on their uniforms to designate their offence or origin. The triangle was about 5 cm across with the point down and was worn on the left breast of the jacket and the outside right pant leg. The pink triangle tended to be 2 to 3 cm larger than the other colours so that they could be more easily seen from a distance. The various coloured triangles were as follows:

yellow for Jews
red for politicals
green for criminals
pink for gay men
black for anti-socials (including

lesbians)
purple for Jehovah's Witnesses
blue for emigrants, and
brown for gypsies.

Jews, gay men, and gypsies were considered to be the scum of society and were the bottom of the prison pecking order. Of these three, gay men were the lowest of the low.

We have a need to be aware of our history. Make this book this year's project. Read and remember.

The GAEZETTE is published monthly by the Gay Alliance for Equality (G.A.E.). The purpose of the newsletter is to keep you informed about activities and issues of interest to G.A.E. and the Gay and Lesbian community.

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Submissions may be deposited in the drop box located at Rumours, or mailed to:

GAEZETTE
Box 7126
Halifax North, Nova Scotia
B3K 5J5

...in the washroom

Two Sides Of The Coin Wayne T.

On May 21, I was shopping for a birthday gift at the Delta Barrington shops, and I was followed to the washroom by two security guards.

It was intimidating! One stood outside the washroom, and the other watched my reflection via the mirror. They assumed I was there to cruise men for washroom

sex.

Can you believe it? And I'm not even a t-room queen!

Let me tell you: ones who practice sleazy things in the can should take it elsewhere. Would you go so far as to have sex in a public place??

If you say yes, you create problems for innocent people and you are asking to be arrested or hassled by establishments.



Commentary

3

Should We become polysexual ferrets?

Contrary to what me and my (gay) peers thought in '75, sexual tastes can change. Yes, we still have our preferences, obsessions and pet fantasies. Some people still are stuck in 1975, for better or worse.

Examples? Well I appreciate black womyn much more than I ever did (Actually, I'm just more aware of it.) I find men of colour more interesting, whereas in the past they never did anything for me. I also appreciate womyn in general more now at thirty-seven than I did at twenty-four.

Gadzooks, has the ed gone bi or hetero?! No, he's just growing up. I must add that I'm finding men past forty to be quite attractive if they've kept themselves in good shape. While men in their twenties still look good to me, their obvious youth detracts from their desirability. I didn't know that crow's feet could be sexy. Yes, you can be sexy past forty-five, at least to ageing romantics like me.

It seems nowhere are youth and narrow sexual tastes more emphasized than in gay culture. It seems, before turning thirty, many of us proudly brainwash ourselves, and all around, about the rightness of our own particular tastes and the horrors of middle age. Some do so to the edge of their graves. Beyond 2nd Debut.

This is not to say that we will all be or should become polysexual ferrets. Some will undoubtedly try. Good luck. Couldn't we just broaden our outlooks more the way we hope heterosexuals could come to appreciate us? The key to finding your own level is to be spontaneous. Don't look for reasons

to eliminate people as potential lovers. The only way you get to love certain kinds of people is to get to know them.

Why does sex have to be the sole reason for getting to know people? This do or die philosophy is too high pressure to work. It's counterproductive. You end up intimidating and driving people away. Couldn't we also learn to give and receive the answer "no" more graciously?

The etiquette of sexual courtship in these post-AIDS days is tense and complex. All the rules seem to be changing about the give and take of attraction. Haven't you noticed that the outgoing friendliest people have the best luck? They make it easier for us to approach them. We would do well to follow their

Why does sex have to be the sole reason for knowing someone?

example. Getting picked up is wonderful and flattering. It's not the ultimate standard by which your human worth is judged.

Getting that special one's attention and going home with them will always be an emotionally loaded situation. Why clutter it up and booby trap it with games, withdrawal, rudeness or perversity? Life's too short. Maybe if the whole game were less tense and not so important, we could all be winners. Easy to say. It's worth the effort though. A good smile and a little consideration (and stubbornness) can get you a long way. Let's play to all be winners.

The New Nova Scotia PWA Coalition



The Nova Scotia PWA Coalition is a nonprofit organization established in response to the need to provide an integrated support network for PWAs including support programmes and services and educational information.

The objectives of the Coalition are:

- 1) To provide support programmes and services.
- 2) To provide coordination of other health and community groups, educators and social service agencies dealing with PWAs.
- 3) To provide and opportunity for PWAs to be actively involved with the issues surrounding AIDS.
- 4) To be an information and educational resource for PWAs.

