

MGW

MOM GUESS WHAT NEWSMAGAZINE

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Greek



Princess



Jock

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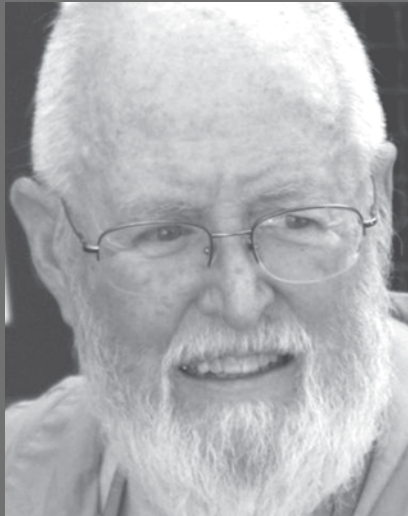
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JERRY SLOAN AT AGE 71 IS AN OUT PROUD GAY MAN AND HAS BEEN FOR 48 YEARS, HE SUCCESSFULLY SUED THE LATE REV. JERRY FALWELL AND THE PROCEEDS HELPED FOUND THE LAMBDA COMMUNITY CENTER (1986), HE IS ALSO COFOUNDER OF THE ANNUAL LAMBDA FREEDOM FAIR (1984) AND A FORMER MCC CLERGY WHO IS NOW A HAPPY ATHEIST. MRLAMBDA1937@GMAIL.COM

Sloan's Soliloquies

SOLILOQUY: TALKING WHEN ALONE (TO ONE'S SELF AND NOT BEING CRAZY, LOL): THE ACT OF SPEAKING WHILE ALONE, ESPECIALLY WHEN USED AS A NEWSPAPER COLUMN THAT ALLOWS THE WRITER'S IDEAS TO BE CONVEYED TO THE READER

AROUND SACRAMENTO

Kudos to Terry Sidie for 24 years of operating Faces. Terry you have served the community well. It seems like it was last week I attended a 17th anniversary party. Well time flies when ...

Kudos to Equality California and their outreach effort led by Jennie Reiken and Ben Hudson to overturn Prop 8 by going door to door to talk to voters. On August 8th their teams canvassed in Citrus Heights and knocked on over 300 residences. The canvassers were able to get a few voters to change their position and promise to vote to over turn Prop 8.

This is the kind of effort that it will take to overturn Prop 8. It is going to be a long hard process that can not be completed if those who are chomping at the bit to get an initiative on the ballot for 2010. I want to urge everyone to take part in this great effort by contacting Ben and Jennie@eqca.org.

Sacramento is fortunate to have two big pride festivals one at the beginning of the summer and one at the beginning of the fall with the up coming Rainbow Festival and Street Fair which came about in 1986 when the board of the Lambda Community Fund was busy open the Lambda Community Center and didn't have the time and energy to put on the the Lambda Freedom Fair and Terry Sidie and Richard Boriolo (now of Hamburger Patti's fame) decided the Labor Day weekend would be a good time to do a street fair in the heart of Lavender Heights and the Rainbow Festival and Street Fair was born. It has become a staple institution for our community. Plan to attend and enjoy the entertainment and vendors.

AROUND THE NATION

Many readers will remember the story of the Texas Alcohol Beverage Control inspection (raid) of the Rainbow Lounge in Ft. Worth on Gay Pride Day, June 28, 2009. A report has been released which cites the officers who conducted the inspection with 19 violations of ABC policies. Among them, failing to report the use of force and injuries involving Chad Gibson, a Rainbow Lounge patron who sustained a serious head injury. One of the supervising officers has reportedly retired and the other two officers are facing disciplinary actions.

Robert Knight, senior writer for the late D. James Kennedy's Coral Ridge Ministries and who I believe used to be affiliated with Concerned Women of America, has stated the new ENDA legislation introduced by U. S. Senator Jeff Merkley of Oregon which includes "gender identity" is a bill that "criminalizes God's biblical morality in the workplace."

The only biblical morality for the work place I am aware of is masters are to be kind to their slaves and an employer has the right to pay every worker the same wage no matter if the worker has worked 8 hours or 2 hours.

As reported in the last column the Gay Pride Celebration in Charlotte, NC, was threatened with disruption by a bunch of red shirted fundamentalist Christians who believed they were to be the start of pushing the GLBT movement back into the closet. Only about 500 antis showed up which

was far short of the more than 1000 that was predicted. Apparently The Call leader Lou Engles is not the prophet he presents himself to be for as far as I can see we as a movement are rolling forward in a positive manner despite some internal GLBT family disputes over strategy as to how to resolve marriage equality on both California and national levels.

ON THE FOREIGN FRONT

Much of the world was shocked on August 1 when a gunman walked into a private center for teenagers in Tel Aviv, Israel, and opened fire killing three people and wounding at least nine more. Many of the teens were dealing with coming out issues as do many of the teens that meet at the Sacramento Gay and Lesbian Center (formerly the Lambda Community Center) or any of Gay/Straight Alliance groups in high schools all across the country.

GLBT people in Israel are subject to much the same hateful rhetoric by Jewish fanatics just as we in America are subject to by Christian fanatics and GLBT people in Muslim countries by Muslim fanatics since all three are Abrahamic based religions.

On August 9 a crowd estimated at 25,000 gathered to mourn and to hear Israeli President Shimon Peres declare "Those shots hurt us all, as Jews and as Israelis."

The Mayor of Tel Aviv, Ron Huldai said, "We would like today for the bullets that pierced Liz and Nir to be the bullets that break through the walls of hatred and ignorance in our society."

The crowd gathered from all over Israel despite several calls which threatened

violence .

It doesn't take a fantasy like Joel's Army to wreak havoc, only one or two fanatics. I am sure we all remember the Williams Brothers who killed a gay couple in Redding and then arsoned two synagogues and a women's health center here in Sacramento.

I am convinced the Sacramento GLBT community in the late 90s missed a reign of terror from two young men who were members of the Aryan Nation that bombed a gay bar in Tacoma. The two were stopped in Santa Rosa for a traffic violation. The police found materials for making bombs and other arson devises. It was learned their destination was Sacramento. Given the fact our community center and 3 bars are all with in one block it would have been short work for them to have destroyed all four in a matter of minutes.

As these religious fanatics of all three faiths become more threatened by the advances we make in achieving the full equalities of citizenship we need to be more alert for the need of security for our personal safety and the safety of our institutions.

In Australia Parliament Member from the province of Queensland during a discussion on allowing GLBT folk to adopt said, "I feel very strongly about that particular thought that . . . I'm not saying they aren't loving people, I'm not saying they wouldn't be fabulous parents, but I am saying that in my opinion a child deserves a mother and a father if possible and that whether you regard homosexual activity as a normal part of life or not, I don't." The USA doesn't have a monopoly on bigotry!

And so the struggle goes ... See you at the Rainbow Street Fair!



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AND THERE GOES MAINE?

BY BOYCE HINMAN

Last April the state legislature of Maine passed legislation allowing same sex couples to marry in that state. However, on July 31, representatives of the Stand For Marriage Campaign delivered petitions for a referendum to overturn that law and ban the recognition of same sex marriages in the State of Maine. The initiative, if approved by the voters of Maine, would not amend the state's constitution. It would merely overturn the law which allows same sex couples to marry in that state.

The group says it submitted over 100,000 signatures to the office of the Maine Secretary of State. Just 55,087 valid signatures are needed in order for the referendum to qualify for the initiative. The Maine Secretary of State's office has until September 4 to determine if there are enough valid signatures to qualify the initiative for the ballot. A representative of the Secretary of State's office said they expect to have completed the review of the signatures by the first week in September. If there are enough valid signatures, the issue will be on the ballot in November of this year. Also, in that case, the same sex marriage law would be stayed until the issue was decided by the voters. In other words, for the time being, same sex couples would still not be allowed to marry in Maine. If the initiative qualifies for the ballot, and is then approved by the voters, the law allowing same sex marriages in Maine would be voided and not go into effect.

Things do not look good at this point. In 1998 the Maine legislature approved legislation banning sexual orientation based employment discrimination in that state. But then the voters overturned that law. Those who wanted to ban discrimination lost the vote by just four thousand votes out of a half million votes cast.

However, in April of this year, a poll done by Pan Atlantic SMS Group found that 47.3 percent of voters favored legislation to allow same sex couples to marry. The survey found that 49.5% of Maine residents opposed such legislation and 3.3% were undecided.

We should know by early September whether or not the initiative will be on the November ballot.

MAJOR BUDGET CUTS STOKE LOCAL FUNDRAISING EFFORTS

BY JAMESON MITCHELL

The Sacramento Valley AIDS Run/Walk (SVARW) is gathering steam and fast. Runners and walkers from all over the Sacramento region and throughout California will congregate on the West Steps of the Capitol September 13, 2009 to participate in Capital City AIDS Fund's (CCAF) annual fundraiser. The SVARW is a great way to enjoy the sunshine and scenery of Sacramento.

Even more importantly, the event raises and provides much-needed money for people infected and affected by HIV/AIDS. Funds raised are used to help people who cannot

afford expensive medications needed to treat the virus. Money collected also provides counseling sessions, HIV/AIDS testing, and education/prevention.

Proceeds from the run/walk benefit several non-profit organizations in the region committed to helping people infected and affected by HIV/AIDS. Recent budget cuts have slashed funding for several agencies, severely impacting the support network for people infected and affected by HIV/AIDS. State and county cutbacks have jeopardized the survival of several agencies and CCAF is trying to raise as much money as possible to compensate for dollars lost. Some organizations have seen budgets dwindle by half. Others have had programs almost entirely decimated.

"The budget cuts are putting many agencies in big trouble but hopefully we can help them stay afloat" said Chuck Driggers CCAF Board Member and SVARW Co Chair. Last year, more than 2,000 people turned out for the SVARW. Driggers is hoping for an even bigger turnout this year to ensure that people in need will get services. The 2009 Sacramento Valley AIDS Run/Walk kicks off at 7:30 AM. It includes a timed 5K run that can be used for qualification in other races. Once the runner's feet hit the pavement, the walk gets underway.

Other attractions featured at the SVARW include guest speakers, a health fair and numerous social service and educational booths. Several politicians and local personalities are lined up to attend, speak, and even run. Driggers said that the event promises to be a success. For more information on the run/walk, visit the SVARW website at sacvalleyaidsrunwalk.org or call the CCAF office at 916-448-1110.

LOCAL FUNDRAISING EFFORTS

BY MANUEL LOMBA

It is alarming to see what is happening at the town meeting being held to explain president Obama's health plan. Since millions of Americans do not have any form of health insurance, it is obvious that a serious problem exists.

As a senior, I benefit from Medicare which has worked very well for me. I do not see why something similar could not work for all Americans. Canada, England, France, etc., all have this universal health coverage for their citizens who could not imagine living without it.

Even though millions here have no health insurance coverage, the per capita and overall cost of health care is higher in our country than in any of those countries with universal coverage. Some individuals and families have been bankrupted by the costs of unexpected illnesses.

Right-wing zealots are now training people on disruptive tactics to use to break up the town hall meetings by shouting speakers down, using physical force, and spreading actual mis-information about the Obama plan. Some of the misinformation is patently absurd. For example, it is claimed that the Obama plan promotes/requires euthanasia.

If you have seen television clips of some of these meetings, you have seen speakers shouted down, obscenities uttered, and a



general attempt to halt any discussion using any tactics which will work to do ruin the meeting.

Historically, the behavior of these hooligans can be compared to the behavior of the right wing in pre-Nazi Germany, or in France during the years before, and after WWI, all of which were calculated to usher in nationalist fascist governments. How frightening that such tactics are being used here, and how ominous.

I wonder at the lack of serious reporting on the leaders of this mob violence. Why are they not being held to account on CNN, Fox, or MSNBC?

CRACKING DOWN NUDE BEACHES

PHOTO/STORY BY NATHAN FELDMAN

Authorities are patrolling and issuing citations on nude beaches across California. Nude beaches can be found in just about any county with a river in Northern California and along coastal areas near San Francisco and throughout Southern California. Many traditional "public nude" beaches often are not really "nude" beaches, they are just places out of the way with a history of tolerance and where officials have difficulty enforcing laws. Locals know about the beaches, and the ones that are not interested largely ignore them leaving the nudists to themselves. On weekends entire nude families can be seen on the beach playing in the sand, lounging in the sun, and some beaches have sections known to be gay.

The conservative family that would have gone to Disneyland in better years may be hanging out on the beach, and calling authorities. With the economy forcing many to rethink travel plans free beaches or low cost state parks are seeing more visitors, and with that the increase in complaints. Higher levels of enforcement and patrols in many of the areas are being reported by beach-goers.

With budgets strained wait for more tickets to follow as marginalized nudists, especially in the gay sections of the nude beaches, become easy targets for fines.



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BY OWEN EDWARDS

What's Raging at Russian River

PHOTOS BY OWEN EDWARDS
FROM THE "THE ATTACK OF
THE FIFTY FOOT DRAG KING"
SHOW

For being the half way point in Summer August has been hot. Not just the temperature mind you but Guerneville has been hopping with mellow low key parties, huge events and everything in between.

