



GLSO NEWS

Vol. 15 **January 2000** No. 1

A publication of the Lexington Gay and Lesbian Service Organization

GLSO on The Web

"Out with the old and in with the new", isn't that what they say, or was I dreaming of my Mother singing to herself as she cleaned out my room when I left for college? Anyway, it goes to show that even the "give me your tired, your poor..." has relevance in this change of times.

Yes, you guessed it, we are moving forward, and maybe it has been more at the speed of grass growing than light, but hey, better now than never, right? I could tell you timing is everything, but then if you believe that, you'd buy my swamp in south Florida thinking it's bluegrass.

What is it we are doing? We are setting up a web page, a page for the tired, the poor...and those in between celebrations. It will remind us of where we came from here in Kentucky, our struggles and victories. It will give you information and contacts; hopefully, it will even make you laugh. There'll be information about finding support, links for related topics and sites for those looking for something or somewhere to go.

It will take you out of the area, giving you news as to what the rest of the world is doing, even events upcoming and past. Eventually there will be pictures of pride events and social activi- ..Continued on page 3

Kentucky Fairness Association, Bluegrass chapter

Our local Fairness chapter will hold its annual General Meeting on Wed., January 19, at 7pm. The meeting will be held in the downstairs sanctuary of the Lexington Metropolitan Community Church (MCC) below the Pride Center, 387 Waller Avenue. There are seven positions up for election for the Steering Committee. Anyone in attendance can vote.

1999 has been such a remarkable year for Lexington and Kentucky as a whole thanks to a large part to our Fairness volunteers and our two staff members, Maria Price and Krisi Sexton. Starting in January with no anti-discrimination protections anywhere in Kentucky other than for Henderson City's public employees and workers at certain progressive employers, we can be thankful that December finds our state with no less than FOUR Fairness laws on the books. Lexington in particular can be pleased at having the most comprehensive of these ordinances after its overwhelming 12-to-3 passage on July 8 by the Urban County Council.

Fairness hosted a number of popular fund raisers and events in 1999 including the March movie and vigil for Equality Begins at Home in conjunction with the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. Joining

forces with GLSO, the Lexington Men's Chorus, the Imperial Court, Moveable Feast and others, Fairness mobilized a 200+ strong contingent in the Independence Day parade this summer. The August ordinance celebration bash at Windy Knoll farm attracted hundreds of happy Fairness-minded folks and an impressive showing of local politicians out seeking votes. Fairness and GLBT politics appear to be coming of age in central Kentucky!

This work is leading to recognitions local and national. Maria Price, Fairness' resolute organizer and lobbyist in Frankfort for over six years, was awarded a national Stonewall Award of \$25,000 in recognition of her amazing work in Kentucky. The various statewide chapters of the statewide Kentucky Fairness Alliance and its Louisville Fairness affiliate (which pre-dates KFA) both won the ...continued on page 2

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The GLSO News

Vol.14 Issue 10

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Peter Taylor

**GLSO Annual Dues
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Opinions expressed in the GLSO News are those of the authors and don't necessarily represent those of the GLSO Board. Submissions are welcome and become the property of the GLSO. The staff reserves the right to edit submissions and advertisements as well as the right to reject any submissions or advertisements.

GLSO Page 2

Fairness...continued from page 1

NGLTF's 1999 Creating Change Award as the two groups that have most bettered GLBT's peoples lives this year.

The Lexington chapter's co-chair, Jeff Jones, was also appointed by the Mayor to the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Human Rights Commission in recognition of his efforts since 1993 to document and educate about hate crimes and discrimination in Ky through the GLSO (later also with KFA) Documentation Project. Add to this an unprecedented amount of media coverage via cable access public hearings, TV, and the newspapers, and we can be content that our neighbors have been richly educated this year about our lives and struggles.

Now it is time to look forward to the 21st century. The biennial KY General Assembly begins Jan. 4 with both proposed bills for a statewide Fairness law (the Stein-Marzian bill) and one seeking to quash local communities from offering these protections (the Kerr bill).