Membership in the Coalition is open to all interested individuals and opportunities exist to become active in volunteer work related to support services and programmes, education and fundraising.

The terms "Person With AIDS" and the initials "PWA" are used in the broad sense to include all persons with a positive antibody test, regardless of their present health status. We prefer these terms over such expressions as "AIDS patients" or "victims of AIDS." Not all PWAs are patients, in the sense of being hospitalized or physically disabled. We do not choose to see ourselves as victims, with that term's connotations of powerlessness and defeat.

A MESSAGE FROM PEOPLE WITH AIDS

We Know It's A Shock

Having Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) or AIDS Related Complex (ARC) isn't easy for anyone to cope with, but life does go on and so will yours. Some Persons With AIDS and

Persons With AIDS Related Complex find that they can enjoy and even improve on the quality of life. It could be the same with you!

Keep Us In Mind

Even if you don't want to see anyone right now, and that is quite understandable, please keep us in mind. We exist as a mutual support group who are willing to help and who all share your diagnosis. We are not professional counsellors but feel that sharing our experiences and providing information can be very helpful to others.

We strongly believe in life extension through group activities. It can be comforting to know that there are people to talk to who really do understand.

Having AIDS or ARC isn't easy to cope with.

The Element Of Hope

As a group we feel we have control over our lives. We refuse to play the "victim" game and we take charge of our lives.

Hope and positive thinking are important elements of our group and our survival.

Please know that you are always welcome. We hold support meetings every second Tuesday.

Our address is:

N.S. PWA Coalition
Box 1374 N
Halifax, N.S.
B3K 5H7

Even
if
you
don't
want
to
see
anyone
right
now
keep
us
in
mind

The AIDS Vigil

It was a memorable evening curiously mixing joy and sadness. Happy to feel so unified in prescence and purpose. We were sad because we were there to remember those who died and are stricken with AIDS. We were keeping the vigil, the second, annual vigil to draw attention to the scourge of AIDS.

It was a raw damp evening. Foggy, windy, chilly. People filtered into St. George's Anglican church on Brunswick Street. What started as a trickle became a flow. Four hundred and fifty Vigil Programmes were handed out.

It was, at first, a time of sharp contrasts. The venerable old round church was infested with cables, electrical gear and TV cameras. There were married couples, old men and women, straights, gays, lesbians, and children. There were lots of familiar faces and many more new ones. The tone was grave but not morbid. There was a warm quiet unity among us. We were all caring people together, united in a cause.

Every word held a poignant meaning.

Slowly the church filled. Dr. William Hart, the president of the Metro Area Committee on AIDS spoke. He spoke about life being victorious in the face of overwhelming odds. Prayers were said and hymns were sung. Every reading, every word held a poignant meaning in the light of the battle with AIDS. Some had to work very hard to keep a positive mindset.

Robin read some of his touching poems about endurance and remembrance. Bob Petite, who organized the Vigil, gave a deft introduction for Svend Robinson that was marked by brevity and vigour.

Svend Robinson spoke with skill and conviction, his voice clear and strong. There was a direct, sincere personal quality to his speaking.

He gave an overview of the AIDS crisis, quoting statistics and praised the hard work of groups and individuals who stand up against AIDS. He gave examples of outright prejudice by politicians against gays and attempts to raise money to fight AIDS. He bitterly contrasted the billions to be spent on nuclear subs, with the miniscule amounts set aside to help AIDS sufferers and the search for a cure.

Most importantly he attacked homophobia. He clearly showed the no-win situation lesbians and gays are in when their rights have no constitutional protection. He ended by calling on all people of all parties to band together to put a stop to AIDS.

After a prayer a candle was lit. The flame was passed from person to person in the darkened church. Gradually the winking lights appeared from the front to the back of the church. The light was spread to the upper gallery until the whole building was lit with a warm glow.

When the candles were lit, people spoke the names of friends killed by AIDS. Each name dropped like an emotional bombshell. As the last hymn, "Joyful, Joyful" was sung we all slowly filed out of the church.

The raw damp fog demanded umbrellas and overcoats. But nothing could dampen our quiet,

determined enthusiasm. We carried our burning candles to the Grand Parade in front of City Hall. People sang and laughed and chatted along the way. People in cars and pedestrians peered curiously at us as we walked, carrying lit candles, through the streets, complete with a police escort before and behind.

