

FIRST SWEDISH GAY WEDDINGS SET

(Outlines) Sweden - Sweden's law legalizing gay marriage went into effect Jan. 1 and gays and lesbians lined up at City Hall doors.

The first couple scheduled to marry was Hans Jonsson, 43, and Sven-Olov Jansson, 58, who live in the far northern town of Ostersund. They made plans for Jan. 2. Stockholm activists celebrated Jan. 5 at City Hall along with eight couples who tied the knot that day.

Sweden's parliament legalized gay and lesbian marriage June 7 by a vote of 171 to 141 with 5 abstentions and 32 absences. At the time, Prime Minister Carl Bildt stated: "We accept homosexual love as equivalent to heterosexual. Love is an important force to personal as well as social development, and should therefore not be denied."

As in Denmark and Norway - the other nations that allow gays to marry - the Swedish law grants gay spouses all rights of marriage except access to adoption, artificial insemination, in-vitro fertilization, and church weddings. In all three nations, one partner must be a citizen living in his/her home country. Denmark legalized gay marriage in 1989 and Norway in 1993. More than 3,000 gay couples have wed in Denmark.

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But Wait, There's More...

- Loreena McKennitt sings HomoErotica
- Back to the Land, Part II
- Choice in the Cross-hairs

APEX

Vol. 4, No. 1

♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥

February 1995

BACK TO THE FUTURE:

Roots of Queer Activism and Journalism in Maine

An Interview by Annette Dragon

This is the story of three members of the Maine Gay Task Force and the Newsletter they published 20 years ago. The first issue came out in October 1974 and the last one in April 1980. For six years it chronicled the beginnings of the Queer movement in Maine. Susan Henderson, Stan Fortuna, and Peter Prizer - all original activists and writers - provided APEX with their recollections of the times and the publication.

Which Came First?...

AD: I originally intended to ask you all to talk just about the Newsletter. After reading every blessed issue I realized that the Task Force and Newsletter were inseparable - one breathed life to the other. I need a short history of how the Maine Gay Task Force began.

Stan: The Gay student group The Wilde-Stein Club began at the University of Maine in Orono in September of '73. The big controversy started when Reverend Bubar of the Christian Civic League noticed an ad for a Stein-sponsored gay dance in the newspaper. He objected to the university's recognition of the group. When Wilde-Stein asked to use university facilities for a regional Gay Conference, pressure on the university escalated. Religious groups warned that Maine would become "a mecca for homosexuals." The University Board of Trustees granted permission and Symposium I was scheduled for April of 1974.

Susan: The U of M stood by us. The anti's threatened to lobby the legislature to cut off university funding. The University said "we'll take you to court." It took some moral courage for the University of Maine. In those days homosexuality was something you didn't even mention in polite society or establishment press. That was one of the things we did - get the press to talk about gay people in Maine. The movement was an enlightenment for a lot of us.

Stan: This became a real hot item in the press. National papers picked it up. Steve Bull from Wilde-Stein was interviewed on the *To-day Show*, and the *Bangor Daily*



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Vol. 3, No. 6, June 1976

The Collective

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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Phoenix Press is a collectively run organization whose purpose is to build and empower our community by providing positive lesbian/gay images. We will be a forum for the exchange of ideas through debate and discussion. The collective will work to reflect the political and social diversity of our community.

SUBMISSIONS

All submissions should be typed and double-spaced if at all possible. Please include your name and phone number in case we have any questions. Your name will be withheld at your request, but any material received without a contact name or number will not be published. If your submission has appeared or will appear in any other publication, we must be notified. Submissions *must* be received by the 20th of each month. Thank you for your contributions.

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LETTERS . . .

An Open Letter

Dear Reader,

In my first term as a State Legislator six years ago, I made an effort to meet and come out to as many legislators as I could. I spoke to them, one at a time when possible, about the need for civil rights for gay men and lesbians in Maine. Several of my fellow legislators had the following sorts of reactions at first:

"You're the first one I've ever met."

"I don't have any in my district. That's a Portland issue."

"I support civil rights, of course, but I don't believe there is a real problem with discrimination against gays in Maine."

After a few years, I found almost no legislators making such statements. They had heard from their gay and lesbian constituents, friends and relatives. They knew better. Many long term legislators, however, have not returned to the State House for the current session.

This year 46% of the 186 members of the Legislature are newly elected. Who knows what they have been told or may believe about the anti-discrimination bill, about the anti-gay referendum, about the gay, lesbian, bi-sexual and transgender community? We need to make sure that this year all legislators have accurate information, so they know the error of the above views; so they are informed about the reality of discrimination in Maine.

As a lawyer, as a lesbian, as a citizen, I think that passage of the anti-discrimination bill is very important. The bill will prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation in employment, housing, credit and

public accommodations. It assures equal, not special, rights for all, regardless of one's sexual orientation.

1. Have you ever experienced discrimination based on your sexual orientation in employment, housing, credit or public accommodations?
2. Do you know personally of someone who lost a job or promotional opportunity, was denied credit, evicted or denied an apartment, etc. because of their sexual orientation?
3. Do you know anyone who didn't report a hate incident directed at themselves for fear they might lose their job or apartment if it were known that they were gay or lesbian?
4. Do you think gay men and lesbians in Maine are discriminated against? If so, why do you think so?
5. Are you a gay or lesbian or bi-sexual person born and raised in Maine? Do you live in the community you grew up in? If not, does your experiences as a gay, bi or lesbian person have anything to do with why you are not living where you grew up?
6. Would you talk about your experiences to your legislators, or speak to the legislators of the community where you grew up? Will you write letters to your legislators or testify on the bill before the Judiciary Committee? Can you help MLGPA work on the bill?

Governor Angus King recently said in a very different context, "We are all in this together." That statement applies here too. Please call 1-800-55-MLGPA right now if you can help. We need you.

Sincerely,
Susan Farnsworth

[The writer was a Maine State Representative from 1988-1994.]

apex\ˈa-peks\ n. 1 a: the uppermost point: VERTEX (the ~ of a mountain) b: the narrowed or pointed end: the highest or culminating point (the ~ of her career) syn see SUMMIT.

The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the views of the collective.

More FUTURE from page 1

News had to ask its readers to stop sending in letters to the editor on this subject because they had printed so many. The exposure resulted in an outpouring of reps from national organizations coming to do workshops at the first Symposium. Symposium I drew 250 people and was a huge success.

We didn't really know we were making history. We had found some scrap lavender fabric and Steve Leo and Peter and I made armbands out of it and tied these rags over our sleeves to show solidarity. Then everyone wanted one. Some tied them around their foreheads.