Religious conservatives backed by Pat Robertson's American Center for Law and Justice (ACLJ) are pursuing constitutionally questionable lawsuits against 3 of the 4 new Fairness laws. All 12 of the district seats on the Urban County Council and all of the KY House Representatives face re-election in November along with several key KY Senators and the President who will undoubtedly appoint a number of Supreme Court seats in his term. Lexington Fairness also just changed its official name to KFA-Bluegrass chapter to reflect our plans to expand our membership and voter education guide research to our neighboring

sister counties. 2000 will be a busy year!

Therefore it is critical to have our best and brightest serving our communities. Fairness is one outlet for this vital community service. Please consider volunteering in some way and/or serving on our 15 member Steering Committee. Due to our rotating terms of 3 years, we have 7 vacancies open. Traditionally anyone may vote who attends the meeting. We are now instituting annual memberships to help support our volunteer work and eventually will move to members-only voting. On January 19, voting will be open to those in attendance, but we urge you to join Fairness and get on our mailing/phone/email lists. Nominations will be taken from the floor that night or you may call (296-7812) or email (nominations@fairness99.org) into the co-chairs before the meeting. Local politicians are being invited to attend, so this is a great forum to ask questions.

So, mark those calendars: 7pm, Wednesday, January 19, Lexington MCC, Waller Avenue!

Therapy Group Opportunity

Kerri Goodman, a Marriage and Family Therapist, is planning to start a group for gay/lesbian individuals and couples on Jan. 25. It will be held on Tuesday evenings, from 6 to 8 PM at her private practice on Reynolds Rd. It will cost \$10 per person or \$15 per couple to cover office space rental, beverages and other expenses. For information you can call her voice mail at 273-5698 and leave your name and phone number and she will call you back.

**Movable Feast is in need of
volunteers. Call 252-2867**

Community News

ties, complete with lists of supporters. In a nut shell, the new web page will be a place even Dorothy would be proud to call "home".

This is an exciting step for us but it does not mean "out with the old"; this ever faithful newsletter will still be available and more in need of supporters than ever. The newsletter and web will work hand in hand, bringing in the new with the old, collaborating as one.

Pass the word, the GLSO is expanding and the horizons are vast, so support your community and become a member of GLSO or pay what you can to receive the newsletter at your home. See the subscription form on page Consider giving a donation, no matter how small to help maintain the web and newsletter, as Gay Kentucky needs both in its quest for equality.

Images of Blackness The Variety Show

In honor of Black History Month, Ebony Male will once again bring an exciting cast of entertainers to the Bar Complex. The Show will be on Wed. Feb., 2 and will begin promptly at 9 PM. A donation of \$3 is suggested to benefit the Aids Medication fund.

This year's show will include live performers and female illusionists. Returning by popular demand, DJ's Larry and Harvey will be spinning R&B favorites throughout the night in the Johnny Angel Disco. Please join Ebony Male and the Bar Complex for this sixth Annual Images of Blackness Show!

Interweave

On Sunday, January 9, Interweave will be having second Sunday lunch after the church service (about 12:15.) Members of Interweave and friends are invited to join us at a restaurant to be determined. Some of us will then go to see the free Diversity Films showing of Guantanamo at the Central Library Theater.

A number of lesbians and straight women will also be gathering for the Women's Spirituality Group on Jan 7 and 21 at the Fellowship House at the UU Church. We will be having a pot luck at 6:30 and a program at 7:30. On the 7th we will be doing dream work.

Discussion Group

The GLSO Discussion Group is going strong with a variety of people attending. A good place to meet people and to have interesting conversations. Come out to the Pride Center on Wednesday nights at 7:30 for some good talk, support, and laughs. Call Jane at 389-7698 for details.

Social Concepts

Social Concepts is a social group for women that sometimes includes men in its activities. Its major project in January will be a mentoring workshop on Sat., Jan. 15, from 9 to 11:00 AM. Are you interested in becoming a mentor to the newly coming out or the new to the Lexington community? I haven't heard from those of you who expressed interest earlier. Call or email Ginger to reserve a spot.