The mood was still high and positive at the Grand Parade despite the damp and cold. Alexa McDonough and Mary Clancy spoke supporting lesbian and gay rights and the fight against AIDS.

After the impromptu speakers and thank yous, most people dispersed. A few groups stayed in happy clusters exchanging hugs and introductions and greetings. We all went home with lots to think about and fired with optimism by this show of unity.

CKDU 97.5 FM

THE WORD IS OUT!

"THE WORD IS OUT" IS METRO'S LESBIAN AND GAY RADIO NEWS PROGRAMME. IT CAN BE HEARD EVERY MONDAY EVENING AT 5:45 ON CKDU 97.5 P.M.

VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED TO ASSIST WITH PRODUCTION. NO EXPERIENCE REQUIRED. INTERESTED? LEAVE YOUR NAME AND NUMBER WITH THE COAT-CHECK AT "RUMOURS."

Out On The Town

Film

The Lonely Passion Of Judith Hearne. (Wormwood, June 24-30, 7:00 & 9:30) Dramatization of Brian Moore's novel, stars Maggie Smith, Bob Hoskins.

Endgame In Paris: The Most Dangerous Spy; Two Episodes From the Life of Hubert Aquin (NFB Theatre, June 24, 7:00 & 9:30, free) An evening of spy films from Veronika Soul, Donald Brittain and Jaques Godbout.

The Dead. (Wormwood, July 1-7, 7:00 & 9:15) John Houston's last film and probably his best. A faithful rendering of James Joyce's short story.

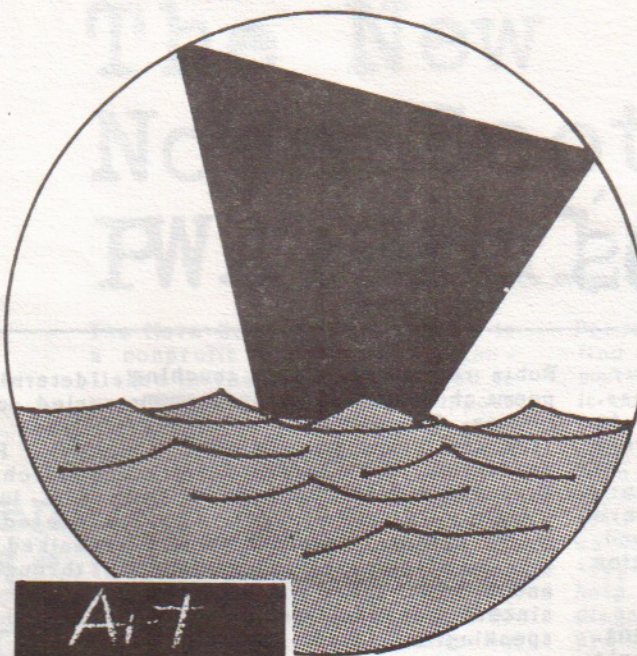
The Unbearable 'Lightness of Being. (Wormwood, July 8-14, 7:00 & 9:15) Based on Milan Kundera's curiously intellectual novel about love, stars Daniel Day Lewis (My Beautiful Laundrette, Room With A View.)

Stage

Dark Night Theatre. Cunard St. Theatre every Monday, 7:30pm. The NS Drama League invites writers, directors, and actors to do dramatic readings of original plays by Nova Scotian and Canadian playwrights.

The Great Canadian Theatre Festival. July 4-10. Featuring theatre groups from across Canada, the U.S., Portugal, Russia, Ireland, Italy, and others. All performances at either Neptune or Cunard St. Theatre.

Theatresports. Pub Flamingo, June 21, tickets \$3. Zany improv comedy.



Art

Piety and Prints. Dalhousie Art Gallery, 6101 University Ave, to June 26. Baroque engravings by artists of France and Netherlands, 1560-1680.

Infermental VI. Centre for Art Tapes, opens June 8, 8:00pm. The world's first magazine on videotape.

Where Will She Sift Her Ashes. Anna Leonowens

Gallery, NSCAD 1891 Granville St. June 21-25. Video installation by Carol Redmond.

The Diary Exhibition. Anna Leonowens Gallery, to July 2. Curated by Marlene Creates.

Weekend Warriors, photographs by Bruce Barr. National Film Board Photo Gallery, into July. 1571 Argyle St.