Susan: It was there that we discovered that there were other gay groups all over the state that we hadn't known about before. We started corresponding with the others and we all decided we gotta get together, so all the groups formed the Maine Gay Task Force. It was kind of a cooperative organization. [The Task Force consisted of the Bangor Unitarian Gay Caucus, GRO (Gay Rights Organization), the Brunswick Gay Women's Group, Gay Support and Action, Hancock County Gays, The Bridge at Colby, the Wilde-Stein Club, and LAMBDA.]

The Newsletter printed the minutes of the Task Force meetings - it was a way for everybody to keep in touch. We tried to have a representative from every group at each meeting. Our biggest problem in MGTF was distance because we were covering the whole state of Maine. We had to travel to meetings. A lot of people who didn't have a car had to hitchhike. Even more than homophobia, distance was a problem.

The Brunswick Gay Women's Group [Sandra Swain, Miriam Dyak, Susan Breeding, Wendy Ashley, Karen Frank, Anne Garland] were the brains and energy behind Volume I, Issue 1. Some of them had learned political skills and organizing skills in the antiwar movement, women's movement, campus politics. The ones that didn't have formal education were self-educated.

Stan: Originally the newsletter was meant more for members of MGTF than the public. It was a method of

communicating among the groups by recording what everyone was doing.

We accomplished a lot in just the first few months of our existence. At the Maine Democratic party platform hearings we lobbied for a gay rights plank and Maine became the first state in the country to have a state party endorse gay rights. Our banner said, "As Maine Goes..."

We went on talk shows and spoke to groups to provide exposure for gays. We started a gay/ lesbian counseling service. We met with the Portland police to discuss harassment of gays. We participated in gay pride marches all over New England. We organized letter-writing campaigns and pickets and boycotts.

Susan: The paper was pretty personal. We never made any pretense of objectivity. We were doing the stuff and writing about it.

AD: How was the newsletter financed? I notice that it went from 8 to 16 to sometimes as many as 76 pages.

Stan: We passed hats at meetings. LAMBDA and other groups held dances as fundraisers and donated portions of the money to the newsletter. We (MGTF) held our dances at the Unitarian Church in Brunswick, in the basement. There was minimal rent and it may have been nothing initially. We gave a small amount of money in the wintertime to pay for heat.

Later we got people to pledge so much money each month. They were billed for it. That was really important - that was for the rent and the phone for the MGTF office. We had a lot of people who believed in the cause so much that they pledged usually between one and twenty dollars a month. One guy pledged \$50 a month.

Susan: In later years one of us usually had to be on unemployment to do the work; another had a job to pay for it.

We figured we were giving back by working for a better society - in true sixties fashion. A lot of people didn't like what we wrote because we were a little too left.



photo by Annette Dragon



photo by Annette Dragon

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CHOICE IN THE CROSSHAIRS

by Sherrie Bast

In 1988 when I was living in El Paso (a city not widely renowned for either feminist or pro-choice politics) I took part in a march to celebrate the anniversary of Roe v. Wade. There were wimmin carrying signs bearing the slogans long term activists know well by now. As we chanted our way through the streets near the University, someone in the small crowd screamed to look out - there were men with bricks and bottles on the porch of the apartment building that we were approaching.

Shattered glass and bricks littered the sidewalk as we continued to chant over the insults and threats hurled at us. I recall being terrified as I squeezed the hand of the womyn walking beside me and continued to chant at the top of my lungs. When

the fear faded I was left with incredible contempt for these right-wing people who hid behind the guise of conscience to take aim at

long-time pro-choice supporter (who happens to be married to Angus King), Andrew Ketterer (the State's Attorney General), Ruth

Lockhart (the director of the Mabel Wadsworth Women's Health Center), Jane Amero (the Assistant Majority Leader in the State Senate), William Gregory (the Minister of Woodford's Congregational Church) and Lois Reckitt (who everyone knows already anyway, and who is a member of the NOW board of directors). Opening and closing songs were sung by the highly talented (but unfortunately barely audible) wimmin's *a capella* group, Voices



photo by Annette Dragon

wimmin who want only the freedom to control our own bodies.

I have thought of that day a lot lately, as I have been reading about the murders happening at clinics where abortion services are provided. In these days of Newt (or "Newtie" as his mom calls him) and the spectre of orphanages he raises, a womyn's right to choose whether or not to become a mother is dramatically highlighted. More so now than ever we cannot be silenced, and must not back down.

This refusal to go back was loudly supported on Saturday, January 21st, as hundreds of people gathered at Monument Square in Portland, Maine for a candlelight vigil in honor of the victims of violence at reproductive health clinics. The vigil, organized by Maine NOW's Portland and Brunswick chapters attracted an impressive array of speakers including Mary Herman, a

Rising.

Ruth Lockhart told how the Mabel Wadsworth Center has started the "Pledge a Picket" program, whereby supporters of the clinic agree to donate a specified amount of money each time a particular protestor demonstrates in front of the clinic. This is a gentle and creative approach to a despicable situation. The center should be well thanked for an approach that serves to remind us all that violence as a response is simply not acceptable, no matter what rage we may feel towards those whose politics diametrically oppose our own. That reminder can not be repeated too often in these times when we might be tempted to fight back in ways that are morally reprehensible, for then we will have sunk to the level of our enemy, and that, as we know, is beneath description. ▼

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More FUTURE from page 3

AD: Tell me about the logistics of putting out the newsletter.

Susan: We'd set up the table with scissors and gluesticks and cut apart the copy and stick it together and load it onto the stenciler. It took time. It was all set up by physically cutting mimeograph stencils. We thought the electronic stenciler was the height of high-tech, even if it broke down all the time. The fellas would run the mimeograph machine far into the night.

Peter: One of our main developments was Stan's idea of going from the long broadsheet to booklet form.

AD: Where did you put it together?

Stan: The paper started at McKean Street in Brunswick. We moved from there into an office on Middle Street in Portland up over what used to be Horsefeathers Restaurant. We were there for probably a year and from there to State Street to Westminster Ave. It was always coming out of someone's back bedroom.

AD: What's up with the flying rhino?

Stan: In a lot of places across the country the rhino was the gay symbol. It looks ferocious, but is really very gentle. Until provoked. Tim Bouffard drew it. He did all of our artwork.

AD: There are so many news stories in your paper that could be lifted out whole and plopped right into a 1995 newspaper - "Pope Tees Off on Women's Lib," "Violence Against the Right to Choose." Carolyn Cosby is just a born-again Anita Bryant. It's like a recycling nightmare.

Susan: It's going to take a long time. It gets discouraging when you realize it's not going to happen in your lifetime.