I find it best to always start with the big one, so jumping into SunDance. After a five year hiatus it's back. Now this infamous party weekend is big, big name DJ's spinning some of the best dance music on this coast. The event runs August 21 though to the 23. With fairly non stop events. The big event of



course is SunDance the Russian River Morning party. Now if you haven't been out to the river in awhile you may not know the amazing space that is used for most of these large scale events. In a nutshell it's a private estate next door to Fern Grove Cottages (by the way at time of writing this still has rooms available for SunDance.

If you want to stay right next to the event you should think about calling them. And personally I just adore Mike and Margaret. They are some of the nicest people you will ever have the chance to book a room with. You can call them at 888-243-2674.) From noon to six pm it's all about dancing in the sun and having a good time with your friends.

Of course I want to remind everyone that sunscreen and plenty of water are a very good idea. So if one is the type to enjoy a circuit party it's well worth



coming. You should also think about getting the tickets in advance if you want to attend more than one of the party's. Take a look at www.guspresnts.com for all the 411 on this and many of his other events.

Now for a quick one eighty, something totally low key to talk about is the Village Inn in Monte Rio. One of my absolute favorite places to eat and watch the river flow by. This small inn was actually used in the classic 1942 film Holiday Inn. But more importantly has the best wine list in my humble opinion on the river. (To be fair, Wine Spectator agrees with me, giving them an Award in 2007 and 2008.) So the wine list is great and the food is just as amazing to pair with it.

The point I want to make is that on Sundays they do a BBQ and Live music with different bands from noon to four that is well worth the trip if for no other reason than to just simply head out here to hear it. I can't think of a better way to spend a late summer afternoon then enjoying a good glass of wine, some great food at a family and dog friendly event while watching the river flow by. Though if you are joining them for the afternoon, be sure to sample the Escargots de Bourgogne. It's the classic preparation with fresh garlic and something not to be passed up. Another of my personal favorites on the menu is the Chicken Marsala. Also a lovely classic preparation served with wild rice and fresh vegetables.

Keep in mind they also have a full bar, so if you want something a bit stronger than wine, perhaps you would be interested in a fresh Mojito? The Village Inn is located at 20822 River Boulevard 707-865-2304 on line at www.villageinn-ca.com

Keeping on the theme of live music in Guerneville you can listen to live music quite a few nights out of the week. At McT's the Bull Pen on Friday and Saturday nights they have a plethora of bands playing. It's always something different, ranging from Rock to Country and always a good time. Now it's a sports bar feel to it, but a welcoming and friendly locals hang out. They are located at 16246 First Street (Behind Larks Drugs) and online at www.mctsbullpen.com

Now as I said this is a sports bar feel to it, and they do on Thursday and Sunday Football on a giant projection screen. I again have to say what a welcoming bar the space is. Yes it's more a locals hang out, but everyone is welcome to hang out. It's my favorite place to get a quick drink after work and just relax with friends.

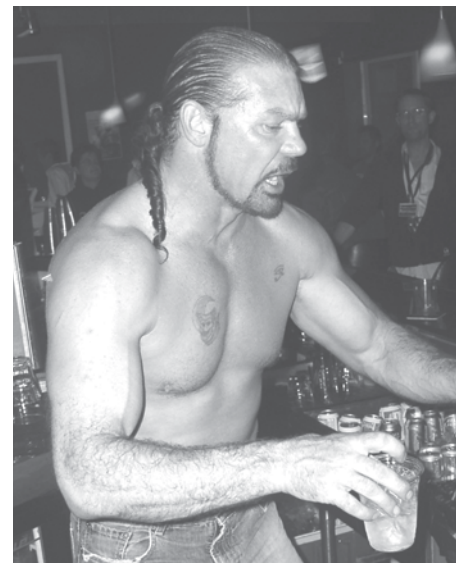
Another amazing venue for live



music is Main Street Pizza. They have some of the best pizza I've every had, along with pasta and other great food. The cabaret feel of the restaurant is perfect for small groups or intimate dinner while enjoying jazz. For that really is the focus of the music they host. Great Jazz and Blues.

Now they host live music seven nights a week, so reservations are strongly recommended. Main Street Station is located at 16280 Main Street or on line at www.mainstation.com

Finally to wrap up live music. Our



best dance venue Club Yamagata hosts a Open Mic on Wednesday nights. This brings out the best of the local scene and is always a ton of fun. Though the other thing I wanted to mention about Club Yamagata is that on Thursday nights they host the truly gifted Psychic Christine Therese Laporte – The Russian River Psychic. (Who also reads at the Coffee Bazaar, and McT's on other nights.) feel free to check out her website at rrpsychic.com

Well, August may be the half way point through the Summer, but the flow of the river and vibe is far from over. September is always a great month with the Jazz and Blues Festival and other weekend events.



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Dinner For The Arts

The Green Room

PHOTOS: (ABOVE AND
RIGHT) THE CAST OF THE
GREEN ROOM; (FAR RIGHT)
DINNER FOR THE ARTS AT
HEADHUNTERS

Dinner for the Arts is back!

Friends of Dorothy Productions, FACES, Headhunters and the Kennedy Gallery have joined forces once again to present Dinner for the Arts.

A free event hosted by local entertainer and vocalist Courtney Parks (who was recently described as a cross between Bette Midler, Judy Garland and Barbara Striesand), Dinner for the Arts strives to feature local arts organizations such as theatres, dance troupes, comedians and actors and vocalists to help them reach a wider audience.

In addition, artists from the Kennedy Gallery will be involved with live art demonstrations and/or presenting artwork at each performance.

Previous Dinner for the Arts performers have include the Hot Pot

Street Team Belly Dancers, ICUP Comedy Troupe, Ruben Sanchez of Dance 10 Studio and various local vocalists, including the current cast of The Green Room.

The next performance will take place on Sept. 3 and continue the first and third Thursdays of each month at 7:30 pm. There is no charge to attend Dinner for the Arts.

For more information and to check out the line-up for the upcoming performances, check outfodproductions.com

Anyone interested in being a part of the line up for Dinner for the Arts can email friendsofdorothyproductions@gmail.com

The Green Room

Friends of Dorothy Productions, a non-LGBT theatre company in Sacramento, has been getting rave

reviews for their new production, The Northern California Premiere of The Green Room - the College Musical.

The show is a new backstage musical illustrating the journey of four best friends in college determined to make it out of the college green room and onto the Broadway Stage.

John, Cliff, Anna and Divonne live out their complicated lives in the green room of their college theatre department and try to make it to the Broadway stage. The show follows these students through their lives in college as they sort through life and try to find their way in the world, including for some, sorting out their sexuality.

Starting out as a one-act play in the early 1990s, The Green Room then became a one-act musical and then was expanded to become the full-length musical that it is today. The show has been workshopped, mostly recently in Hermosa Beach before finally taking the stage as it was written, with the addition of video and photography to help tell the stories of these characters.

Often hilarious, at times heart-warming, this modern musical gives an authentic account of the struggles these four have in finding their place in the world. With a rocking score and witty dialogue, The Green Room is destined to be a hit.

The show's Lyrics and music by Chuck Pelletier and Book by C. Stephen Foster and Rod Damer. Directed by Kevin Carvalho, Musical Direction by Jane Veimiester, Choreography by Terri Taylor. The show stars Jacob Montoya as Cliff, Jessica Goldman as Anna, Lafras le Roux as John and Courtney Parks as Divonne, as well as the Band: Jane Viemeister, Alfonso Portela and Chelsea Gordon

The Green Room - the College Musical, The California Stage, 2509 R St., Fri. and Sat. at 8 p.m., Aug. 7 - 29, Thurs. at 8 p.m. Aug. 20 & 27, Sat. Aug. 22 at midnight.



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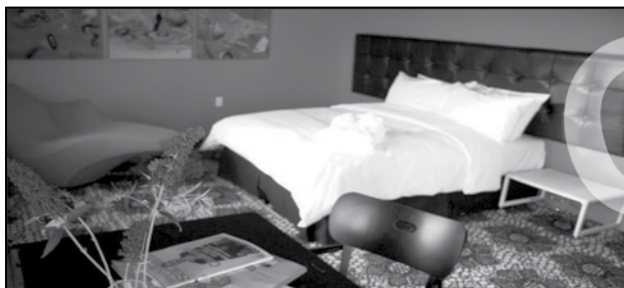
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BY JENIFFER WERTZ

Seasons of Love

She Said ... He Said ...



BY LANCE WILLIAMS

Looking

She said ...

My cutie pie friend Lance and I decided to write tandem articles about our version of "Sex in the City". The idea started casually. "Hey, all we do is talk about our romantic trials and tribulations (like everyone else does). Why don't we write about what people really think about?" We all know boys and girls see things differently. Let's compare gender differences, side by side. I have no idea what he is writing, and visa versa.

I think that most women are looking for true love that lasts forever. The U-haul jokes are mostly true. We do nest. When we find love, we cling to it, and feel more content than we do at any other time. When we loose it, we go through so much drama, and suffer so much despair. Then, when we survive our heartbreaks, we look for it again, and try to be more careful and better at love. On our death beds, we aren't thinking about how much money we made, what we owned, or what we did at our jobs. We are thinking about whom we really loved. We regret the things we should have but didn't say, and wish we had more time to do what we should have done in the first place. Ultimately, love is the most important thing in our lives. Hopefully, we cherish the ones we love everyday, and live each day as if it were our last.

I recently met someone significant and began dating, which is both exciting and scary at the same time. During our first few encounters, I found myself subconsciously interviewing her and dissecting her answers. I listened very closely to everything she said, and studied her body language at the same time. I automatically began trying to figure out if this person was going to be someone I should spend any time or effort on. I knew I at least liked her enough to entertain the thought, but being on the heels of two failed long term relationships that I worked really hard at over the last decade, I came from a position of skepticism. I've been in no hurry to meet someone. I found myself interested anyway, despite my best efforts to protect myself from women.

Besides trying to figure out if I really liked her, I was unsure how she felt about me. I did my best to plan my behavior toward her. I put on my very best cool, but not too cool attitude. I wanted to call her, but resisted the urge so as not to appear to be too anxious. When she asked me to lunch, I made myself unavailable for a few days. I wasn't sure if she would even still want to go after a few days had passed, but that was a good way to find out if she was truly interested in me. She did still want to go, and when we finally had some time alone to get to know each other, I listened to everything she said carefully so as to assess what kind of person she was. At the same time, I was trying to portray a good listener that was very interested in what she had to say. I actually was interested, but wanted to make sure she knew it. I also tried to let her know some things about me that I thought would impress her. So, about 3 hours later, I had to drag myself away from lunch and get back to work. I left with a smile, both on my face and on the inside as well.

Was she pretentious? No, check. Was she intelligent? Yes, check. Was she interesting

and fun to be around? Yes, check. Was I attracted to her? Yes, check. Was she truly available, both literally and emotionally? Yes, check. Did she like me as well? I had to find the answer to this one out later, but it ended up being another check mark (smile).

I've been seeing her since, and things have been going well. It scares the heck out of me, but I can't help but want to give it a shot anyway. I hope this is not my next big mistake. I have resolved with myself not to blame her for things that have been done wrong to me in the past. I also want to make every effort to not make the same mistakes I have made in the past. I think she feels the same way. We made it past the second date with no U-haul. So, things are going good so far. Wish me luck.

He said ...

Lately I have been spending a decent amount of time chatting on a certain website designed for gay men. I've had an account on this particular site for quite a few years now, dating all the way back to when I lived on the East Coast. The site has remained relatively the same in design for most of that time, and there has always been a place in one's profile to designate what he is looking for. There are several choices including Friendship, Relationship, 1 on 1 Sex, Group Sex, etc. While you can list as many of these choices as you like, I don't believe the site has ever given the option to leave that part of a profile blank or to state that you are not looking for anything at all. This indicates to me that the creators of the site believe we are ALL looking for SOMETHING. I would certainly agree, although many guys on this site would most certainly disagree with that belief. After all, why would I (and countless other guys around the world) spend/waste such an obscene amount of time on this site?

So what have I been searching for online for so long? I have told myself many a time that it's just a way to kill time or communicate with lots of people and "see what's out there" without having to leave the comfort of my own home... But that doesn't ring very true. Any guy who pays attention can see that there is a very unrealistic proportion of guys online who look like underwear models and have very flattering "stats." Indeed I've even been looking for porn and happened upon pictures that guys on my beloved chat site were passing off as their own. Hmmm. Not only that, but of the guys I've liked chatting with enough to meet in person (and who were obviously not models or using fake pics), the vast majority have been disappointments. Some have been on drugs, which is kind of a dealbreaker for me. One was wearing five different kinds of plaid. Others wanted to get married after half an hour at Starbucks. Several let their purses fall out of their mouths as soon as they spoke after claiming online that they were "masculine" or "straight acting" and "in the military." A surprising number were obviously using pictures from when they were 10 years younger and in a totally different shape. (I don't even care that much if a guy acts masculine or has a few extra pounds. I just can't tolerate

when people deliberately misrepresent themselves.) Sadly, the list could go on for quite a while... The point of this paragraph's rant is that chatting on my cherished website doesn't even give me a very good idea of what's truly out there.