Music

Open Mike Nights. (Pub Flamingo, every Monday, free) Hosted by Mark MacMillan of The Heartbeats. Any local and all talent.

John Prine. (Cohn, June 23, 8:00pm, tickets \$16.50)

The Tragically Hip. (Pub Flamingo, June 23-25, tickets \$4 Thurs, \$6 Fri-Sat) straight ahead unadulterated rock'n roll.

The Floorboards. (Pub Flamingo, June 25 matinee, free) Horn-fired R&B.

Spirit Of The West (Pub Flamingo, June 29-July

2, tickets \$5 Wed-Thurs, \$6 Fri-Sat) This Vancouver-based group captures the essence of West Coast music: the message of folk and the energy of rock.

Jonathon T. Davis Band (Pub Flamingo, July 2 matinee, free) R&B

Larry Coryell (Cohn, June 30, 8:00pm, tickets \$15 & \$14) One of the premier jazz guitarists.

Terrence Simien (Pub Flamingo, July 27-28, tickets \$8) One of the most explosive Zydeco bands ever to emerge from the Louisiana bayou.

Tuesday June 21

SEMINAR: Homosexuality: Who? Rumours, downstairs. Pan Bob Petite, sponsored by 7-10pm at Rumours.

Saturday June 2

WORKSHOPS:

10:00am Artificial Insemination lesbians: is it legal? Is it safe? Is it available? Frederickson.

11:30am Why It's Important Women's Nights. Discussion welcome.

2:00pm Legalities of Lesbian Gay Couples. An explanation of some of the legal issues that affect same-sex couples, wills, medical consent. Derrick.

3:30pm Gay Fathers, Lesbian Mothers. A discussion of that affect lesbian and gay parents. Intended to provide initial opportunity for and gay men who are parents are considering parenthood gather in an atmosphere of mutual support.

(All workshops held in the Rumours)

BOOK TABLE: a selection of books on gay and lesbian interest from Herring Co-op Books, all day lobby of Rumours.

Mon

Tue

The Word Is Out Each Monday at 5:45 on CKDU-FM 97.5. News, events and issues of interest to gays and lesbians in Metro.

Dartmouth Gay Alcoholics Anonymous, each Monday 8:30pm, St. Peter's Church Hall on Maple St.

WOMEN'S DANCE: 9pm Veith House, \$4 waged, \$2 unwaged. Sponsored by Pandora.

Sunday June 26

FILMS: Wormwood, 2-4pm.

"On Guard" (lesbian activism)

"Pink Triangle" (development of the lesbian/gay political movement)

VESPERS: St. John's United Church, 8-9pm, refreshments 9-10pm. Father Henry, sponsored by AFFIRM.

Monday June 27

THE WORD IS OUT: CKDU-FM 97.5 on your dial at 5:45pm.

FUCK AWARE PARTY: safer sex workshop 7:30-9:30 at Rumours. Sponsored by the Metro Area Committee on AIDS.

SIGN MAKING (for Friday's march): 6:30pm 2096 Gottingen St., at the back entrance.

Tuesday June 28

SEMINAR: Homosexuals: what does the bible really say? Martin Rumscheidt & Neil MacDonald, sponsored by AFFIRM.

OUT FROM WITHIN: Lesbian Art Show, OtherArt, Gottingen St. Opens Tuesday morning, closes Saturday afternoon.

Wednesday June 29

SPEAK EASY: readings by gay and lesbian writers. 8-10pm Rumours.

Thursday June 30

SOFTBALL GAME: Women vs men, 7pm at the Common. Bring your glove and gear or bring your voice and cheer.

Friday July 1

MARCH: Out of the Closet and into the Human Rights Act. Meet at the Common, corner of Quinpool & North Park St., 4:30pm

FIREWORKS: dusk, compliments of the government.

Monday July 4

VARIETY SHOW: Rumours Celebration!! 10:00pm.