AD: A lot less would be happening if there hadn't been a Newsletter.

Susan: Somebody would have done it later, but the 60s and 70s were the time. It was probably easier then than it is now. There was more receptivity to social change. People were ready. The civil rights movement was waning and the women's movement had picked up. This was a natural outgrowth.

Birth Of A Struggle

AD: Volume One, Number One. Your first issue. The title of the editorial was "What the Fuck Is Unity?"

Susan: She was saying we don't all have to be alike to work together - even if we have different styles and priorities and opinions.

Peter: I think it's great the first issue had a "What the Fuck Is Unity?" editorial rather than "We're Here - We Hope You Like Us." Those Brunswick women - it didn't take them two or three years to figure out what they wanted to say.

AD: This is from the MGTF Position Paper on p. 3.

We are Maine residents who feel the time is overdue for this state and its people to recognize the existence of homosexuality and to acknowledge the inherent civil rights belonging to gay people.

Stan: People should be aware that it was the birth of a struggle here. It wasn't a struggle that had been going on that someone simply steps into and participates in. We wanted to talk about the rights that we were being denied that other citizens had. We didn't even hit them with marriage back then. We didn't dare deal with issues of adoption - we were in their face just to say who we were.

Susan: We were defining ourselves. Gay is good. We weren't twisted, perverted sick people. We were good people -- that was part of the message we were getting out. We had a lot of discussions among ourselves about how gays

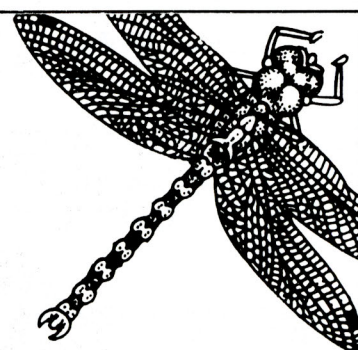
should act, how it wasn't right for a gay employer to sexually harass his or her employees. That's the same reason we objected to gay bars being dives -- we deserved better than that.

Just being open was offensive to a lot of people. It frightened a lot of gay people too. I knew several people who dropped out of the Wilde Stein Club when it became noticed in the newspaper by the public. There were times when it could be physically dangerous. There was a lot of fear out there.

AD: This is from a letter to the Task Force that was printed in the premier issue.

I imagine that the gay lifestyle would be pretty heavy to cope with in Maine. And the only way to lighten it seems to be for people like you to take on some extra weight until the super-straight gets a little more accustomed to seeing, hearing, reading about and being with, and socializing with people who've taken themselves out of the closet. At the same time you're making yourselves known to the straights, you're turning on the lights for a lot of people who have been in the closets for years, and showing them that they aren't alone - there have been people in the closet

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**ANNETTE
DRAGON**

PHOTOGRAPHER

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WEDDINGS • UNIONS • PARTIES

THE DARK NIGHT OF THE SOUL

Loreena McKennitt wrote the music for this 15th century poem by St. John of the Cross to his god. It appears on her 1994 recording, the mask and mirror.

One can interpret the poem in any number of ways; Loreena compares it to early Judaic and Islamic approaches to god. It is also possible to see this as a poem written by a male to one he perceives as male in a passionate sexual manner...

Upon a darkened night
The flame of love was burning in my breast
And by a lantern bright
I fled my house while all in quiet rest

Shrouded by the night
And by the secret stair I quickly fled
The veil concealed my eyes
While all within lay quiet as the dead

Oh night thou was my guide

Oh night more loving than the rising sun

Oh night that joined the lover

To the beloved one

Transforming each of them into the other

Upon that misty night
In secrecy, beyond such mortal sight
Without a guide or light
Than that which burned so deeply in my heart

That fire 'twas led me on
And shone more bright than of the midday sun
To where he waited still
It was a place where no one else could come

Within my pounding heart
Which kept itself entirely for him
He fell into his sleep
Beneath the cedars all my love I gave

From o'er the fortress walls
The wind would brush his hair against his brow
And with its smoothest hand
Caressed my every sense it would allow

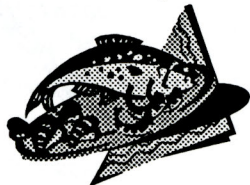
I lost myself to him
And laid my face upon my lover's breast
And care and grief grew dim
As in the morning's mist became the light

There they dimmed amongst the lilies fair
There they dimmed amongst the lilies fair
There they dimmed amongst the lilies fair ▼



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More FUTURE from page 5

with them all the time, and that those people are now saying, "It's time to get some fresh air."

Hundreds Of Subscribers

AD: You guys had at times over 300 subscribers. That's incredible 20 years ago! Is it because you were the only show in town?

Peter: We often ran exchange ads with other publications that we liked. And, we ran an ad in *The Maine Sunday Telegram*. Stan and I went into the *Press Herald* with a 2x4 inch display ad that simply said: "Subscribe to the MGTF Newsletter, a monthly publication for lesbians and gay men. Mailed in a plain envelope. \$4 a year." And our POB address. That was it. So we took it in and gave it to some totally jaded doing-her-nails receptionist who could give a fuck whether it was an ad for the Aryan Nation. Took our money - that was it. Then we got a phone call from some real dink - a higher up, and of course all the higher-ups were men. This guy said our ad was not suitable for publication. So next thing I know we're heading down to the *Press Herald*.

We had an idea right from the very beginning that we weren't going to fuck with any intermediaries. Right to the top, and if they won't see you, then you picket them. You only go two steps and you don't get the runaround.

We went right to the publisher - top floor, we're out on his balcony terrace. I believe we were so novel, people wanted to see who we were. So we'd get immediate appointments. They were probably afraid

we'd paint their building pink.

Portland Press Herald was concerned that it was pornographic. Little did they know how puritanical we were! We never put anything sexual in - we didn't think it was a good political strategy. We really wanted to appeal to everybody. We were always editing ads for dirty movies and we wouldn't take sex ads.

So the guy looked at the issues we had brought with us and saw they were okay and said they would print our ad. We left and stopped down on the first floor and said we'd like our ad run and Stan said, "We want it run on the family page." And they did!

We got quite a few ads because *The Sunday Telegram* went statewide. Two or three days after the display ad these letters started coming in from Unity and all through Bangor and up to Aroostook. Here are all these queers sequestered in little tiny towns, and then they got the paper, and here was something they never expected to see.

At the time there was nothing else. If you wanted a gay publication you had to go to Boston or N.Y. And of course their slant was big-city. Their politics were not as pure as ours - they needed the money so they printed sex ads.