Some guys with whom I've chatted have told me they are looking for "quality guys." Well, duh. Is any gay man looking for the guys with little or no quality? How does one even know when he's found a quality guy (online)? Is it in how many times a week he goes to the gym? His job or the car he drives? His age? His looks and the size of his package? Is it whether or not he is a vegetarian? Maybe his religious and political beliefs? What about the words in his vocabulary? Is it his lack of a disability? The desire to be monogamous? The clothes he wears? Work ethic and sense of responsibility? Is it how many friends he has? Most guys would probably say quality is a combination of many things, and that's a fair but vague answer. I guess we all think we'll "know it when we see it." But will we (especially if we are looking online)?

I continue to wonder each time I log in... Why am I doing this? I don't know for sure what I'm looking for, and even if I did, the chances of being able to recognize it on this site are akin to finding the proverbial needle in a haystack. I could kill my spare time by doing a hundred other things that are far more productive (like writing articles for local gay rags) and would leave me feeling better about myself in the end. Is this site more of a habit than anything? It's a poor substitute for real human interaction, although I've had some respectable e-conversations with a few of the men on there. It comforts me to know that some of the good guys I know in person also hang out on this site. Maybe it's not all bad.

As a matter of fact, my chat site has seen me through several failed relationships, moves across the country, friends, jobs, a life-threatening health condition, and numerous "encounters" with other gay men. Comparatively speaking, it's been one of the more stable and faithful nouns in my life. Is it even somewhat of a comfort to me? The little sound that I hear when someone sends me a message makes me think it might be...

I've decided that for all practical purposes, and for better or worse, I've had an ongoing love/hate relationship with this chat site. As such, he deserves a name. I will call him Adam. While he and I have been together for years (only broken up once but we quickly got back together), my relationship with Adam has left much to be desired. I fear that the only way he and I will ever truly separate is if I find the needle in the haystack. Adam has in fact been an online haystack for me, and at times I've been all too comfortable searching endlessly through him... Maybe the reasons I have stayed with Adam are the comfort factor and some underlying belief that if I find my needle in that online mess, it will all somehow have been worth it. Wouldn't that be the most liberating feeling in the world to walk away with what I've been searching for all along? I would never look back.

We are rapidly approaching that one day a year that is both eagerly anticipated and resignedly dreaded throughout communities across the United States; the first day of school for the fall semester. Parents are rushing to the local discount store to grab all the pens, pencils, markers, paper, folders, binders, calculators, glue sticks, scissors and boxes of tissue they can find in hopes that it will mostly meet the teachers' "required" lists that traditionally come home on the first day of school. Students are figuring out what to wear, how to do their hair, who they are going to meet and have lunch with, and "oh my god I have a pimple!", "will I know anybody in any of my classes?"; and, will this be the year I get that crazy mad English teacher down the hall who laughs like the Wicked Witch of the West, and makes you read, read, read, discuss, discuss, discuss, and write, write, write for 182 days until you leave once again for the next summer break and hopefully don't ever have to deal with her again because you actually EARNED your way through her class and passed!? That teacher would be me.)

Like all teachers at this time of the year, I worry about my curriculum, anticipate my new students' needs and peculiarities, and run about making lesson plans, handouts, grading books and syllabi that will disappear from their neat little piles on my desk as I'm continuously swamped with the examples of learning I expect from my students throughout the school year. I've been a credentialed high school English teacher for eight years in some of the worst performing and most demanding educational environments because I love the challenge and believe that our youth are our future, ALL youth, but most immediately our adolescents who very soon will be in charge of running our country. Because I am who I am, and I believe what I do about the value and purpose of a national system of free public education, that first day holds a unique, anxiously anticipated event for me every year that I've come to call "the question." No matter how veiled the terms the students put it in, or roundabout way they go at getting to the truth they want, the question boils down to, "Ms. R. are you gay?"

You see, when I finally figured this out about myself and had finally had the fortitude to come out of the closet to my parents, I did a very foolish thing considering I already knew I wanted to be a public high school teacher, and was beginning my teacher education program in predominantly Catholic Hispanic New Mexico. I had a permanent, prominent symbol of my lesbian pride indelibly inked on the outside of my right ankle. A beautiful triangular shaped, rainbow colored swish that proclaimed to old and new friends alike on MY first day of fall semester of my teacher preparation program that I had finally come to terms with this aspect of myself and I would NOT be ashamed of it for any reason. Hmm ... in that initial rush of excitement and exhilaration of self discovery I might not have been thinking things through too clearly when I got that gorgeous tattoo I still love ssssooooo much, but which has caused me many a sleepless night trying to figure out what the right way to handle "the question" is with my students.

Within three weeks I was in the office of the Director of my program, in tears, fretting

about how to handle "the question" in an environment that openly views homosexual teachers as predators trolling for victims, or recruiters for "our side", yet still stay true to my newly found and formed self image. I had already experienced a situation where 8th grade students should have been looking at the notes we were taking on the overhead, but instead were checking out my clothes and hair and body language and various other aspects of this person invading their classroom pretending to know what they were doing and usurping the teacher they had come to know and love. I handled their veiled "what is that?" literally, "What do you think that is?" then went on to the lesson and lost that "teachable moment." Even my cooperating teacher commented on it in my evaluation for the day and I felt truly horrible about feeling like I needed to hide who I am. I cried a river of woe, wailing that familiar refrain, "What the heck am I gonna say? People around here really hate me!" Dr. P. handed me a tissue and then said the most amazing, insightful bit of knowledge that has colored my views about my chosen profession and informed my classroom performance since that day long past in my professional history.

Dr. P. said, "Public Education has both explicit and implicit purposes. Explicitly, we as teachers are to give students a set of skills that will allow them to interact and excel independently in a literate, technological society. Implicitly, we are to teach the core values and beliefs that bind our particular society together and that form the basis for lawful governance in America. I trust that we will train you and assist you to make thoughtful decisions about how to use the teachable moments to bring the hidden agenda of our profession into the spotlight to help all students understand and value, not just tolerate, each other as human beings despite our differences." Then, over the next 18 months, they did. After that, I did another 18 months earning a Master of Arts in Education degree under the tutelage of these same professors. I have never forgotten, nor regretted one second of the time I spent with these teachers who helped me become the kind of teacher I think it takes to make a difference in a child's life to create a peaceful, successful society that respects and values the diversity of its individuals.

Upon leaving Dr. P's office I commenced upon an education that gave me insight into teaching the adolescent student and the vision and purpose of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). I believed that NCLB would create a better society by making education equitable across socio-ethnic boundaries and provide the means to a true equality of citizenry favored in our Constitution and Declaration of Independence. While I no longer believe that NCLB as it was put into actual practice is the solution to the problem, I do still believe that a quality education CAN solve a myriad of issues that have created an ever widening gap between the Haves and Have-NOTS in American society. This is definitely NOT a new idea. The online encyclopedia, MSN Encarta, states in its article "Public Education in the United States":

"The national system of formal education in the United States developed in the 19th century. It differed from education systems of

other Western societies in three fundamental respects. First, Americans were more inclined to regard education as a solution to various social problems. Second, because they had this confidence in the power of education, Americans provided more years of schooling for a larger percentage of the population than other countries. Third, educational institutions were primarily governed by local authorities rather than by federal ones." (http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761571494/public_education_in_the_united_states.html) And therein lies the rub; although created in part to help solve the social dilemmas that Americans as a national society faced during the mid 1800s, the actual implementation is handled on a local community level which allows for inequality of education on a number of facets; most especially communal mores, cultural customs and societal values. How does this relate to "the question", you ask? I have consciously chosen to teach in some of the most socio-economically depressed schools because I believe this is the segment of society that needs the absolutely best teachers who actually care if they have the ability to make informed choices for themselves.

Because, in ways to numerous to mention, no one else does care and that is exactly the role that I feel teachers fulfill in any society. So when I think about standing on my little stage, ready to introduce myself and my particular flavor of knowledge acquisition and expected outcomes to my newest students, "the question" is always forefront in my mind. I have come to realize that I really do represent more knowledge than what is contained in the adopted textbooks, and that my students look to me to answer the hard questions and choices they have to make outside the academic environment. So when "the question" comes, again, I realize I represent a segment of our society that seems to be one of the last bastions of condoned discrimination. And many of my students have never interacted with a real one of us from the queer community. And I am not ashamed of who I am, nor am I merely the product of my sexuality. And, I have a societal responsibility to help my students understand that being different from each other makes us a precious as the most highly valued jewels in the Queen of England's crown; all extremely different and cut into the most interesting angles, yet complimentary in their arrangement adding to an overall overwhelming sense of grandeur and beauty.

So how do I answer "the question" every year? As a representative of the gay community and in all honesty, "Yes I am." And inevitably one then says, "But you don't look gay," and I reply, "What does a gay person look like," then turn the conversation to stereotypes and how our lack of knowledge and misperceptions cause disruptions to the peace and harmony we all seek. Maslow's "Hierarchy of Needs" in which the most basic need of the human animal is a sense of security and belonging. Depending on my students' actual experiences with the gay community, or not, the discussion follows a variety of topic paths, but eventually winds its way into what I expect of my students behavior in my classroom, especially in the area of respecting each other. And how, because I am asking them to start thinking

Back To School

BY MYSTRIA MAZING

and acting like the adults the very soon will be, I will be treating them as such. Of course there is always the disclaimer that while I am willing to share control of my learning environment, should such privilege be abused it will be revoked and I can conduct classes in such a rigid structure that no one has the opportunity to disrupt the most valuable flow of ideas that makes it possible for students to appreciate another's point of view while not necessarily having to agree with it. I'm a harsh educational taskmaster and I will be strict when necessary, but I allow this discussion to take place because it sets the stage for a truly cooperative group of learners who are not afraid to take the risk of learning something new and finding a better way to live in the world and pursue their own happiness. Because of this one honest discussion, they leave my class at the end of the year knowing a heck of a lot more than just what they read in a book or regurgitated from my opinions. They learn how to form, state, and support their own opinions.

While this one particular conversation that takes place every year has cost me a job and probably more than a few of my students' trust, I never regret having it, though I always question my motives for letting it take place.

Not just for me and my students, but for the whole of our society because I believe that discrimination taints not just the particular segment of society it is practiced against, but also becomes a cancer that eats at the very fabric of that which should bind us together, the diversity for which the founding fathers thought was worthy of creating and protecting a new national society.

CORRECTION

LAST ISSUE THE ARTICLE "COURAGE CAMPAIGN—SACRAMENTO EQUALITY TEAM" INCORRECTLY IDENTIFIED JENNY B. AS THE AUTHOR. THE CORRECT AUTHOR WAS PETRA LEE. OUR APOLOGIES TO PETRA AT OUR READERS



Steam

BY JENIFFER WERTZ

Steam is a movie about the struggles of three women from different walks of life who are linked through their shared visits to a steam room at a local gym, where they each go to escape their difficulties.

The movie stars Ally Sheedy (High Art, The Breakfast Club), who plays a single divorced mother dealing with an ugly custody arrangement with her ex-husband, who has left her for a younger woman. Further

complications arise when Sheedy gets involved with a handsome man, young enough to be her son.

Ruby Dee (Oscar nominee for American Gangster) plays a lonely and isolated widow who finds love again late in life, only to face a lack of acceptance and support from her new companion's family.

The third woman is played by Kate Siegel (The OC), who encounters her first lesbian

relationship while in college, which she has to keep hidden from her religious and very controlling parents.

While Steam is heartwarming overall, and has a strong cast, the lesbian aspect is more of a weak sidebar than the theme of the movie, which was a disappointment. Reshma Shetty (Royal Pains) plays Siegel's lesbian love interest.

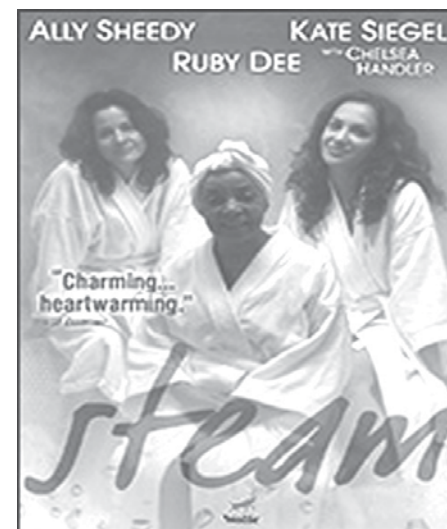
Though they are both attractive young women, Shetty is portrayed as a very shallow bisexual woman who lacks any substance of character.

One scene involving the couple and their friends depicts lesbians as recruiters when they celebrate and congratulate Siegel for becoming a lesbian. Shetty ends up dumping Siegel for a boy, which seems like a mainstream marginalization of lesbian relationships. The relationship between Siegel and her rigid parents is more interesting and has more substance than the love story.