Pride Week

es	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun
	<p>Gay and Lesbian Association Nova Scotia, first and third Wednesday of each month, 7:30pm, at Rumours.</p> <p>Atlantic Gays and Lesbians in Healthcare and Human Services, meets the second Wednesday of every month. For details call Ken at 453-4320.</p>	<p>Gay Alcoholics Anonymous, each Thursday at 8:30pm, Commons Field House. Call 422-5875 for more information.</p>			<p>SPARROW, an interdenominational Christian group. Each Sunday, 8pm, St. John United Church, corner of Wilow & Windsor St.</p> <p>Seventh Day Adventist Kinship Group. Contact Box 408, Stn C., Toronto, Ont. M6J 3P5</p>

The Christian Triangle

8

May has been a very busy month. Spring arriving, new house projects starting, and the sudden, unexpected death of my lover's mother meant I didn't get an article completed for the Gazette deadline. So, in place of my thoughts, I'll reprint a very good article I came across in "SCA KINSHIP Connection" (a publication of Seventh-day Adventist Gay Men and Lesbians and Their Friends). Kinship has recently found its way to Halifax to join the other Christian groups of Sparrow and Affirm. If anyone wishes more info regarding Kinship please feel free to get in contact with me via:

SPARROW

P.O. Box 673, Station "M"

Halifax, N.S. B3J 2T3

and I'll pass it on to those who know. IN the mean time, read on. Enjoy.

Once upon a time, very long ago and far away, there was a tiny village where the villagers, for reasons one can only speculate upon, had come to the conclusion that it was a very evil thing for a person to wear (and some felt even to NEED to wear) eyeglasses.

Many of the more religious among the villagers pointed out that it was contrary to nature to wear those ugly things. Obviously God had originally intended for people to see with only their eyes. And furthermore, they reasoned, scripture was full of scathing passages referring to those who would not see. It was perfectly clear to them that these people were openly practicing sin by putting on their eyeglasses, and sin was sin and could not be condoned! Others agreed to a point, but felt it was important to make the distinction between the inability to see clearly and the actual wearing of eyeglasses. They firmly believed that if a vision-impaired person bore his burden patiently and without glasses, there was no sin. The sin was in the putting on of eyeglasses.

Then there were others who did not care to discuss why, when, where or how; they just knew in their heart of hearts that it was wrong, and their biggest fear, particularly as parents,

was that their vulnerable children being exposed to such behaviour at a tender age, would think it acceptable, and might wish to wear eyeglasses themselves.

At any rate, it was an extremely emotional issue, and especially threatening for some who suspected they were not able to see as they should. So, as man is prone to do, they persecuted even harder what they were afraid of in themselves. Names like "old four eyes" abounded.

Naturally among those poor unfortunates who found themselves with failing eyesight, there was much anguish. At the extreme there were some for whom the prospect of being totally ostracized by their community was too painful to face and, in utter despair, they took their own lives. Others, perhaps blessed with a stronger will to survive, but still fearful, became more resourceful. Sneaking under the cover of darkness to the sleazy little optical center across the tracks, they associated with others of their kind and purchased glasses, which they used only in utmost secrecy. And, if the truth were known, several of the village's most respected leaders and pillars of the community wore contact lenses, which could only be detected at extremely close range by those trained to discover them.

The psychological and emotional damage done to those in the community with dimmed eyesight was phenomenal. Ironically, when some psychologists and religious leaders closely studied the personalities of those with glasses they believed that the very damage their own society had caused was merely another symptom of the original "problem".

As the condition was studied there arose an interest among some in helping to rehabilitate those stricken with it.

Consequently, some people with vision problems were rushed off by their families to Vision Psychologists where they spent hours discussing the fact that their parents had not provided enough light for them to read by when they were children. Needless to say, the parents of

these counselees experienced tremendous guilt, which often led to more business for the counselors.

One organization which sprang up was called Eyeglass Anonymous. Its basic premise was, if a person would just admit that he could not see without glasses, then, with the help of God and others like himself, he could go through the fourteen basic steps and at the end of the process he would be able to see clearly. It was simply a matter of choice. E.A. boasted a success rate of about 30%, but it was hard to know who was still secretly using glasses in private.

The very existence of this group made many of those who wore glasses feel even more hopeless. Obviously, if it was simply a matter of choice then it was their own fault if they weren't cured. This caused them untold guilt and grief.

There was a small group, however, made up of both sighted and vision-impaired people who began to proclaim that needing and wearing eyeglasses was not sinful. They claimed that they, too, believed God had not originally intended for people to have to wear glasses, but that when people did need them it was as a result of sin, and not a sin itself. They believed that the villagers had erroneously interpreted the scriptures in using them to condemn those whose eyesight was impaired. Many of those who actually wore glasses told of their own experiences, of either having been born with impaired vision, or having developed it so young that there had been no conscious choice involved at all. They wanted others like themselves to know they were not perverted simply because they could not see well, and that they had as much right to see, with the aid of glasses, as those who could see without them. And, most of all, they wanted it to be known that God accepted vision-impaired people just the way they were, and He didn't mind at all if they wore glasses to help.