The *Telegram* ad was very productive. We ran an ad in *The Maine Times*. That ran a long time. We put an ad in *The Portsmouth Herald*.

The only publication that steadfastly refused to take our ad right to the bitter end was *The Lewiston Sun*.

Susan: There were several fundamentalist preachers that gave us a lot of flak, so that created news copy, so we started getting correspondence from gays out of

More FUTURE page 11

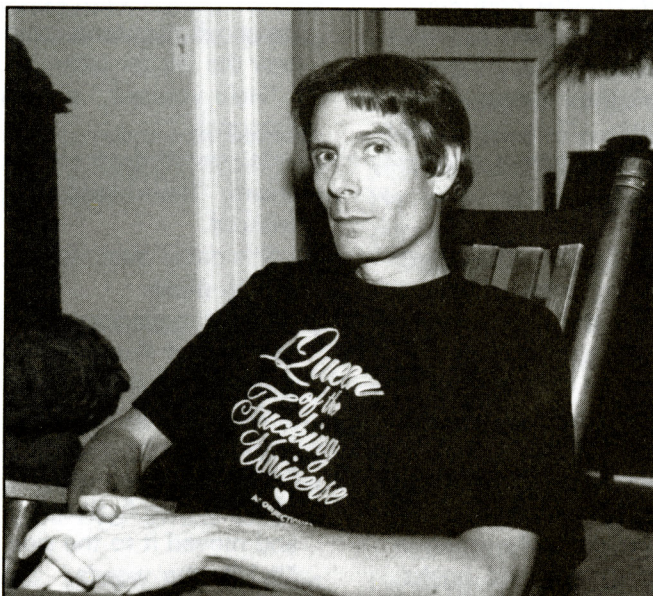


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BACK TO THE LAND (Part II)

by Jonathan Carr

This is the second half of a two-part short story. In last month's issue, Mr. Wilmer Potter arrives at the home of Mrs. Gladys Marritt to begin a three-week vacation. Mrs. Marritt talks to and caresses the plants and flowers which jam the house and yard. She tells Wilmer that plants are better than people, who spend their lives taking from the land. "Plants give themselves back to the soil they came from. They put back everything they took. They complete Nature's cycle. ... Gardening is more than a hobby; it's a way of life. Gardening IS life."

His room was small but tidy, tucked under the eaves with one small dormer to let in light. He took his vest from the hook where he had hung it the night before, put it on, and bent over to straighten the bedspread.

He had decided during the night to give things a day or two to see if the situation would be acceptable. Gladys Marritt was very odd, that was certain, but she seemed harmless enough, and he wasn't about to give Beatrice Rambley the satisfaction of ruining his vacation as he was sure she had intended. She was probably sitting in the library right now with her pile of returned books, laughing herself silly over her little joke. Well, what was done was done, and he would certainly be more careful the next time. If things got too intolerable, he could always go for a walk and take in the scenery.

The living room appeared empty when he came downstairs, and so he made his way into the kitchen. It really looked more like a potting shed, he thought. The counters were covered with flats of seedlings, and the sink was filled with potting soil and empty containers. He was about to turn away when he heard a faint, off-key humming. It seemed to be coming from the back yard, so he walked through the pantry and peered through the screen door.

She was on her hands and knees, a small cultivating fork in hand, digging around a large bush with huge pink flowers. She looked up and smiled.

"Good morning, Mr. Potter," she called, waving to him with the fork.

"Come out, come out. I have some tea and donuts for you on the patio."

He opened the rusty screen door and walked over to the small flagstone patio and sat down in a lawn chair near the wicker table.

"Help yourself," she called over her shoulder. "I'll be right over."

He poured tea from the china teapot and added a little cream. There wasn't any sugar on the table, so he went without.

She came over, wiping her gloves on the sides of her paisley dress.

"What a glorious morning! It's a perfect day for gardening; not like yesterday at all." She dashed some tea into her cup and took a donut.

Wilmer didn't want to get her started on her plants again, but he felt he needed to make conversation. "What were you doing to that plant over there?"

"Cultivating." She took a bite of donut, chewed twice, and moved it to the side of her mouth so she could talk. "It kills the weeds. Susan can't stand to have weeds around her roots."

"Susan?"

"My peony bush. I just love peonies, don't you?"

"You name your plants?"

"Just the special ones. I don't name them, really. Let's just say I call them by their names. I think it helps them grow. They feel more cherished. It's a scientific fact that plants grow better when you talk to them. I can hardly have a conversation with a plant if I don't know its name, wouldn't you agree?" She shoed a fly off her donut and took another bite.

"Do you see that flowering crab over by the delphiniums?" He looked where she was pointing with her donut and nodded.

"When I first got that, it didn't do well at all... not at all. Then it became Shirley, and she did wonderfully. It's the fertilizer that does it. That, and the care I give her."

"But I thought you said that plants made their own fertilizer." He didn't want to get her going on the subject, but he couldn't help himself.

"To an extent, they do," she explained, after sipping her tea, "but to grow really special plants, you need to give them a little something extra. That's the secret."

She set her cup down and stood up. "Come, Mr. Potter, let me give you a tour of my garden."

She marched off into the profusion of blossoms and Wilmer had no choice but to follow.

"This," she said, pointing to a forsythia bush, "is Francis."

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"Francis the Forsythia," he said, smiling faintly. "It has sort of a nice ring to it."

"Yes, it does, doesn't it? And this columbine here is Raymond. He'll be blooming in another week or so. He has such lovely purple blossoms." She walked further along the gravel path and stopped by a huge rhododendron.

"This is Mathilda."

He was beginning to enjoy this in spite of himself. It was crazy, but refreshingly so. "You know, it looks something like a Mathilda."

"It should."

There was a clump of three bleeding hearts just beyond, and he stopped her before she could speak. "Don't tell me; these are Patti, Maxine, and LaVerne."

"No... Nancy."

"But what do you call the other two?"

"Nancy."

He shrugged his shoulders and followed her down the path.

"And, of course, I've already told you about Susan, here." She pointed to the peony and Wilmer nodded. She walked off down the path, but he stopped and peered closely at the plant. There was glitter coming from the ground near the roots, and he bent over to see what it was.

"Mr. Potter, are you coming? I want you to meet Jonathan."

He stood up, slipped the object into his vest pocket, and nodded numbly. She talked on and on, but he didn't hear her. His heart was squeezing painfully inside his vest, and he was having a hard time making himself breathe slowly and evenly.

"Mr. Potter, are you all right? You look paler than usual."

"I... I'll be fine," he managed. "I just need to sit down for a minute."

"Certainly, certainly. That sun is a bit strong. You're not used to it; that's what it is."