It would be nice to see more genuine and positive lesbian characters, and strong lesbian relationships that aren't just about sex for a change.

With that said, the overall theme about the struggles of the women does make the movie worth watching; just don't expect much of a lesbian love story.

Distributed by gay and lesbian film distribution company, Wolfe, Steam is going to be available on DVD in September. wolfevideo.com



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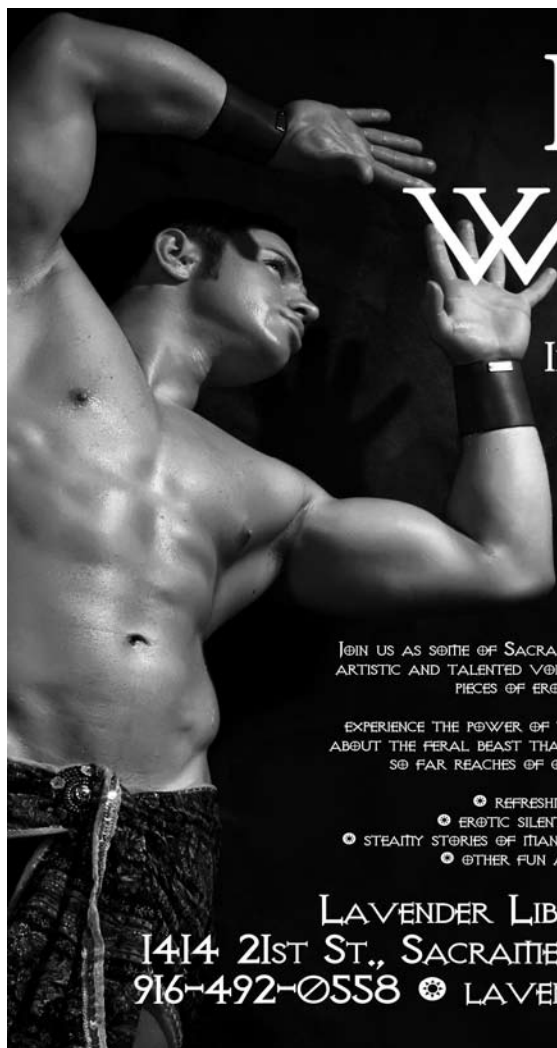


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TOM SWANNER HAS BEEN A FILM REVIEWER FOR 10+ YEARS. HE LIVES IN SACRAMENTO WITH HIS 25-YEAR-OLD BOYFRIEND SEAN AND THEIR GROSSLY OBESE DAUGHTER (READ DOG) "HONEY".



BRIAN JUDD HAS BEEN A FILM REVIEWER FOR 6 YEARS. HE LIVES IN SMALL APARTMENT WHERE A PORTRAIT OF ANITA BRYANT HANGS OVER HIS BED SO HE CAN POINT AT HER AND LAUGH DAILY. HE IS ALONE AND BITTER AND LIKES IT THAT WAY.

Swanner & Judd

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THE PERFECT GETAWAY

Swanner: Steve Zahn and Milla Jovovich play newlyweds honeymooning in Hawaii. Before partaking on a secluded three day hike around one of the islands they hear about the murder of some newlyweds in Honolulu. There hasn't been any arrests made but they do know it's a couple. Of course everyone they meet up with on this secluded hike is a couple, so the mystery is...who are the killers?

Judd: The best part of the movie is the amount of skin. The movie certainly isn't homoerotic by any means, but Timothy Olyphant and newcomer Chris Hemsworth have plenty of shirtless screen time. Olyphant pairs up with Lost's Kiele Sanchez as a southern couple with military backgrounds that like hunting, knives and weed. Hemsworth pairs up with 11th Hour's Mary Shelton as a dirty looking couple with bad attitudes.

Swanner: The movie is called a thriller and I think that fits. The title is kind of silly because it makes it sound more like a romantic comedy than a who-done-it. I loved the skin factor here, not to mention the location was beautiful as well. I must admit I went in not liking the film. The preview looking kind of dumb to the point I was mocking it to friends. When Zahn and Olyphant are talking about screenwriting the movie got more interesting...most because of Olyphant, who I think was the best part of this film.

Judd: I went in thinking I was going to like the movie more than I did. It's newlyweds being murdered, what's not to love? I liked the movie more at the beginning than I did as it progressed. I struggled with why I didn't like the movie when we left the theatre, and I'm still can't put my thumb on it. I know that one issue I had was that the violence came way too late in the movie. I enjoyed Olyphant, but I kept thinking that he was playing a young man's Billy-Bob Thornton.

Swanner: I can see where you'd get that. Olyphant and Sanchez certainly brought the bigger than life characters to life. Casting wise I did have a problem with Zahn. He's relied on the cute factor to get him through movies and it wasn't working here. The rest of the cast was fine but with Zahn as the lead and Olyphant as more of a supporting character it made Zahn's whiney moment almost unbearable. I'm not saying I didn't like the movie but it's not till the third act that I even start to believe Zahn's character.

Judd: I think that was my biggest problem with the movie. I agree with you that Zahn's character was extremely whiny and "delicate". The idea that his character would consider a difficult hiking trail to get to a private beach didn't make sense. There were other similar problems throughout the movie that for some reason really got under my skin. I wasn't able to look past them and get into the movie.

Swanner: Hurray, we have solved your problem with the film. It didn't bother me as much as it did you. One other thing about this movie is that people are laughing again in horror films. It's something that's been missing. When people are nervous or uncomfortable...they laugh. People also laugh when you can see the plot forming like we did here. Sure it's predictable but there were enough good lines and awkwardness to push it over the approval line for me. Which is funny since those were the reasons I hated Orphan. I guess hot guys with very little on can win me over compared to evil children with hammers.

Judd: And see, I would rather watch a child bash in a nun's skull than a shirtless Timothy Olyphant... Wait a minute. What the hell is wrong with me?

Swanner: I'm questioning that myself as well

Swanner: 2 Stars
Judd 1 Star

500 DAYS OF SUMMER

Judd: Leave it to my best friend, Joseph Gordon Levitt, to pick a role in one of the most enjoyable romantic comedies that I've ever seen. 500 Days of Summer tells the story of a couple that don't quite work out and the highs and lows of love in an honest, funny movie so good it should have been based on a book.

Swanner: What makes this movie so different is it's a romantic comedy but from the male point of view. Tom is just you're regular hopeless romantic (who, in most films, would have been played by Katherine Heigl or Sandra Bullock) looking for what we all look for. "The One". Zoëy Deschanel plays Summer Finn, the girl Tom Hanson (Levitt) thinks is "the one" but Summer thinks differently. She not looking for anything serious, she wants to keep things casual.

Judd: Don't you DARE befool this movie by using actresses like Heigl or Bullock for comparison! 500 Days of Summer is nothing like any piece of crap those two hags would star in! 500 Days of Summer is different because Hanson is allowed to wallow in his misery without his friends cheering him up and he doesn't meet someone else ½ way through the film. Judd Apatow has built his career on guy-centric romcoms, and as much as I like him, even he can't



escape the clichés.

Swanner: Down boy...I'm agreeing with you here. If you breakdown the average romcom they are the same but the Tom Hanson character is what makes this script different. Tom Hanson is us. He's not one of Apatow's cool, funny, who-doesn't-love-him characters... He's real and he demands special treatment. The script does that for him. The clever way it bounces around the 500 days is genius and my buddy Joseph Gordon Levitt was so spot-on that I almost felt like I was imposing on his life.

Judd: I really enjoyed the fact that when the movie fell to standard romcom conventions, it did so tongue in cheek. The dance number after Tom spends his first night with Summer is very cute, but done in such an over the top way that it laughs

at itself. I also liked they way it juxtaposed the good and the bad of a relationship. One moment their running through IKEA as the happy couple then next moment, 200 days later, they're fighting in the aisles. Instead of seeing the relationship deteriorate over time, it instantly goes to crap, which gives the scenes emotional heft.

Swanner: This is everything you want in a romcom or an independent film. it works on so many levels I can't imagine anyone that wouldn't like it. This film really has the potential of being a very big movie if the studio distributes it right. I overheard a male audience member last night saying "now that was really good". Now this was a guy I was sure would be running for his car, but the Tom Hanson character spoke to this guy and will speak to guys who get dragged to see movies by their girlfriends. It's a win win as a date movie and it's definitely a win win for critics that have to see a lot of very average movies. I'm stoked up about this movie and want everyone to see it because then, just maybe, we'll start seeing more films that take chances and break from the tired old traditions.

Judd: I actually liked it – more than that, I loved the movie, and for me to say that about any romantic comedy, you know it has to be above and beyond excellent. I loved its honesty, the genuine emotion and real scenarios. The writing is funny without being slapstick or overly witty. I worry that

the film won't do so well because it strays too far from the formula and it has a very indie feel about it. It isn't familiar enough to draw the women that normally see movies like this.

Swanner: I have much more faith than you do in this film. I think the word of mouth is going to be incredible. We have forgotten to mention three people, Marc Webb the director and Scott Neustadter & Michael H Weber the screenplay writers. With very little experience they made one of the best movies of the year. Expect to see 500 Days of Summer on my best picture list.

Swanner: 5 stars (Yes, that's five stars)
Judd: 4½ (It's a romcom, I can't do five on principle)

CORTISOL, STRESS & WEIGHT LOSS!

Stress affects hunger, body weight, and where fat is distributed. The body produces cortisol to help us handle stress. When stress goes up, so do cortisol levels. This can lead to weight gain and a host of comorbidities associated with it which includes hypertension, diabetes, abnormal blood lipid levels, heart disease, and cancer. Overweight and obese people especially have higher cortisol levels than lean people. Here's why.

Cortisol is a hormone in a group of steroids commonly referred to as glucocorticoids. The hormone cortisol is produced by the adrenal gland and is necessary for life. Cortisol is a key hormone involved in the body's response to stress, both physical and emotional. Cortisol is responsible for the metabolism of Carbohydrates, fats and proteins and helps regulate inflammation in the body and the immune system. Cortisol increases blood sugar levels, increases blood pressure, and is part of the body's fight-or-flight response (from stress) that is essential for survival. The pituitary gland directs the adrenal glands to secrete both cortisol and adrenaline. Adrenaline production increases alertness, energy level, and metabolism by helping fat

cells to release energy.

Cortisol actions help restore balance after stress, including increased production of glucose from protein to quickly increase the body's energy during stressful times.

Cortisol has a two-fold effect on fat. When stress first occurs, fat is broken down to supply the body with immediate energy. Simultaneously, the brain releases a substance known as corticotropin-releasing hormone (CRH), which alerts and sends the body into the fight or flight mode. The body prepares for battle, pupils dilate, thinking improves, and the lungs take in more oxygen. CRH signals the appetite to suppress, and the digestive system to shut off temporarily. CRH also triggers the release of the hormones adrenaline and cortisol, which help mobilize carbohydrate and fat for quick energy. When the immediate stress is over, the adrenaline dissipates, but the cortisol lingers to help bring the body back into balance. One of the ways cortisol gets the body back to normal is by increasing the appetite to replace the carbohydrate and fat we should have burned while fleeing or fighting. Most people do not respond to stress with such physicality. The body assumes it has just physically exerted itself. In reality the body is probably sitting while stressed out and not physically fleeing or fighting. This survival mechanism causes the body to refuel when it doesn't need to. Sustained stress keeps cortisol levels elevated which in turn

keeps the appetite up.

The second effect of cortisol occurs while being in a constant state of stress. Long term exposure to cortisol can lead to weight gain, increase in appetite, and continuously increasing insulin levels. If stress and cortisol levels stay high, so will insulin levels. Continual stress leads to a constant state of excess cortisol production, which stimulates glucose production. This excess glucose is then typically converted into fat, ending up as stored fat. The net effect of this will be increased fat storage in the body. Furthermore, stress and the resulting chronic overload of cortisol makes one feel tired and listless. A repeated cycle of overeating to renew energy and comfort leads to the end result of unwanted belly fat.

Stress-induced cortisol causes fat to be stored in the center (waistline) of the body, as fat cells in this area are more sensitive to cortisol. Fat cells in the abdomen are richer in stress hormone receptors. These receptors are particularly sensitive to high insulin, and are very effective at storing energy, more so than fat cells in other areas. Weight gain in the abdomen is a warning indicator of possible future metabolic syndrome, diabetes, and heart disease among others. The relationship between cortisol, stress, and weight gain is not a simple one-to-one relationship. There are many different peptides and hormones involved. Cortisol might not be the primary culprit. Studies suggest that a state of elevated cortisol levels in fat tissue cells may exist without elevated cortisol levels in the blood regarding obesity. High levels of cortisol within the cells, such as in fat cells, may play a causative role in obesity, but this conclusion requires further investigation.

Stress increases glucocorticoids which involve the control of body weight and obesity. There are multiple controls in our body that regulate body weight and appetite. Glucocorticoids are not the only hormones involved. Multiple systems are involved in and outside the brain that regulate the amount of fat and appetite level.