Needless to say, many sighted people laughed derisively at all of this. Some even got angry and made snide remarks about the vision of the sighted people who were supporting those with glasses.

All in all it makes one wonder just who among the villagers was having the real difficulty seeing clearly.

AFFIRM

Alan Stewart

Affirm is a national association of gay men and lesbian women and their friends within the United Church of Canada. The local branch of Affirm here in Halifax was searching for a way in which the rest of the gay community could join with us in witness of and solidarity in our struggle for liberty and human rights. We decided to sponsor the Gay Pride Week Vesper.

This Vesper will be interdenom-
inational. We will go light on
the liturgy so that those of

other religions or of no religion at all should feel comfortable in joining with us in this display of unity and concern.

The Rev'd Henry Capstick, a Roman Catholic priest and a gay activist, will deliver the homily. He has chosen as his text St. John's references to love and St. Paul's words on love from his first letter to the Corinthians. Love is a challenge to all people. For those of us who are a persecuted minority, it is especially difficult for us to love our persecutors.

The choir will be direct by Prof. Vernon Ellis with Alan Fraser at the organ. Anyone who would like to be a member of the choir should contact Terry Parker at 826-7526.

Gay Pride Week Vesper will be held on Sunday, 26th of June at 8 pm in St. John's United church on Windsor St., between Willow and North, in Halifax. All gays are welcome and are encouraged to bring their family and friends. refreshments and conversation in the church hall after the service.

Pride Week Vespers

Alan Stewart

In this year of controversy and debate with the United Church about homosexuals and their role in the church, Affirm decided that it was an appropriate time to have the gay community face up to its own myths and prejudice and Christianity. Gay men and lesbian women have for many centuries been the object of the Church's scorn, persecution and execution. Thus it is only natural that gays should at least be resentful and alienated from a religion that professes love and brotherhood for all people.

The teachings and life of Jesus do speak of love and brotherhood. So what happened? Why did the Church turn its back on homosexuals? Did the post ancient Church misinterpret the scriptures -- both Jewish and Christian?

On Tuesday, 28th June, the Rev. Dr. Martin Rumschiet, of the Atlantic School of Theology and the Rev. Neil MacDonald of St. John's United Church will visit with us in the lower meeting room at Rumours. These two men who are friends of the gay community and strong advocates of gay rights will help us explore scriptural references about homosexuality and show us where and why many have erred in their use of the Bible in condemning us.

On thursday, 21st June, also in the lower meeting room at Rumours, Dr. Pamela Brown and Rev. Bob Pettit will discuss with us the medical, psychological and human characteristics of homosexuality.

Dr. Brown is a Halifax physicians and ex counsellor. She was also a member of the National Committee that wrote the report "Sexual Orientation, Life Styles, and Ministry" for the United Church. Pam

has also been a good friend of the gay community and a strong advocate for gay human rights. Father Bob Petit, an Anglican priest and gay activist, hardly needs an introduction to most gays in the Halifax area.

Both of these seminars offer a challenge to open up to discussion. All are welcome to attend and be sure to invite your family and friends. Refreshments will follow.

gayline
423-7129
Thurs - Sat
730 - 10pm

From the Net...

10

Newsgroups: soc.motss
Subject: Are Activists 'Losers'?
Date: 18 May 88 00:18:52 GMT

I just got a chuckle out of this article, having only recently (since about October) leaned in the direction of becoming an activist myself. It appeared in the 4 May "Weekly News" from Miami:

OUR TIME: Are Activists 'Losers?' by Tom Bradshaw

Just when I think I am stuck for a subject for this column, unforeseen events always unfold to bail me out. Recently, I found myself in a casual debate with an older, traditional gay male -- very Republican, very conservative and very much against what he termed "misguided, dogooder faggots who are losers in their own lives and cover it up by supporting every left-wing cause that is available."

If you are guessing at this point, I am home in the Victoria Park section of Fort Lauderdale, you are right on both counts. But, if you are also guessing that I begrudge either one of these accomplishments, I certainly do not. I begrudge only that he refuses to utilize them to aid his brothers and sisters. [as an ex-Fort Lauderdale resident, I recall how impossible it was to find gay meeting places--rkb] Yes; he has a right not to do so if he chooses. But, whether he is right in not doing so is another matter--especially since he has consistently voted for many of the enemies of gay and lesbian rights and isn't bashful about saying so.