She helped him back to the patio and pulled out a lawn chair. "What you need is a cup of my special herb tea. I'll be right back."

He nodded weakly and slouched into the chair. It seemed preposterous, but if what he was thinking was true...

She appeared a few minutes later with a new teapot. "Here you go," she said, pouring some into his cup and holding it up for him, "Drink some of this and everything will be fine."

He sipped, and gagged. "What's in this? It tastes terrible."

She pressed the cup against his lips again. "Just drink it. It's what you need right now. It's only some herbs and spices, and a few choice leaves and roots. Mr. Senner thought it was wonderful. But you have to get just the right mixture, or it doesn't work."

The tea filled his mouth and he choked it down. "Mr. Senner... didn't leave, did he?"

"Why, Mr. Potter; what do you mean?"

"He didn't leave his violin behind. You killed him, didn't you?"

"Mr. Potter, I really don't..."

He cut her off before she could continue. "And this. How do you explain this?" He reached into his vest and pulled out a tooth. "I found this under that peony."

She put a hand to her mouth in mild surprise. "My goodness, I must have been cultivating Susan a little more than I thought. I hope I didn't hurt her roots."

He struggled to get up. "Which one is Mr. Senner? That vine out front that attacked me, or that bush over there?" He was yelling now, and his eyes were glazed and popping.

"Please, Mr. Potter, calm down. The tea won't work if you get excited." She tried to put the cup to his lips again but he shoved it away and it fell out of her hands and broke on the flagstone. She stared at it in dismay, and then sighed.

"Actually, Mr. Senner is the lovely purple columbine. Purple was his favorite color, so I thought it was only right. That's Milton out front, along with his wife, Harriet. Lovely couple. Came here on their anniversary..."

His breath was coming in great, wheezing gasps now. He struggled to stand, and fell back into the chair.

She picked up another donut and bit into it. "Now you know my little gardening secret, Mr. Potter. Although you mustn't tell; it's not nice to tell a secret." She smiled, and took another bite.

"But I really don't think I'll have to worry; you've had too much tea."

His eyesight was beginning to blur, and her voice came as if through a door.

"You know, Mr. Potter, I've been thinking all Spring about what kind of plant to get this year, and I just couldn't decide. But now I think a flowering fig would be just right." She took another bite of donut and stared out over her garden.

"Yes. Wilmer the Fig - that's perfect. I'll put him right over there, next to Nancy."▼

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FRIDAY 2/3

Drop in Time at Safe Space Women's Center of Maine, 67 Main St., Topsham, ME. 7-9:30pm FMI ☎ (207) 725-7632.

FRIDAY 2/4

Women's Pre-Valentine Dance, 8pm-2, Temple Beth El, 400 Deering Ave., Portland, ME. Sponsored by Wild Iris Productions, POB 17, W. Buxton, ME 04093.

Mom's in Winter. Intro to Snowshoeing and Winter Hiking for mothers and daughters (10 years old or over), sponsored by Women's Outdoor Challenges, Keene, NH. FMI ☎ (603) 763-5400.

FRIDAY 2/5

Portland Pride '95 Planning mtg, 7pm, 30 Exchange St. (Ferrante's), Portland, ME. FMI ☎ (207) 871-9940 or (207) 772-7325.

MONDAY 2/6

Book Group at Safe Space Women's Center of Maine, 67 Main St., Topsham, ME.

7-9pm. FMI ☎ (207) 725-7632.

WEDNESDAY 2/8

P-FLAG Meeting, 7pm. FMI ☎ Jeanette (603) 643-8079.

Lesbian S/M Discussion/Support Group. 2nd & 4th Wed. each month. Confidentiality assured. Lesbians only. FMI/ location ☎ (207) 775-1487.

THURSDAY 2/9

Love Makes the World Go Round: Matlovich Throws a Valentine Party! Warm up the winter doldrums by sharing your expressions of love with Matlovich friends. Dust off those love letters, that special poem, sing or play your favorite love song. This is an open mike evening, and everybody's invited to participate. Refreshments! Holiday Inn by the Bay, 88 Spring St., Portland, ME 7:30-9pm. Free parking. FMI ☎ (207) 773-1209.

FRI.-SUN. 2/10-12

Affirming Every Person, an education conference about Lesbian, Gay & Bisexual People. Presented by Antioch New England Graduate School, Keene State College & the Keene UU Church, Keene, NH 03431. FMI ☎ (603) 357-5183 or (603) 585-9238.

FRIDAY 2/10

Drop in Time at Safe Space Women's Center of Maine, 67 Main St., Topsham, ME. 7-9:30pm. FMI ☎ (207) 725-7632.

SATURDAY 2/11

Potluck and music making at Vanessa's. 6pm. Bring an in-

strument. FMI ☎ (603) 298-7913. An Amelia's Event.

XC skiing in Allenstown, NH Sponsored by Women's Outdoor Adventure Cooperative. FMI ☎ (603) 483-8704.

Women's Telemark Ski Clinic, Bretton Woods, NH. Sponsored by Women's Outdoor Challenges. FMI ☎ (603) 763-5400.

FRIDAY 2/17

Drop in Time at Safe Space Women's Center of Maine, 67 Main St., Topsham, ME. 7-9:30pm. FMI ☎ (207) 725-7632.

SATURDAY 2/18

Women's Valentine's Dance! 8pm to 12, United Methodist Church, 129 Miller Ave., Portsmouth, NH. \$6/door, semi-formal optional, Chem/smoke free. FMI ☎ (603) 659-2139. Sponsored by Out & About.

Mardi Gras '95 at the Radisson, West Lebanon, NH, \$10/adv., \$15 at the door. Sponsored by SAM (Social Alternatives for Gay Men). FMI ☎ John (603) 543-4136.

WEDNESDAY 2/22

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THURSDAY 2/23

Towards a Lesbian Health Agenda: The Lesbian Health Project of Southern Maine. Tania Hathaway, Project Coordinator of the Lesbian Health Project of Southern Maine, gets us thinking about lesbian health. Come

hear about, & give input into, this pilot project's agenda for lesbian-focused medical and educational services, health issues advocacy, and health-profession education. Holiday Inn by the Bay, 88 Spring St., Portland, ME 7:30-9pm. Free parking. FMI ☎ (207) 773-1209.

FRIDAY 2/24

Drop in Time at Safe Space Women's Center of Maine, 67 Main St., Topsham, ME. 7-9:30pm. FMI ☎ (207) 725-7632.

MONDAY 2/27

Book Group at Safe Space Women's Center of Maine, 67 Main St., Topsham, ME. 7-9pm. FMI ☎ (207) 725-7632.