Chronic stress and elevated cortisol may be factors in weight problems. What can one do to reduce cortisol? First, focus on becoming stress resistant. One of the best things to reduce stress and improve insulin sensitivity is to get regular exercise, or even a daily brisk walk. Exercise not only helps promote weight loss by burning calories, but is also beneficial because it helps neutralize effects of stress, which in turn helps you keep weight off. A daily brisk walk can help to alleviate the causes of stress, allowing the body time to move and awaken.

Second, practice stress reduction techniques such as meditation, yoga, stretching and breathing exercises. Improving time management or organization skills can also be essential to reducing stress in one's life. Getting quality sleep can help reduce your body's physiological response to daily stressors.

Third, how a person perceives stressful situations is extremely important. One person may feel major stress from a particular situation, whereas another will handle it better by using the event as a learning opportunity. Stress is all around us, but how one reacts to stress is most important. "The Body Clock" and "Eat to Sleep!" were last issue's topic. Remember today's tip, clip it out, save it on the fridge, and make sure to read next issue's topic, "Exercise - Too Much, Too Soon!"



MICHAEL A. COOK, AFAA (AEROBIC AND FITNESS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA) HAS OVER 15 YEARS EXPERIENCE AS A CERTIFIED PERSONAL FITNESS TRAINER, AND IS OWNER OF FITNESS-HAPPENS.COM AND THE EAST SACRAMENTO TRAINING STUDIO. AS A REGULAR CONTRIBUTOR TO THE SACRAMENTO MGW NEWSPAPER, MICHAEL INTERVIEWS AND WRITES ON HEALTH AND FITNESS TOPICS. MICHAEL (COACH COOK) WELCOMES YOUR QUESTIONS, COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS WRITE TO MICHAEL COOK AT 3112 "O" ST., SACRAMENTO CA 95816 OR CALL 916.813.9009

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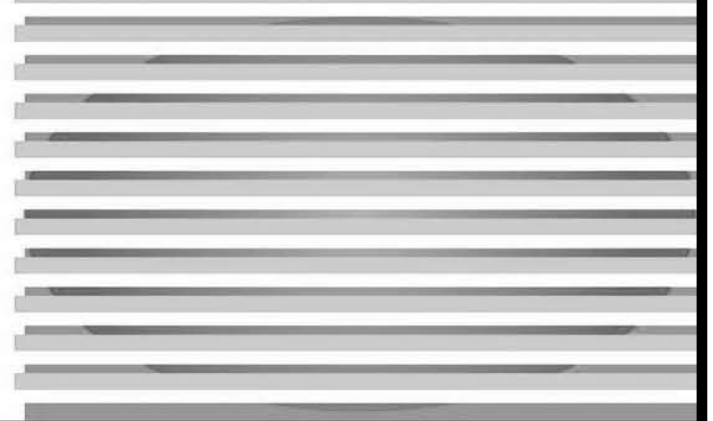
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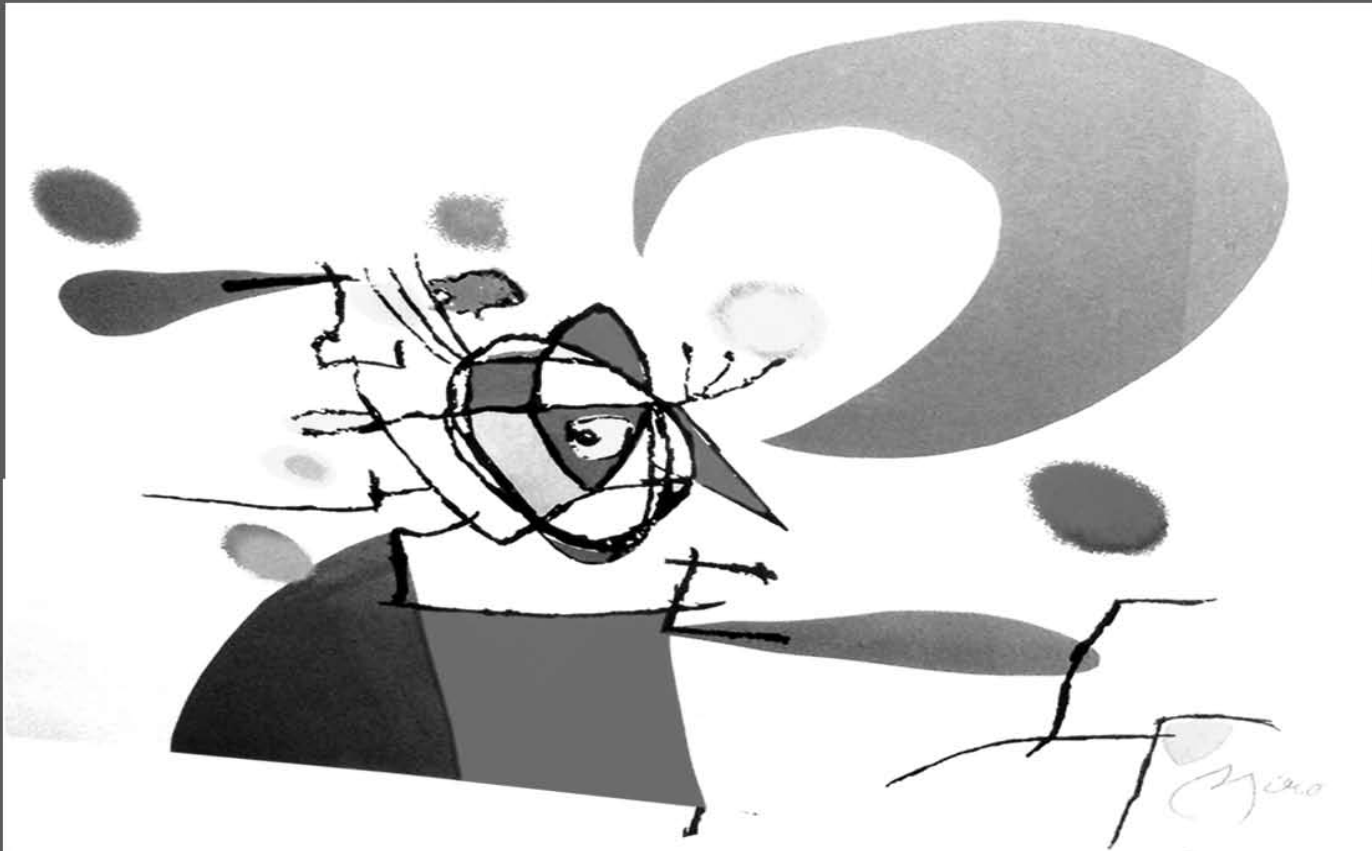
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ADVICE OF THE WEEK: SOMETIMES AN EARRING IS JUST AN EARRING.

I never thought I was the kind of guy who could cry over a lost earring.

To make you understand why I'd spend a Saturday morning in my bathroom staring at a naked earlobe and choking back sobs, I have to walk you through some of the ways my weight loss has altered me. No one will be surprised when I admit that my body has changed a bit as I've dropped the last 210 pounds. Some of the changes are obvious — legs shrink, arms get more and more solid, being less likely to knock someone over with your belly when turning around quickly (sorry about that, Grandma). But there are other changes that people take into account a little less, like your feet shrinking, or losing weight in your hands and fingers. I wonder if the higher than average divorce rate among people who have gastric bypass surgery is because as the weight comes off so does the wedding ring whenever you point, gesture, or flip the bird at some bastard on the freeway.

The biggest impact to the way you see yourself is the change in your own face, though. It's sort of epic, like watching geography happen. Lips grow and define as the second chin recedes, a mighty glacier traveling south on the planes of your face. Cheeks shift and then sink, cheekbones you never knew suddenly rise out of your face like hidden mountains you never knew were there. The face you've always known suddenly changes and becomes Eastern Europe.

There was a morning a few weeks back when I realized that someone else's eyes were looking back at me from the mirror. That blew my mind. All the rest, all the other changes in my face I could understand, but I never expected to lose my eyes. When people talk about eyes being the windows of the soul they think they're talking about the eyes themselves — the irises, the whites, the little colored bits that look back at you. What they don't always consider is that they eyes

bear no capability of expression. Eyes flirt with you by winking, but the wink is made be the eyelid closing, a softness lent to the action by a cheek and a forehead. A smile reaches the eyes and makes them twinkle not by some magical spark formed by the iris but by the face around it shaping the eyes into an expression of happiness. As the cheeks thin out, as the forehead smooths, your smile changes and your eyes become strange to you. As the face changes, so change the windows to the soul.

There were cosmetic choices I made along the way, too. My old hairstyle suddenly looked totally wrong on me as the texture of my hair changed, going from thick to fine (yes, I even lost weight in my hair). Realizing that I had no idea what my face looked like under my goatee, anymore, I shaved it off for the first time in decades. Suddenly, there's a stranger looking back at you from the mirror. As my old face faded away and a new one rose up to replace it, though, there was one anchor to cling to, one feature that remained unchanged — my little brass earring.

I'm not a jewelry person. I don't own much in the way of ornaments. I'm not even sure why I pierced my ear all those years ago, but I did. For the past 10 years or so I've worn one earring: a simple brass hoop that I bought with a friend at a trinket store at Disneyworld. At first I thought it was fun, something that made me look like a pirate. Over time it became part of my face, part of my look, part of my identity. That earring lasted longer than any of my relationships, than jobs, it survived my moving to California and redefining myself, it went to formal events, to funerals, to weddings; it was a part of me. This earring became an anchor, a rock, a reference point that remained solid for me while the familiar slipped away. Yes, I may have minor co-dependency issues with my jewelry. I'm working on it.

And then one morning the earring was gone.

I spent a long time looking for it that week. Losing a part of your face is hard; losing the

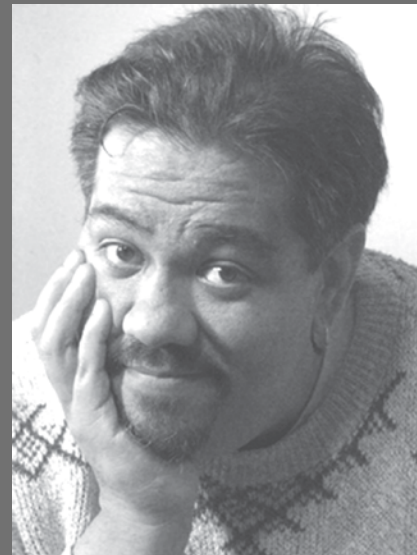
last part of your face that you recognized was harder. I didn't tell anyone what happened, because I felt silly that this earring meant so much to me. How could I express that in the middle of all this good, of the thousands of positive impacts my weight loss has had on me, that I desperately needed this one connection to the old me, this one, last piece of a face that I hope to never see again?

I wasn't sure that anyone could understand what I'd lost when I misplaced a \$3.00 piece of metal from Disneyworld.

Yesterday I found a spare pair of earrings. I bought them months ago because they're a silver version of the earring I lost — close in design, but slightly larger and made of sterling silver instead of the simple brass. When I picked them out I was pleased to finally have a spare for my earring, "just in case". I never actually thought I'd wear them. I pulled the new earrings out of my bathroom drawer, picked one of them off the little white piece of cardboard they sell them on, put it into my ear for the first time and looked at myself in the mirror. Like my chin, like my cheeks, my forehead, my hair, like my eyes, this new earring reminds me a lot of the face I used to have — so close, but so different. It's like the wave of change has finally reached that unchangeable earring.

An earring is what you make it. But so is a face. My friends and my family celebrate my new face; the loss of the old one goes unmourned. I know it's not because they didn't like the old face, it wasn't that they didn't like my old body — it's just that the new face celebrates an accomplishment that has changed my life for the better. They see the old face in my new one, as does most of the world, so they don't feel the loss that I do. They don't see a smile as a series of twitches that swing cheeks and forehead into a series of proper positions — they really do just see the twinkle in my eye. And my eyes twinkle a hell of a lot more lately, thinner cheeks or no.

Perhaps a face is better defined by the people who love it than by an earring.



HUMORIST AND SATIRIST DONALD E. MARSHALL IS A 35-YEAR-OLD GAY MAN LIVING IN HOLLYWOOD, CA WHO RECENTLY MADE SOME CHANGES IN HIS LIFE. OVER THE PAST YEAR, HE'S LOST 180 POUNDS BETWEEN DIETING, EXERCISE AND GASTRIC BYPASS SURGERY. HIS LIFE IS CHANGING QUICKLY, AS IS THE WORLD HE LIVES IN. THE LOCAL ALL YOU CAN EAT CHINESE BUFFET HAS GONE OUT OF BUSINESS. TRAINERS AT THE GYM NO LONGER HIDE UNDER THE DESK WHEN HE WALKS BY AND HE'S EXPLORING THE WHOLE NEW WORLD OF FASHION, DESPITE THE PROTESTS OF LOCAL SALESGIRLS. BEST OF ALL, HE'S LOVING LIFE IN A WAY HE HASN'T IN YEARS! SHRINKINGFATMAN@GMAIL.COM

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Earth Talk

EMAGAZINE.COM

I haven't heard much of late about big oil spills like the infamous Exxon Valdez. Has the industry cleaned up its act, or do the media just not report them?