"I vote with my pocketbook," he told me tartly, "and so do most people, if they are honest. I am a businessman and I got where I am by making the most of my opportunities. Being gay has never been an obstacle because the fact is that, in business, the people you deal with don't give

a shit one way or the other. Ideology is for losers."

Oops, there was that word again -- "losers." Well, now I said to myself, as this champion of rugged individualism rattled on: "Here is a subject worth exploring. This man is saying that I am a loser and that my fellow activists are losers, too. Very interesting."

I confess I didn't help matters much when, at the peak of his lecture on the virtues of closeted conservatism, he accused me and my activist brothers and sisters of being "two-faced" on the issue of quarantine for HIV-positive individuals. Being the student of American political history that I am, and being as honest about my own physical

If I had another face, do you think I would wear this one?

appearance as the circumstances demanded, I responded with the same words Lincoln directed at Douglas during one of their debates: "If I had another face, do you think I would wear this one?"

My antagonist paused in mid-drink, mouth open for a second, while a couple of other guys standing near me looked startled. Then the same man who had spent much of the evening denouncing me actually smiled and said: "If I could wear your face, I would do it in a second. But the fact that you regard yourself as unattractive proves my point. I think ... you obviously see yourself as a loser or you wouldn't have responded the way you did. You were trying to be clever, but, as is char-

acteristic of most people with your philosophy, you were too smart for your own good. Now, if you will excuse me ..." He finished his drink and moved on.

I was tempted to fire a parting shot as he walked away; namely, that--if he would be so willing to trade faces with me--what did that say about his own self-esteem? But I let it go. While I kicked myself mentally for being suckered into such a discussion in a bar setting in the first place -- when I should know better by now -- the incident did leave me very thoughtful. Thoughtful enough to explore it further on the phone with a friend of mine-- after I got home.

"I think the man is an ignorant asshole," my friend concluded about my adversary in the bar, "who is obviously very unhappy and lonely, too. But how could you possibly even suggest that you are not good looking?"

"Wait a minute," I protested, "my looks aren't the issue here. I am talking about the claim that activists are losers. Now, you and I have both heard this before, and we have read it often enough, too. Why do so many people seem to think that way? Would you get involved with an activist--socially, I mean?"

"Romantically, you mean," my buddy chuckled. "Besides, I am one, remember?"

He hesitated for a second, and then said: "I admit that I honestly don't know. ... Actually, I can't think of any I know that turn me on ... except you."

"Thanks," I said, "but we settled all of that, I do believe."

"I know," he sighed forlornly.

"Knock it off," I laughed. "I am serious, damn it. Is that one of the reasons we seem to have trouble getting support down

here ... because of the personal image we have in the community? I hate to say it, but that guy may be right."

"What? That we are losers? I can't believe that you, of all people, would even consider ..."

"I am not saying we are losers," I cut in. "I am saying we are perceived that way. It is the perception that guides people's actions, not the reality. How many times do I have to tell you that?"

More silence. "All right," he finally said. "We are perceived as losers. What do we do about it?"

"I don't know," I admitted. "... Yet. I have to sort it out in my own mind, first."

"Starting with yourself is a good idea," he said. "If you think you are a loser then you are one."

"Agreed," I responded. "But a loser in what sense? If we are talking about great material gains or happy romantic relationships, I guess maybe I am. But, on the other hand, I reject the elitist notion that I am an activist because I have failed in these two categories or that I wouldn't be one if I were more successful in my private life. ... If you believe in something, then you should fight for it, regardless of your economic circumstances or your bedroom scorecard. And I think most of us do." ...

"You just said you were a failure," he went on. "That bothers me."

"... I am about to become a 38-year-old middle-management media executive who doesn't drive a new car, who doesn't own a home, and who-- with very rare and diminishing exceptions-- can't attract anyone he is attracted to. In fact, if there is one thing I am a whooping success at, it is the fine art of scaring them away. Of course,

I am getting older, too, so it figures to get worse."

More silence, then this: "So you think you are a loser after all."