NOTICES

Ann Reed Performs Sat. 3/18 at First Parish Church, 425 Congress St., Portland, ME. Tickets: \$13.50/adv. \$15/day of show. General admission. FMI write Wild Iris Productions, POB 17, W. Buxton, ME 04093.

Lavendar Land Utopia, a musical comedy presented by the Furies, Oak Street Theatre, 92 Oak St., Portland, ME. Fri. 3/24 at 8pm, Sat. 3/25 at 10pm, Fri. 3/31 at 10pm. Tickets \$10/door. FMI ☎ (207) 773-4698. Presented as part of Oak Street Theatre's Women's Theatre Festival in honor of Women's History Month.

CORRECTION

The photo of the Quilt at Loranger Middle School in Old Orchard Beach in our last issue should have been credited to Sherrie Bast.

More FUTURE from page 7

state. When we had the first symposium we invited every activist we knew and found out later that most of the New Yorkers weren't even speaking to each other - I think they had a ceasefire for our benefit. We'd get correspondence from them. There was one man out on the west coast who sent us tons and tons of clippings from the gay papers out there for several years. We'd go through them and glean news items.

Peter: At times we exchanged papers with as many as 70 other gay papers across the country.

Queer Activism 101

AD: Still on the first issue - 1974 - you begin a series of strategies for creating change. On the front page you call for a nationwide protest against ABC TV because they planned to air a homophobic episode of a popular weekly show.

A proposed Marcus Welby script, entitled "The Outrage," concerns the rape of a 14 year old by his male science teacher and will serve as a massive psychological incentive for homophobic heterosexuals to redouble their opposition to basic civil rights of all gay people. The screenplay is indeed outrageous and must be stopped.

AD: You push for a letter-writing campaign to the station, explaining what to say and how to say it. You describe how to jam phone lines. You teach basic queer activism.

Susan: Anything that was written about homosexuality or lesbianism had always been written by straights. There was a lot of really homophobic stuff coming out of Hollywood then. As long as there was money to be made, they didn't give a shit.

AD: Tell me about your notorious pickets.

Peter: The summer before the Symposium - 1973 - one of the first things we ever did as a group was to

picket the Stowe House, a very fancy Brunswick restaurant that catered to the upper middle class. The Stowe House decided to dump all of their women waitresses because they thought it would be a classier joint with male waiters. So we started picketing them.

Stan: Some of the women that were fired were involved in the picket; the Brunswick Gay Women's Group, members of LAMBDA, and women from NOW showed up. Some people would come and picket for an hour, some for the entire evening.

Peter: We picketed them every night seven days a week for the whole summer. And we parked in their spaces. We had signs, we carried posters. It was hairy because at nighttime we had these fliers saying "Why Is the Stowe House Sexist?" and we'd try to hand them to people whose windows were rolled down. These guys in their Cadillacs didn't want any part of this - this was radicalism, and boatrocking, and bad. Sometimes when they saw us, windows would start rolling up and we'd try to push them through the windows - once I got my hand caught...Finally the waitresses were hired back, with back pay, probably because of the bad press the situation was getting. It made it unpleasant to go there.

Susan: We picketed Valerie's, an

Ogunquit restaurant that catered to gay people. That was one of those underground things that everybody knew. Valerie's wouldn't let men dance together. Women could, but not men. We thought this was discriminatory - they were taking our money and making a living from us and trying to pretend that we didn't exist. That's why we picketed them. I made the mistake of walking behind the owner's car as he was driving out. He tried to back up and hit me. Luckily I was a lot younger and more nimble and able to dodge him.

I don't think anything changed but we made our presence known. It was quite a piece of street theatre.

Stan: Some of these people had never seen a homosexual or a lesbian before.

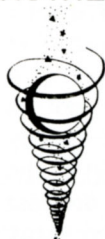
If people didn't want to directly picket something, there were ways they could work behind the scenes. Like during the Florida orange juice boycott, if you didn't want to carry a poster, maybe you could fill a cart with fresh Florida orange juice and wheel it to the back of the grocery store in the hopes of it going bad in a few hours.

Peter: One guy went so far as to poke holes in the Tropicana and put them back on the shelf.

Stan: People were encouraged by papers like GCN to do these little acts on their own.

More FUTURE page 14

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ASK THIGHMASTER - advice with holes

Dear Thighmaster,

My new lover often cries after an orgasm. She says this is something that's happened before, but never this often. She is sure that this "kind" of orgasm she has with me is because of something I'm doing, though she doesn't know what. Also, it takes her a long time to climax with me, and she has made a point of saying that this is new since she's been lovers with me also. Are we doomed as lovers? Am I doomed to a future of slow, weeping lovers?

Fountainhead

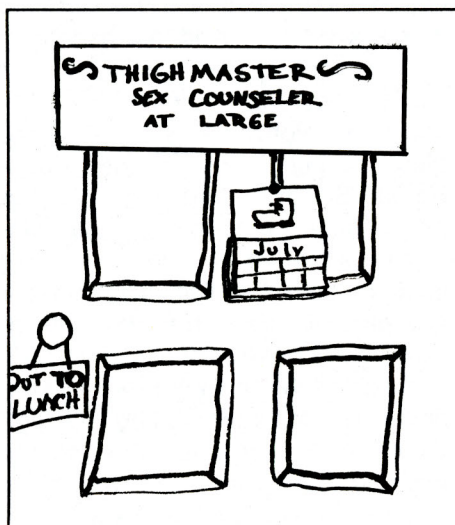
Dear Fountainhead,

Thighmaster spent six months thinking about how to answer this letter because there is one possibility here that Thighmaster is not qualified to address and that no one is qualified to diagnose on the basis of four sentences. Do you think there is any chance that some history of sexual abuse - remembered, unremembered, or soon to be remembered - is involved here? Thighmaster asks this question for two reasons. First, the fact that your lover views the crying as a problem suggests that what's involved is not good post-sex crying: the kind, which happens to a lot of people sometimes, that reflects either the intense emotional experience sometimes involved in sex or other emotions that sex sometimes enables you to release. But your lover seems to think that you are triggering something bad here. This, in turn, might be related to what she perceives as taking too long to come. Is it possible, given the unwelcome crying and feelings generated, that she doesn't really want to get there? She's offering one theory: these new things are happening because of something you, the new lover, are doing. It might be, instead, that something is changing in her.

Thighmaster is not suggesting that this is the most likely source of your

lover's tears, or even that you should bring this up to her. There are lots of reasons that orgasm might generate tears or be hard to achieve - lots of memories and emotions about lots of situations, past, present and future. So, while sexual abuse is in the personal history of far too many people, you don't want to jump to any conclusions. Maybe something else is going on in her life right now that is making her weepy. Besides, if abuse is involved, you can't rush her memories anyway.