In the wake of 1989's massive Exxon Valdez oil spill in Alaska's Prince William Sound, when 11 million gallons of oil befouled some 1,300 miles of formerly pristine and wildlife-rich coastline, much has been done to prevent future spills of such magnitude.

For starters, Congress quickly passed the 1990 Oil Pollution Act which overhauled shipping regulations, imposed new liability on the industry, required detailed response plans and added extra safeguards for shipping in Prince William Sound itself. Under the terms of the law, companies cannot ship oil in any U.S. waters unless they prove they have response and clean-up plans in place and have the manpower and equipment on hand to respond quickly and effectively in the case of another disaster.

Also, the law mandates that, by 2015, all tankers in U.S. waters must be equipped with double hulls. The Exxon Valdez had only one hull when it ran aground on Bligh Reef and poured its oil into Prince William Sound, the southern end of the oil pipeline that originates 800 miles to the north at Prudhoe Bay. By comparison, a 900-foot double-hulled tanker carrying nearly 40 million gallons of crude oil did not leak when it crashed into submerged debris near Galveston, Texas in March 2009.

According to the U.S. Coast Guard, average annual oil spill totals have dropped dramatically since new regulations took effect in 1990. Between 1973 and 1990, an average of 11.8 million gallons of oil spilled each year in American waters. Since then, the average has dropped to just 1.5 million gallons, with the biggest spill (not including those resulting from Hurricane Katrina in 2005) less than 600,000 gallons.

Despite these improvements, critics say the industry still has more work to do. While protections have been beefed up in Prince

William Sound, other major American ports still lack extra precautions such as escort tugboats and double engines and rudders on big ships to help steer them to safety when in trouble.

Another area that the 1990 law doesn't cover is container ships that don't transport oil as their cargo but which carry a large amount, anyway, for their own fuel for the considerable distances they travel. Such ships could also cause a major spill (anything more than 100,000 gallons, by Coast Guard standards). Yet another concern is the great number of smaller oil spills that occur every day at industrial locations (including but not limited to oil refining and storage facilities) and even in our own driveways. These will continue to add up to a heavy toll on our environment, even if another oil tanker never spills at sea again.

And while the total number and volume of oil spills is down dramatically from bygone days, the trend of late warrants concern. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA's) Office of Response and Restoration reports that oil spills in U.S. waters have risen again over the past decade, with 134 incidents in 2008 alone. Green leaders worry that if Bush administration plans to expand offshore oil drilling are not overturned by President Obama, oil spills in U.S. waters could remain a sad fact of life.

CONTACTS: NOAA Office of Response and Restoration, www.response.restoration.noaa.gov; U.S. EPA Oil Pollution Act Overview, www.epa.gov/OEM/content/lawsregs/opaoover.htm.

I'm sure there are many good environmental reasons to build a rooftop garden. Can you enlighten? And also I'd like to know how to go about creating one and whether or not some municipalities might offer incentives to do so.

Indeed there are many good reasons to

build a rooftop garden, or a so-called "green roof"—whereby layers of soil and plants on top of homes and buildings provide a host of environmental "services" for the living space below as well as for the surrounding ecosystem. Unlike traditional roofs, green roofs thrive on (and filter) precipitation, decreasing the amount of pollution-laden stormwater run-off draining into our waterways. And thanks to the process of photosynthesis, the plantings create oxygen, cleanse the air and absorb carbon dioxide before it gets into the atmosphere and adds to our global warming woes.

Green roofs also provide insulation: All those layers of organic material help keep a structure warm in the winter and cool in the summer, and help cut energy use and costs. Migrating birds and other wildlife have been known to take a shine to green roofs, especially in urban areas where natural habitat options are limited. Likewise, homeowners and building residents tend to view their green roofs as oases of peace and tranquility within otherwise noisy and concrete-laden urban environments.

According to Green Roofs for Healthy Cities, a nonprofit industry association, green roofs are gaining popularity. North Americans added some 3.1 million square feet of them to their buildings in 2008 alone—up 35 percent from 2007. Part of the uptick can be attributed to increasing awareness of the benefits of green roofs among urban planners, building owners and managers, and homeowners, all who have pressured policymakers to ease the burden of zoning and permitting for such beneficial projects.

Chicago now sports some 535,000 square feet of green roofs—the most in North America. Other leading lights in the green roofs movement include Washington, DC, New York City, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Montreal, and Vancouver, British Columbia. Dozens of smaller cities have also embraced green roofs. Grand Rapids, Michigan sports some 75,000 square feet of them, and Princeton, New Jersey and Newtown Square, Pennsylvania each play host to 50,000 square feet citywide. Inquiring at city hall is the best way to see if your city or town offers incentives for creating a green roof or greening an existing one.

Relief for the costs of installing a green roof might be on the way from the federal government. As part of the Clean Energy Stimulus and Investment Assurance Act she authored earlier this year, U.S. Senator Maria Cantwell (D-WA) is calling for residential and commercial property owners who install green roofs or retrofit existing roofs to recoup 30 percent of their costs in the form of a federal tax credit.

Do-it-yourselfers will find a treasure trove of information on how to create and install a green roof at the website Greenroofs.com. The site's keyword-searchable directory offers links to manufacturers of kits to make installing your own green roof that much simpler, as well as to professional installers across North America and groups working on urban greening issues.

CONTACTS: Green Roofs for Healthy Cities, www.greenroofs.org; Clean Energy Stimulus and Investment Assurance Act, www.govtrack.us/congress/bill.xpd?bill=s111-320; Greenroofs.com, www.greenroofs.com.



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ACTIVISM

Equality Action NOW, a Sacramento based grassroots organization dedicated to mobilizing concerned citizens to promote equality for all. Formed in the wake of Prop. 8 the group works to see that LGBT voices and concerns are represented in the larger community. 916.446.1082, equalityactionnow.org

BARS

1099 Club: 1099 S. Virginia St. Reno NV, ten99club.com 775-329-1099

5-Star Saloon: 132 West St. Reno NV, 5starsaloon.com

Badlands Dance Bar: Mon - Sat 4pm to 2am, Sun 2pm to 2am, 2003 K St., 916.448.8790, sacbadlands.com

BoJangles: 18+, 1119 21st St. (Moving Next To Headhunters Soon)

Bolt Bar: Leather/Cowboy/Bear, Open 5pm-2am Mon - Fri, 2pm-2am Sat and Sun, 2560 Boxwood St., sacbolt.com

Brave Bull, 701 S 9th St., Modesto, 209-529-6712, thebravebull.com

Cadillac Lounge, 1114 E. Fourth St. Reno NV

Club 21: 1119 21st St.

Club Yamagata, 16225 Main Street Guerneville, clubyamagata.com, 707-869-9383

Depot Video Bar: 2001 K St., 916-441-6823, Mon - Fri 4pm - 2am, Sat and Sun 2pm - 2am, thedepot.net

FACES Nightclub: 2000 K St., 916-448-7798, faces.net

Mercantile Saloon: 1928 L St., 916.447-0792

Headhunters/ROK: Restaurant, Bar Service until 2am, 1930 K Street, headhuntersonk.com

Mustang Club, 413 7TH St, Modesto, 209-522-0393

Neutron Bar, 340 Kietzke Lane - Reno

Rainbow Cattle CO, 16220 Main St. Guerneville, queersteer.com, 707-869-0206

Russian River Resort (Triple R), 16390 4th St. Guerneville russianriverresort.com, 707-869-0691

The Patio: 600 West 5th St. Reno NV. 775-323-6565, thepatioabar.com

Tronix: 303 Kietzke Lane, Reno NV

BUSINESS

Rainbow Chamber of Commerce: Business association promoting networking within the gay and lesbian business community and its supporters. rainbowchamber.com

Valley Rainbow Pages: A directory of LGBT-owned and LGBT-friendly businesses in the Greater Sacramento Valley. vrp.info

FAMILY

Camp it Up: (August 3-10) A family camp known for one-of-a-kind gay family vacations, we respect and celebrate all unique families. www.campitup.org

Camp Lavender Hill: A week-long summer camp for children, ages 9-14, of LGBT families. (2008 camp date has passed). camplavenderhill.org

Lesbian Families: A forum for Lesbian couples with children. geocities.com/lesbianfamilies/index.html

PFLAG Sonora/Mother Lode Chapter: Meets on the third Tuesday of Jan., Apr., July, and Oct., 6:30pm, at the Tuolumne County Library. Other events scheduled through the year. pflagsonora.org

Sacramento PFLAG: Promotes health and well-being of LGBT persons, families and friends. Meets the third Tues. of each month at 7:30pm, St. Mark's United Methodist Church, 2391 St. Mark's Way. 916-978-0410, pflagsacramento.org

FESTIVALS - EVENTS

Reno Gay Pride, August 15th 2009, renogaypride.com

Sacramento Pride: (June) Annual Pride celebration for Sacramento, hosted by the Sacramento Gay & Lesbian center. sacramento pride.org

Rainbow Festival: (Aug. 29 - 31, 2008) Annual LGBT street

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SeniorGays.org
Support Group for the Senior GLBT Community

As seniors we face common problems of aging, illness and the loss of friends, partners, and relatives. As LGBT people, we sometimes face estrangement from our neighbors and families. It would be good to unite to form a community of support for each other in Sacramento as well as online. In other cities such organizations have flourished and have provided companionship, fellowship, and mutual nurturing to LGBT seniors.

faire over Labor Day Weekend. Rainbow Festival is Run by CGNIE and takes place at 20th & K Sts. rainbowfestival.com

Sac. International Gay & Lesbian Film Festival: (Oct. 2009) Annual LGBT film festival takes place over 5 days. siglff.org

Sac. Earth Day: Annual Festival coordinated by Environmental Council of Sacramento (ECOS), 909 12th Street, Suite 100, 916-444-0022, sacramentoearthday.net

Sonoma County Pride. Guerneville May 31, 2009

GALLERIES

Crocker Art Museum: The longest continuously operating art museum in the West founded 1885. crockerartmuseum.org

Kennedy Gallery: 1114 20th St. Tues.-Sat. Noon to 7pm and by appointment. mmkgallery.com

HIV | AIDS

Anonymous HIV Testing Services: Harm reduction Services, 3647 40th St., Wednesdays 8am - 5pm; Appointments are required for testing. 916-875-6022
Breaking Barriers: Provides a wide range of services for people living with HIV. 2200 21st St., 916-447-2437, breakingbarriers-sacramento.org

Capital City AIDS Fund: Raises money for HIV/AIDS services in the Sac. area. CCAF's activities include Oscar® Night (Feb. 2010), NorCal AIDS Challenge (May 14-17, 2009), and Sacramento Valley AIDS Run Walk (Sept., 2009). capcityaidsfund.org

CARES: HIV/AIDS health clinic, outreach, education and prevention. Free, rapid HIV testing M-F 9 am to 5 pm. 1500 21st St., 916-443-3299, caresclinic.org

Face to Face - Sonoma Co. AIDS Network www.f2f.org 707-544-1581

Golden Rule Services: A minority based organization that resolves health, education, employment and criminal justice disparities in People of Color communities through culturally competent programs and resources. 4433 Florin Road, Suite 760. 916-427-GOLD, goldenrules.info

NorCal AIDS Challenge: (May 15-18, 2009) A 4-day, 330 mile bike ride to raise funds and awareness for HIV/AIDS norcalaidchallenge.net

Northern Nevada H.O.P.E.S., P.O. Box 6420, Reno NV. nnhopes.org, 888-467-3144

Sacramento Valley AIDS Run/Walk: Sept. 14, 2008. 916-448-1110, sacvalleyaidsrunwalk.org

Sac. Valley Pozabilities: HIV+ social group. sacvalleypozabilities@yahoo.com, PO Box 161871, Sacramento, CA 95816-1871

Sierra Hope: Provides support for people with HIV & AIDS. Sierra HOPE, 1168 Booster Way, P.O. Box 159, Angels Camp, CA, 95222, 209.736.6792, sierrahope.org

Sunburst Projects: Providing support to families with children who are living with HIV/AIDS. 1025 19th Street, Suite 1A, 916-440-0889, sunburstprojects.org

IMPERIAL COURT

Court Of The Great Northwestern Imperial Empire (CGNIE): Parent organization for Sacramento's Court, La Kish Hayworth Memorial Fund, Fairy Godfathers' Fund and Rainbow Festival. myspace.com/cgnie

LAW | POLITICS

California Communities United Institute promotes the social, economic, and human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex individuals, couples, and families; people affected by HIV/AIDS; people of color; women; and people of low economic status. We urge elected officials to enact and support legislation that accomplishes this goal. calcomui.org

Central Valley Stonewall Democratic Club: Helps elect qualified, openly LGBT people to public office, as well as Democratic Party candidates that support equal rights for the LGBT community. cvstonewall.org

California Capital Political Action Committee (CAP/PAC): A non-partisan, political action committee formed to provide a voice for the LGBT community in the political process. cappac.net