"No, I don't," I insisted. "I am just being honest about my own ... pardon the expression ... shortcomings. I also know what my strengths are. Chief among them are that I am a genuinely caring person, and I have intellectual and verbal communications skills which many people do not have. The fact that I have been able to utilize these skills with some effectiveness towards the goal of making this a more just society is something I am very proud of. So, no, I

**If you think
you are a
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don't think I am a loser. Anyway, what right do I have to complain when so many of my brothers are sick and dying? I am many things, but I don't think selfish is one of them."

"Do you think things will ever change for you?"

"In what way?"

"You know, more money, a happy love life."

"I am not exactly destitute," I laughed. "It is just that I have chosen a profession that, in this market, doesn't pay as well as it does up north; that is all. It is improving, though, so

I will be doing better as time goes on. As for my love life ... well, the less said about that, the better."

"You know what your problem is?" my friend asked in that needling tone of voice that had become all too familiar over the years. "You go for those young preppies and would-be yuppies. And they like a lot of muscles, a dark moustache, plenty of money, hot cars, fancy homes and all that materialistic shit your friend in the bar likes." [Sigh. I had the money, car, and home when I lived in Lauderdale. Fat lot of good it did me--rkb]

"I tried the moustache; remember?" I laughed. "Besides, they all can't be that way. Somewhere out there, there has to be one who will love me just as I am. And, if you believe that, there is this great piece of real estate near the Everglades that ..."

"Tom," my friend cut in, "I have just one question for you, and then I will let you go because I want to get some sleep."

"What?" I asked, sensing that the needle was on its way, again.

"Will you marry me?"

I howled and, with the most utter severity that I could muster, said "Good night," and hung up the phone.
---[End of TWN article]---

That reminds me of last night, when I dropped off my good friend Tim. As he opened the car door, I asked him if he wanted to help out with the Steve Holt campaign. He said "Good night. See you September 16th!" (The election is to be held on 15 September.)

I must say that The Weekly News has become a much better, more serious newspaper than the bar rag I can recall from years past. (They still have those wonderful trashy bar ads and personals, of course...)

enjoy,
-rich
"You want me to put that ... where???"

11

Horatio Beeswanger On Assignment

Interviewing: The Man In The Closet

Horratio: Mr. Man in the Closet, I'll begin with a question that has been eating away at my innards for quite some time. Why do you live in a closet? It must be very cramped.

Man in Closet: Well, Mr. Beeswanger..., may I call you Horrario?

H: Sure! May I call you MC?

MC: No. The truth of the matter is, and this may surprise some people, I don't live in an "actual" closet.

H: Then why is everyone saying that you are?

MC: They must be getting confused with the fact that I live in a very large flat consisting of several closets, rather than just one small closet.

H: I see. Is it true that you keep your stereo, your bed, and your fridge all in separate closets?

MC: Yes, it's true. Do you have a problem with that?

H: Hey, I'm supposed to ask the questions here MC!

MC: I'll stop asking questions if you stop calling me MC!

H: OK! OK! Now, why do you keep your fridge in a closet?

MC: What! Do you want me to starve?

H: Of course not! Stop being such an oversensitive closet case!

MC: Sorry, Horrario.

H: That's OK. So how long do you plan on remaining in this place of many closets?

MC: Until Svend Robinson gets elected Prime Minister.

H: Oh, I see. What do you tell your mother when she asks when you are getting married?

MC: I tell her I haven't enough closet space for a wife.

H: What do you tell your friends and co-workers?

MC: I tell them lies.

H: Why?

MC: It's wrong to be gay isn't it? So I hide it.

H: Why is it wrong to be gay?

MC: Everybody says it's wrong.

H: Who is everybody? How many gays have you talked to that have said it was wrong? You've been in the closet so long I doubt that you've even talked to another gay. Why don't you tell "everybody" to go to HELL and be yourself?

MC: I'm afraid.

H: What are you afraid of more, what everybody else thinks, or of being alone and miserable for the rest of your life?

MC: I'll be alone and miserable anyway once everybody finds out and rejects me.

H: BULLSHIT! Your true friends will remain your friends. The gay community will accept you and you'll make new friends within it.

MC: Really?

H: Yes really. Just be careful around the 'sluts,' leave them to experts such as myself.

MC: Oh Horrario, you're wonderful!

H: Hey! Get your hands off my @#%*&*!!

MC: I'm coming out, Horrario, right now!

H: Shit! I did it again and created another maniac!

MC: ... Horrario!! Come out of that closet! Right now!!

Next issue: "Gay Lifestyle, Is There Such A Thing?"

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