Thighmaster does think, though, that you should talk to her about a lot



drawing by Naomi Falcone

of things. Start with the matter of why she's taking longer to come than usual. She thinks it's something you're doing or not doing. Why does this have to be such a mystery? Ask her what has made her come sooner in the past. She shouldn't put the burden of success on you or expect you to know exactly what turns her on. There's this idea out there of a magical fuck where a lover comes along who somehow knows exactly what you want, touches you in all the right spots, taps into your deepest fantasies that you do not even know you have, makes you come 12 times before you even know what's happened, and then tops it all off by serving you the very prune danish, Philadelphia cheesesteak, cream of chestnut dessert, or barbecued pota-

to chips that you've secretly been craving nightly for weeks. And all along, you've never had to say a word; you just lie there (or sit or stand there) getting pleased, transformed, and lifted to new heights. But get real. Sure, it's more romantic to call this stuff soul-mating rather than hit-or-miss luck. Sure, there's the pleasure of surprise and of trying new things you might not have thought of, neither or which you'd want to give up totally. Sure, lovers sometimes come along who generate the big bang on the first time around. But consider three reasons to view this fantasy with suspicion. First, this myth of the magic pleasurestud induces people to buy foul books at the supermarket, like the hideously bad *Bondage*, now on sale at Shop "N Save, with the following cover blurb: "Maybe I came from your fantasies." From the first night, Sara knows that she is his prisoner. His skillful touch is addictive, and his eyes, full of secrets, seek every one of hers. In the dark heat of passion, she senses Anthony re-mapping her, changing the boundaries." Thighmaster will confess to having fallen for this - well, also because it's written by none other than Patti Davis, and who could resist seeing what Reagan's daughter is fantasizing about? But Thighmaster should have predicted what you get: an irresponsible and unsexy piece of crap, where people get tied up with silk scarves over and over without one character ever stopping to say, "Don't try this at home, boys and girls, unless you make sure you're not cutting off circulation." This brings us to point two: we all need to pull out of this letting-sex-happen fantasy enough to watch out actively for our own safety, latex and otherwise. Three: you can't always get what you want and you can't always keep someone open from 7 to 7 like 7-Eleven (to do some gross mismatching of musical lyrics) without talking and telling. Ask your lover

what she likes, what got her off in the past. If the problem is about what might overdryly be called "technique," trying some of her tried-and-true turn-ons might fix it. Talking might be uncomfortable at first, but you all might find that sex talk is pretty sexy. If the problem is really about something else, you'll at least be on the way to process of elimination.



Thighmaster eagerly awaits your submissions. No problem too complicated or twisted! Thighmaster, c/o Phoenix Press, PO Box 4743, Portland, ME 04112.▼

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More NEWS from page 1

MAYA ANGELOU ATTACKED

(Washington Blade) Kansas City, Mo. - More than 70 groups met 11/26 to plan opposition to the Rev. Fred Phelps, a Topeka, Kansas, minister known for his virulent anti-Gay rhetoric and protests, according to the Associated Press.

Two Kansas City investment brokers formed the group in response to Phelps's 11/13 attack on Maya Angelou, poet and civil rights activist, who spoke at President Clinton's inauguration. Phelps and his followers surrounded Angelou's limousine after an appearance in Topeka and hurled anti-Gay epithets. Angelou then canceled a sold out appearance at Emporia State University.

Most at the meeting concluded that Phelps is difficult to oppose because of his highly visible demonstrations. He is known for leading pickets at unusual places such as the funerals of people who have died of AIDS-related causes.

The two coalition founders, Sharon Lockhart and Ginger Ashmore, read an open letter to Angelou.

"The actions in Topeka resulting in a lost opportunity for students at Emporia State to hear your inspirational message is inexcusable and will not be ignored."

Angelou agreed to speak at the school next spring and the group agreed to organize a large demonstration to protect her from the Phelps group. The Coalition also decided to picket Phelps's church, whose congregation is mostly family members, and to attempt to follow him when he pickets elsewhere.



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More FUTURE from page 11

Peter: I remember getting a *York County Coast Star*, one of the better papers in the state, and there was a photograph all across the front page of this whole picket line with signs. It looked like an army. At the time the papers loved it. It was new; it was fresh. Never in their history had they printed queers picketing anything. It was hot stuff. We knew that almost anything we did would end up in the paper, and we saw that as a good political tactic to get the message out. For every Valerie's that got picketed, there's got to be a lot of owners of other restaurants reading that and thinking, "We don't want these people out in front of our place." So it probably had a subtle effect.

We were like a little tiny voice, but we were the only little tiny voice. And because of that we got magnified out of proportion. No one ever appreciated outside the movement what a tiny cadre we were. But you wouldn't know it. Virtually everyone showed up at these things. They'd look at us and think, "Christ! If they can get 20 people out on a cold freezing night, there must be thousands..."

AD: In January of '77 the name of the paper changed to *Mainely Gay*. You went from being essentially the house organ of MGTF to a more literary and less activist publication.

Susan: Maine Gay Task Force was a tremendously activist group, like night and day sleeping it, eating it. It was going on all the time and people did get burned out. When the Task Force decided to disband, the core group of people who were originally involved in starting the paper didn't want to let it die, so they kept producing it, and it had a different focus. We started printing essays, reviews and reprints from other publications. There was more variety.

Send The Bigots To Hell

AD: You wrote a monthly column, Susan, called "The Penobscot County Curmudgeon" and later "The Cumberland County Curmudgeon." Some of it was queer history - "Frederick the Faggot Rides Again," "The Gay King of Scots"

and some was social commentary - you explained why Joan Baez should come out and you debated the pros and cons of separatism.

Your explanation of the difference between liberals and radicals is wonderful.

The radicals invent the theories from which we (liberals) pick out bits and pieces. They bear the brunt of the abuse inflicted on those who break with tradition... We should not overlook the moral courage of those who go out on a limb for a world-view and sometimes risk job or worse for it. We liberals can command the power of established institutions; let us use it to encourage the creative heretics, the unconventional thinkers, who feed our minds, rather than put roadblocks in their way because they go too fast for our liking.

There was a lot of humor in there too. In '79 you lamented how difficult it was to stay on a Weight Watchers diet and at the same time honor all the current boycotts of let-

photo by Madeleine Winter
tuce, bananas and Florida oranges.