Green Party of Sacramento County: P.O. Box 2082, Sacramento, CA 95812, 916-484-4000, sacgreens.org

Libertarian Party of Sac.: P.O. Box 3003, Orangevale, CA 95662, lpsacramento.com

Log Cabin Republicans: logcabin.org/logcabinca/sacramento_chapter.html

SAC Legal: Association of attorneys, legal professionals, and legislative advocates, affiliated with the Sacramento County Bar Assoc. that promotes equality the LGBT community. saclegal.org

Stonewall Democrats of Sac.: Helping elect qualified, openly LGBT people and Democratic candidates who support equal rights for LGBT. P O Box 161623 Sacramento, CA 95816-1623, 916-441-1787, sacstonewall.org

NEW MEDIA

Being Gay Today: Sacramento's oldest, still-running LGBT TV show. Comcast Cable. Access Sac, channel 17. Thurs. 10pm, Now on myspace and youtube. beinggaytoday.com

Checkerred Nation Video Show: A gay-focused internet chat show in and around Sacramento. checkerrednation.com

Transponder Radio: Internet radio show covering many transgender issues. transponder.com

PERFORMANCE

A Small Difference Women's Choral Ensemble: Women, under the direction of Sage Brown, dedicated to performing music with a message. smalldifference.org

Sac. Gay Men's Chorus: Produces up to three concerts a year, and performs throughout the year at events in and around Sacramento. sgmchorus.org

Sacramento DanceSport: The Largest Same-Sex Dance Program in the United States. Classes, performances and competition. sacdancesport.com

True Colors Women's Chorus: Women building a community through their love of music. 877-758-7827, truecolorschorus.org

RELIGION - SPIRITUALITY

A Church For All: Fosters an all encompassing spiritual community. 721 North B Street, Sacramento, CA, 95816-2073, 916-502-5603, spirit@achurchforall.org. achurchforall.org

Atheists and Other Freethinkers: Promoting the civic understanding and acceptance of atheism in our community. afoonline.org

Atonement Lutheran: Welcomes all people, regardless of race, language, previous denominational affiliation, gender, or sexual orientation. at-one.org

Grove of the Oak: An eclectic group of Druids, Wiccans, and other Pagans who gather twice a month and on the eight annual Celtic seasonal festivals, to share community, perform ritual, create magic, and support each other in our chosen earth-honoring pagan paths. groveoftheoak.org

Lutheran Church of Our Redeemer: LGBT affirming and supports the Lutheran Lesbian & Gay Ministries. lctorsac.org

Pioneer Congregational Church: LGBT open and affirming. 2700 L Street, 916-443-3727, uccwebsites.net/pioneercongsacramentoca.html

Sacramento Friends Meeting (Quaker) 890 57th St, Sacramento., 916-457-3998 sacfriendsmtg.org

St. Mark's United Methodist Church: A Christian community welcoming a diverse congregation. stmarksurmc.com

St. Paul's Episcopal Church: A Christian community that embraces one and all to worship together at God's table. 1430 J Street, 916.446.2620, stpaulssacramento.org

Trinity Episcopal Cathedral: LGBT affirming. Christian worship, life and ministry. 2620 Capitol Ave., 916-446-2513, trinitycathedral.org

Valley Ministries: Existing to communicate God's love and accept all people. 4118 Coronado Ave, Stockton. 209-464-5244, valleyministries.com

RESOURCES

Amador County LGBTQQ Support Group: Amador County Mental Health - call Mary Pulskamp at 209-223-6412

GaySacramento.org: Interactive online resource for LGBT Sac. news, events and community resources. gaysacramento.org

Lavender Library: Serves the LGBT community as a lending library and archives as well as houses LGBT activities. Loans books, periodicals, DVDs (general and erotica), to members. lavenderlibrary.org

yourgayreno.com Online resource for Reno residents

outsacramento.com: Internet links, photos, message board and news for LGBT Sacramento. outsacramento.com

Diversity R Us: Support group for Yuba City-Marysville LGBT. groups.yahoo.com/group/diversityrus

Foothill Lesbians and Gays Social Network (FLAG): An organization for the LGBT community in the Sierra Foothills of No. Cal. flagamador.webs.com

Gaysonoma.com: Online Guide to events, personals, gay businesses, community organizations, classifieds, for Sonoma County LGBT. gaysonoma.com

"If The Shoe Fits": Gay/lesbian organization in the Foothills of El Dorado County that provides social/recreational activities for members. itsfnews.org

Nevada County Pride: Social network of gays and lesbians in western Nevada County in California. nevadacountypride.org

Out In The Mother Lode: Social network for fun/support among the LGBT in the central sierra

foothills. outinthemotherlode.org

Rainbow Frontier: A website for LGBT adults in rural/frontier areas of Northeastern California funded Plumas County Public Health Agency. 1-800-801-6330 or 530-283-6358, rainbowfrontier.org

Sac. Gay & Lesbian Center: Serving the LGBT of Greater Sacramento and surrounding counties, providing facilitated discussion groups for LGBT youth and adults, counseling, legal services, HIV prevention and education services and programs for LGBT seniors, families and people living with HIV/AIDS. saccenter.org

Sierra Gay Men's Network: A newsletter & blog with news for Gay Men and their friends in the Sierra Foothills of California. sgmn.org

Solano Pride Center: Support for LGBT of Solano County. Solano Pride Center, 1125 Missouri St., Ste. 203-D, Fairfield, CA 94533, 707-427-2356, solanopride.org

Stanislaus Pride Center: Resources and support for LGBT persons in Stanislaus and surrounding counties. stanpride.org

Stonewall Alliance of Chico: Services and support for LGBT people in Chico and surrounding areas. stonewallchico.org

SENIORS

Senior Gays: A resource for the senior LGBT and friendly community. SeniorGays.org

Prime Timers of Sacramento: Prime Timers is a social club for mature gay or bisexual menand their younger admirers. We will be having 4 or more meetups/events a month. Email PrimeTimersSac@comcast.net or call Denny at 916 647-9587.

SOCIAL GROUPS

Capital City Squares: A square dance club for LGBT people who want to learn and enjoy Modern Western Square Dancing. iagsdc.org/capitalcity

High Sierra Primetimers, 1730 Aquila Dr. Reno, 775-324-6785

Males Au Naturel Sacramento (MANS) - A gay/bi male naturist organization for men who enjoy social naturism in positive. groups.yahoo.com/group/malesaunaturesacramento
Natomas LGBTQ: A group to connect Natomas area queers for in-person social activities. An alternative to the bar scene. natomaslgbtq.wordpress.com

Sac Woof Society: A social group for bears and bear lovers. sacwoofsociety.net

Gay Men's Book Group: A literary group for Sac. gay men. Meets once a month (usually 3rd Wednesday). groups.yahoo.com/group/sacgaybookgroup

Pink Pistols - LGBT group with an interest in shooting sports and self defense. pinkpistols.org/local/sacramento

Sacramento Professional Men's Group: Alternative lifestyle men who get together for networking and social gatherings with other professional men. groups.yahoo.com/group/SacramentoProfessionalMensGroup

Sac. Valley Bears: A social and charitable organization for bears and bear admirers. sacvalleybears.org

Sac. Valley Knights: Northern California motorcycle club whose membership consists solely of those who own and ride motorcycles. valleyknights.org

Sac. Valley LeatherCorps: Gay men's and women's organization seeking to educate

and mentor members of the Leather/BDSM communities through classes and other club activities. svclub.org

Western Slope Men's Social Group: Online forum for gay/bi men on/near the Western Slope of the Sierra Nevada's (between Sac. and So. Lake Tahoe). groups.yahoo.com/group/WesternSlopeMensSocialGroup

Yuba-Sutter Unity: Social, education & community involvement. gayyubasutter.com, groups.yahoo.com/group/Yuba-Sutter-Unity

SPORTS

CHEER Sacramento: Volunteer cheerleading squad now cheering at games for West Sacramento Wolverines. cheersacramento.org

Frontrunners of Sacramento: Social group inclusive of all types, sizes, dispositions, and levels of activities with running and running events as a main focus. frsac.org

Gay & Lesbian Sierrans: Lesbians and gay men who enjoy outdoor adventures and camaraderie. motherlode.sierraclub.org/gls

Gay Sport Bike Riders of Sacramento - Gay sport bike enthusiasts who meet, post rides and related links. Serious enthusiasts 18+ are welcome. autos.groups.yahoo.com/group/SAC_GSR

River City Bowlers: Gay and Lesbian Bowling league. Winter league runs from Sept.-May and averages 22 teams per season. Summer league lasts 12-13 weeks beginning in June. rivercitybowlers.homestead.com/about.html

Sac. Capital Crossroads Gay Rodeo Association (SCCGRA): Sacramento's gay rodeo chapter. capitalcrossroads.org

Sacred City Derby Girls (SCDGD): Sacramento Women's Roller Derby team. sacredcityderbygirls.com

THEATRE | FILM

Lambda Players: LGBT theatre company now in its 19th Season. 1028 R Street, 916-444-8229, lambdaplayers.com

24th Street Theatre: Hosts Runaway Stage

which does musicals and larger well-known plays. Facilities for large meetings, lectures, film screenings and performances Sierra 2 Center, 2791 24th Street, 916-452-3005, sierra2.org

Capital Stage - Capital Stage, Delta King: 1000 Front Street, www.capstage.org

Mondavi Center - 530-754-ARTS, One Shields Ave. Davis, mondaviarts.org
Shiny Object: Weekly showings of independent films and Rocky Horror Picture Show. 600 4th St. West Sacramento, shiny-object.com

The Crest Theatre: 1013 K St., 916-44-CREST. Shows independent and LGBT films. Often hosts Sacramento Gay & Lesbian Film Festival. thecrest.com

TRANS SUPPORT

Sac. Gay & Lesbian Center Trans Support: Counseling services available for transgender people. 916-442-0185, Ext. 102. 1927 L St., saccenter.org

Kings of Drag: Performance troupe of women dressing in male drag. kingsofdrag.com

Sac. Gender Alliance: Provides recreational and educational needs of the trans community, their spouses, family members and related professionals. 916-442-0185, Ext. 141, saccenter.org

Sigma Delta Gamma "Sac. Delta Girls": A chapter of Tri-Ess, an educational, social and support group for heterosexual cross-dressers, their spouses or partners and their families. 916-359-2328, geocities.com/Sigma_Delta_Gamma

Transgender Law Center — Works to make California a state in which we can all fully and freely express gender identities. 870 Market St., Room 823, San Francisco, 415-865-0176, transgenderlawcenter.org

Sacramento FTM Support Group, Lavendar Library located at 1414 21st St. Sacramento, First Tuesday of every month, A safe, supportive environment for individuals who were born female bodied and identify as male. lavenderlibrary.org

Sacramento Transgender Coalition, SacTGC,

is an alliance of transgender groups who wish to strengthen the transgender community in Sacramento so we can collaborate to make changes and educate the general public about the proper terms and treatment of all transgender individuals, young and old. sactgc.org

Trans Families Sacramento, Support group for families with transgender members. They meet on the third Sunday of every month in the Lavender Library (1414 21st St., Sacramento) from 6-8 p.m., transfamilies@sactgc.org

River City Gems, Celebrating Feminine Expression, A social and support group serving the crossdressing and transgender community of Northern California, info@rivercitygems.org

Sutter Gender Identity Support Group at Sutter General Hospital, 2801 L St (28th and L) Downtown Sacramento, The MCC group is an open, non-religious, non-profit, non-sexual social group for those who are serious about their transformation. Meets on the third Saturday of every month at 6:30 p.m. at the Sutter General Hospital, 2nd floor Conference Room C, 2801 L St, Sacramento, for a potluck and fellowship meeting.

Sacramento Trans Youth, Peer support group for young people in their teens through early twenties, sactyouth-owner@yahoo.com

Colage, Equal Justice For People with LGBT Parents & Our Families, a national movement of children, youth, and adults with one or more lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and/or queer (LGBTQ) parents. 1550 Bryant Street, Suite 830, San Francisco, 415-851-KIDS, colage@colage.org

Our Family Coalition, Bay Area LGBT Family Organization, Promotes the rights and well-being of Bay Area LGBT families with children 870 Market Street, Suite 872, San Francisco, 415-981-1960, info@ourfamily.org

TransGender San Francisco (TGSF), For all members of the Transgendered Community. 415-839-9448, transgendersanfrancisco@yahoo.com

Trans: Thrive, A drop-in center by and for trans. 815 Hyde Street, 2nd Floor, San Francisco, 415-409-4101

WOMEN

Adventure Out Women: Business networking, social activities, special events and recreational adventures throughout California year-round. adventureoutwomen.com

Lesbian Cancer Support: Meets third Monday of each month at 6:30pm. Bring partners or support people with you. ROXANNE1040@aol.com

Rainbow Womyn (Sac.): Online social group for Womyn. groups.msn.com/RainbowWomynofSacramentoCA

Sac NOW: Feminist news, actions, and

opportunities. Meets monthly on the 3rd Thurs., 7pm, at the Hart Senior Center at 915 27th Street (27th & J St.). sacnow.org

Sacto Girls: Lesbian social group for women in the Sacramento and surrounding areas. members.aol.com/sactogirls/index.html

Sisters of Scota Foothills Chapter: Women's Motorcycle Club who rides mostly in the foothills. soswmcfoothills.org

Sisters of Scota Women's Motorcycle Club (SOSWMC): A tightknit sisterhood on women motorcycle riders who plan social events and raise funds for various charities. SOSWMC@hotmail.com, soswmc.org

Sac. Area Lesbian Health Resource Guide: A guide to help lesbians in the greater Sac. area identify and obtain services from providers who are sensitive to the needs of lesbian, bi and trans women. saclesbianhealth.com

Single Lesbians of Sac.: A community of single lesbians in the Sac. area interested in meeting other lesbians for the purpose of dating. groups.msn.com/SingleLesbiansofSacramento

Women On Wednesdays: Social discussion/activity group meets each Weds. at the Gay & Lesbian Center, 1927 L St. 7-9pm. Open to lesbian, bi and trans women. saccenter.org

Womyn Over the Rainbow: A group open to lesbian womyn over the age of 40 for the purpose of building friendship. groups.msn.com/WomynOverTheRainbow

YOUTH

CSUS Pride Center: Open to Sac State LGBT students. Lassen Hall 3011, 6000 J Street, 916.278.8720, Email: pride@csus.edu, csus.edu/pride

Delta Lambda Phi: A non-secret, non-hazing, national social fraternity founded by gay men for all men. dlp.org/iota/DLP.htm

Lambda Delta Lambda: Queer-friendly Sisterhood/Sorority social network on campus, accepting of all social identities and backgrounds. ldlucdavis.org/about.htm

Modesto LGBTQ Youth: LGBTQ Youth in Modesto and surrounding areas. myspace.com/lgbtqmodesto

Rainbow Club Of American River College: LGBT students on the American River Campus. geocities.com/arc_LGBTqclub

Queer Straight Alliance CSUS: Social/Activist group on campus. myspace.com/queerstraightalliance

RESPECT Sacramento: A grassroots organization dedicated to creating safe schools for all sexual minority people in Sacramento area schools. Meets the second Weds. of the month, 6:30pm at Lavender Library, 1414 21st St. 916-733-2135, RespectSacramento.org

Sac Youth Yahoo Group: Forum for LGBT and friendly youth under 21 years old. sacyouth.net, groups.yahoo.com/group/sacyouth

City College LGBT Club: 3835 Freeport Boulevard, 916-558-2111 Advisor: Gayle Pitman, Behavioral & Social Sciences, PitmanG@scc.losrios.edu, wservers.scc.losrios.edu/~LGBT/index.html

U.C. Davis LGBT Resource Center: Campus Center for LGBT students. 530-752-2452, lgbcenter.ucdavis.edu

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NOT ANOTHER FAILED PRISON POLICY

BY NATE FELDMAN
EDITED BY MICHAEL GORMAN

The California penal system is broken. One of her prisons just had one of the worst prison riots in American history, one that will cost billions of dollars in rebuilding expenses. Worse yet, the riot was predicted by those studying the system of prisons that is so overcrowded as to be Dickensian in its treatment of prisoners, sustaining conditions guaranteed to create ever increasing anger, despair, and anti-social behavior among the prisoners. It seems that our prisons are actually training camps where petty criminals learn hands on to become professional criminals, and while in prison, all have a ready and accessible opportunity to join some of the most organized and violent organizations.

So far the solutions being suggested offer more of the same failed policies and practices. Ever more severe punishments are breaking the state's budget, depriving law-abiding citizens of services, and creating effective factories for the training of ever more dangerous criminals without significantly lowering crime rates. California's criminal justice system is a lose/lose proposition. Perhaps it is time for a serious look at more creative solutions.

In many cultures in the past, when a crime did not justify capital punishment but deserved more than a fine or the short imprisonment which was all the resources could offer, these very practical early justice systems had an alternative punishment: voluntary exile. The leaders of these cultures understood the burden that prolonged imprisonment forced upon the limited resources of their communities, which seemed to be as much

of a punishment of the people as the lawbreaker. Hence the very practical solution of exile.

Granted, exile from a community in the agrarian past was a greater threat to the criminal's safety and well-being than in modern times, but we are far too prone to dismiss the possibility that some form of exile might well work for a modern state, especially in the case of non-violent offenders.

Here is how such a system of exile might work. Once a qualified, non-violent offender has been tried, found guilty, and sentenced, enactment of that sentence would be deferred for a suitably short period of time to allow the offender to cross the state line and set up residence in another state or country before the end of the deferment period. If after that time the offender in exile returns to California of his own free will, he will be arrested and begin serving his original sentence in full. If he stays away from the state, the sentence will remain deferred in perpetuity.

If the exiled offender is convicted of a crime in his new home state or country, he would not only have to serve whatever sentence is laid down there, he would also be automatically extradited to California to serve his original sentence once his out of state sentence is completed. He would become ineligible henceforth for deferment and exile from California or any other state. The pressure to succeed in his first exile would be great indeed.

This system would have many advantages for the citizens of California and even for the perpetrator. The most obvious benefit would be removing a criminal from the state permanently, thus eliminating re-offending in the state. The perpetrator would be removed from familiar places and people that could become a temptation to return to old patterns of behavior, and will have a fresh start in a new location far from partners in crime. The exile of convicted, non-violent offenders would relieve the citizens of California from billions of dollars in incarceration costs, freeing money for more positive social services. The need for lengthy

follow-up trials would be eliminated, and in some cases, a plea bargain for exile could eliminate trials completely. The original deferment time will also strengthen the family by allowing the criminal to make arrangements for his family's well-being as a part of his preparation for exile.

With the system of exile for less severe crimes, the incarceration in California could focus upon those violent criminals who are truly a danger to society. For the exiled beneficiaries of deferment, programs of rehabilitation could be implemented to ensure that he will never return to a life of crime because it would be too costly, and because he will have gained the skills and resources he needs to become a contributing member of society while actually re-entering society in a productive way.

Add to all of this a focus on rehabilitation for those perpetrators who choose to stay in California and serve their time, and we might actually have a system that serves the needs of California instead of bankrupting it with no increase in safety for all the money poured into a failed system.

In order to prevent out of state criminals from coming to California to commit crimes, thinking they could then leave without punishment, this exile program could be limited to citizens of California who have been in residence in the state continually for the 16 years prior to the commission of the crime. Incarcerated prisoners whose crimes and trials took place before the enactment of the exile program could be eligible as well.

An arrestee would become ineligible for a deferment and exile if he commits another crime other than a minor traffic crime while preparing to leave during the period of deferment prior to exile. Defendants with other pending criminal charges would also be ineligible for the program. Any convicted perpetrator of a violent or heinous crime would be ineligible. These cases of ineligibility would avoid any criminal from taking advantage of the deferment and exile program in order to commit further crime.

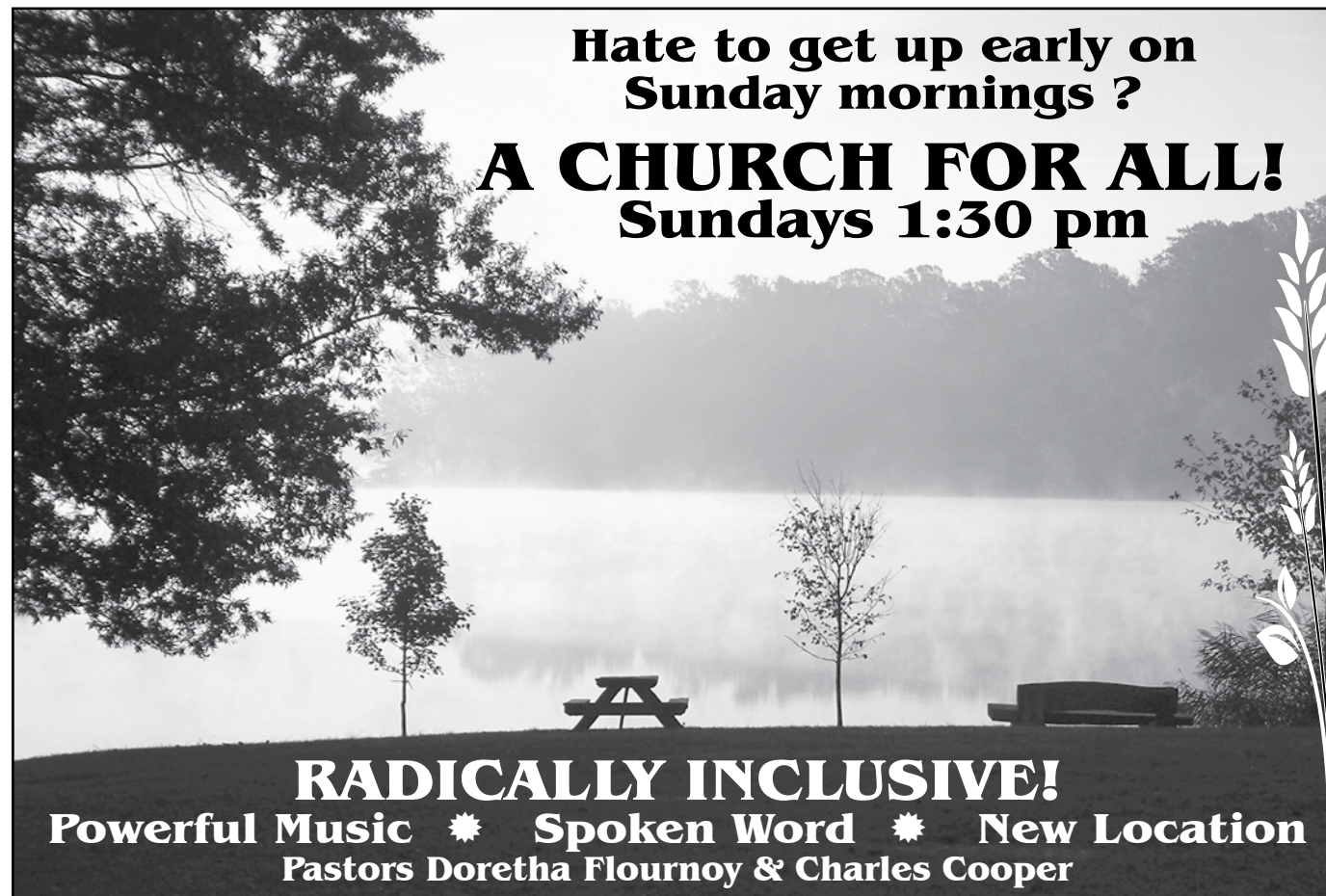
There are admittedly some risks associated with this proposed program of deferment and exile. While on deferment some would remain in the state and go underground rather than leaving or checking back into prison. Is a person that "goes underground" and remains undetected any more dangerous to the public than a person that had remained in prison only to be released at a later date without rehabilitation?

Would it cost more for officers on the streets if people are released? Possibly. However, think about this: If we could save money from the prisons and shift a portion of that to public safety officials like local police and highway patrol. Local peace officers provide services to the public whereas Guards do not. And for those perpetrators who move into the intended exile, any extra police patrol would be temporary. Most of the criminals in the program would be wise enough to leave.

Some individuals released on deferment could commit more crime, but so do people who serve full sentences. Likely some of the lesser criminals if allowed to relocate away from the elements that promoted the criminal activity would not return to crime. A vast majority of individuals qualifying for and choosing deferment would use the opportunity to leave after attending to personal matters.

This deferment program would reduce the average length of time from arrest to sentence by encouraging those qualified individuals to plead guilty and then use the deferment to leave the state rather than dragging out lengthy court preceding. Prosecutors can focus on prosecuting the offenders of atrocious crimes.

As for the California citizen? There would be fewer convicted criminals in the state. The state would be gifted with billions of extra funding dollars for each year's budget. And the state government could place its focus on improving the lives of law-abiding citizens.




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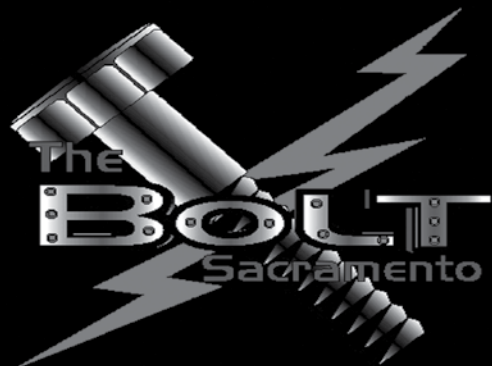
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GEAR NIGHT

FRI., SEPT. 4, 2009

The Sacramento Valley Leathercorps and The BOLT present GEAR NIGHT the first Friday of every month, 8pm to midnight! Gear up and join us! We're looking for folks with leather/latex pants, chaps, vests, shirts, skin gear, uniforms, jackets, boots, harnesses - get the idea? BOOTBLACKING by boy dave! No speeches, no fundraising, and NO COVER!

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