Boycotts were a big tool. In fact, my favorite column of yours was almost exactly 20 years ago in March of '75. You urged a seasonal boycott of Wells and Ogunquit for not renewing the license of, and then burning down, The Stage Door, a gay dance club.

The townspeople are willing enough to take our money; let them respect our humanity, or they may whistle for our business. Let's ... send the bigots to hell and the bankruptcy court.

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AD: I'm happy to see you didn't exempt the queer movement from scrutiny. Steve Bull (the Los Angeles County Corn Muffin) wrote:

Yes, we have our own elite - a Gay power structure which is no better than a straight power structure. It constructs class lines, encourages alienation, individualism, competition and sets Gays against other Gay people.

AD: *Mainely Gay* seemed to strive for equality between the sexes. It was very feminist.

Susan: We always tried to make common cause with other minority groups. There was always a strong feminist presence in the gay movement.

AD: There's some advice on the first issue's back page to all the group members of MGTF:

ALWAYS make sure your group is balanced between men and women. If you want to alienate Lesbians, ignore their input or close them out of important meetings. The same is true for appearances on programs.

AD: There's a great article in January of '77 called "Where the Girls Are" by Elaine First Sharpe on sexist language.

... "Girls" are young attractive showpieces; "women" are not. Bring on the Goldwyn Girls, the Gibson Girls, the Follies Girls, the go-go girls, the show girls, and the chorus girls. Let us see the best of your sweater girls, cover girls, calendar girls, Vargas girls, Playboy girls, gatefold girls, pinup girls, glamour girls, and pompom girls. Perhaps the "girl" is a low woman on the status pole -- a street girl, a bargirl, or the slightly higher-ranking call girl. ...

AD: Peter, you wrote this in 1976.

NO, THIS IS NOT A QUIBBLE & I'M NOT NIT-PICKING... ...Why, oh why is the proper noun Lesbian always --well, almost always-- spelled in Gay publications with a lower case 'l'? Even the sexist American Heritage Dictionary manages a capital L in the words Lesbian and Lesbianism to indicate, it is assumed, that these words have their root in the proper noun Lesbos. Lesbos, we may recall, is a greek island 632 square miles in an area in the aegean sea off the western coast of turkey and noted for the lyric poetry of sappho and alcaeus.

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AD: Your monthly column "The State Street Straw" was an eclectic collection of advice, news, wit and political analysis. Topics ranged from a woman's right to choose to your ride with the Moonies to Madison Ave. homophobia. You informed us that there was a town in Michigan called "Gay" and a village in Laos called "Het".

"Twenty-One Egos In

Search of a Massage" is your description of the UofM Portland/Gorham budget vote by the homophobic Student Senate.

I've saved your very best writing for last. This is a good time to thank the three of you, and all the MGTF activists and writers and shitworkers. None of the queer rights that we sometimes take for granted would exist today if it

weren't for this group of people, this publication, the things that you all did. You really are the backbone to everything that's going on today. People need to know that.

In February of '75 Sandra Swain and Peter Prizer wrote:

Mother God, give us the courage to make scenes, to lift our voices and demand our freedom, to "HOWL" anywhere and everywhere we find injustice -- even in Wells, ME on a cold winter's night. ▼



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**YES! NOW LOSE 20, 30, EVEN 50 OR MORE
YEARS OF HOMOPHOBIA AND KEEP IT LOST FOREVER!**

Listen to what Anita Bryant, former Miss America runner-up, has to say about the value of FORMULA-CR: "Yes, I used to be terribly homophobic, so much so that it cost me \$945,000 in lost TV contracts alone. Believe me, I learned my lesson. It got so bad I tried to commit suicide!" What is Anita doing for work now? "After the Florida Citrus Commission fired me, and my daughter 'came out,' I felt it was time for me to look for a cure for my acute homophobia. A close friend recommended FORMULA-CR, and I tried it. Now I'm busy lobbying for passage of a statewide ordinance that would give Gay men and Lesbians child adoption rights."

NOW! A LIFETIME WITHOUT THE PAIN OF HOMOPHOBIA

How can medical science make this lifelong dream come true? It's simple. Because doctors, many of whom are licensed to practice in this country, have developed a remarkably easy way for you to TURN OFF YOUR HOMOPHOBIA any time you want, JUST LIKE YOU WOULD TURN OFF A LIGHT SWITCH! Yes, actually discover the root cause of homophobia in seconds! In a matter of weeks, you may actually have brand new friends!

VITAL NOTICE

EVEN THOUGH FORMULA-CR WILL RAISE YOUR CONSCIOUSNESS IN MINUTES, JUST LIKE YOU TURN ON A LIGHT SWITCH, YOU CAN NOT GO FOR LONG PERIODS RELYING ON NOTHING ELSE. YOU MUST READ AT LEAST TWO GOOD BOOKS A YEAR...EVEN IF YOU HAVE TO FORCE YOURSELF. OUR FORMULA-CR MAY NOT BE USEFUL AS A TOTAL SUBSTITUTION FOR CONVERSATIONS WITH YOUR FRIENDS. WE URGE THAT YOU SHOW THIS PROGRAM TO YOUR ENTIRE FAMILY AND SEE IF THEY DON'T AGREE THAT THIS IS A MEDICALLY-SOUND METHOD OF DEALING WITH HOMOPHOBIA.

NOW! THE MIRACLE DRINK THAT HELPS CONQUER ANTI-GAY PREJUDICE!!

PERMANENT LIFETIME PEACE OF MIND--FINALLY A REALITY!

Best of all, because FORMULA-CR contains very few dangerous drugs whatsoever the only sensation that you experience is that of TOTAL CONTENTMENT. And the only change you see or feel is in the growing circle of new friends. So.... if you are truly committed to equality and human understanding and wish to realize your desire faster than you ever dreamed possible, take advantage of the no-risk offer described below. GET YOUR HEAD TOGETHER TODAY! Act now.

- ■ ■ ■ ■ mail no-risk coupon today ■ ■ ■ ■ ■
- Withit Pharmaceutical, Dept. MG-4
- 1115 East Memorial Blvd.
- Lakeland, Florida 33801
- Yes, I want to raise my consciousness fast and permanently with this doctor's amazing program featuring FORMULA-CR. Please rush the offer I have checked below. If still homophobic, I may return it in twelve days and you will refund the full price.
- ☐ (#003) 12 gallon supply only \$8.95
- ☐ (#005) 30 liter supply only \$12.95
- Amount enclosed \$ _____ FL residents add 5%



NEEDS NO REFRIGERATION

Name _____
Address _____ Apt. # _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Div. of Hetero Consumer, Inc. ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

Mainly Gay puts the squeeze on Anita Bryant