Other activities: Sunday, Jan. 9 - 7PM, Memorial Coliseum, Women's Gymnastics "Excite Night"; extrava-

gant pep rally for womens' gymnasts. Sunday, January 23 - WOMENS' BASKETBALL!!!! - UK vs Tenn. 2PM! Memorial Coliseum.

For next month, a Valentines Dance is planned for Sat., Feb. 12 at the Kirklevington Clubhouse, 8PM. It will be an intimate and special evening. Come comfortable, or dress to the nines; good music, good friends, good fun!

MS. Valentine Pageant

The annual MS Valentine Pageant is set for Wed., Feb. 9. The Royal Sovereign Imperial Court of all Kentucky is planning the Ms. Valentine 2000 pageant to be held at Club 141 on Vine Street starting at 9 sharp.

A Season for Love is the theme. All girls interested in vying for this wonderful crown need to start planning, preparing, and practicing now. Co-hosting the pageant are Niagara Falls and Sundae Delarouge. Categories include presentation in red, talent and evening gown. Applications will be available from Niagara (321-5411) or Sundae (312-8113), at Club 141 and on line. Get ready to show Lexington your love and talent. Application deadline is February 1.

Everyone get ready for a night of fun, Valentine love, drag and maybe a few cute guys!!! (of course Niagara and Sundae get first dibs) We expect to have cupid available for photos, so bring your spouse, lover, partner, or date for some fun pictures. This pageant is expected to be one of the best of the year 2000 so do not miss it. SEE YOU THERE!

Community news continued page 4

Community News Continued

Married Lesbians

There is a new support service on the net for women who are lesbians, or who are considering the possibility that they might be, and who are married to men. You can reach the list serve at <http://onelist.com/community/LexMarriedLez>. You will have to become a member to onelist.com, which is free.

Successful Leather Benefit

Leather Cares, a benefit for the UK Children's Hospital, co-hosted by Lexington's two leather clubs, the Bluegrass C.O.L.T.S and the Lex Lyons L/L, at The Phoenix on Dec. 4, yielded 78 stuffed animals (mostly teddy bears) valued at over \$400 and \$186 in cash donations.

Larry Stanley manager of The

Phoenix and coordinator of the event, called it "the most successful drive ever. The C.O.L.T.S have conducted similar benefits in the past but this year with the assistance of the Lyons, it really took off. It's great to see the leather community pull together."

Both clubs will have bar nights in January at The Phoenix, 123 W. Main St.: the C.O.L.T.S on Friday, January 7 and the Lyons on Saturday, January 22. In addition, the Lyons will have an out-of-town bar night at the Serpent in Cincinnati, Ohio on Sat., Jan. 29.

Your Choice Awards! Rocks Crossings

Leigh Angelique's award show on Dec 8 at Crossings proved itself once again as top entertainers and bar staff were recognized for outstanding work in the Lexington Community. Over 150 people com-

pleted ballots and the results were :

- Best Newcomer--Chichi Rodriguez
- Most Improved--Karen Kollett
- Best Stage Make up--Latoya Bacall
- Best Hair--Eden Towers
- Best Costumes--Taylor Bryce
- Best Character Impersonation--
Rayna Starr
- Best Comedy Performance--Sundae
Delarogue
- Best Bartender--Annie Cummings
- Best Bar Manager--Terry Brockman
- Best DJ--Chad Norris
- Best Bar Owner--Michael Langano
& Peter Decore
- Best Overall Stage Performer--
Latoya Bacall

Congratulation to the winners and a big thank you to Crossings and the fabulous entertainers. Watch for Leigh Angelique's Miss Lexington Supreme coming Feb 23. See Leigh or Latoya Bacall for information.

Cold Feet, Warm Heart By Lori Shepherd

On a cold January night the only place I want to be is nestled deep within flannel sheets, nuzzled up next to the warm body of my soul mate.

Her skin is so soft and supple. I can feel the warmth of her body as it escapes her naked back and soaks into my chest. At some point during our slumber, the covers shift slightly and the cat that has wedged itself between us stirs with a distinct murmur of annoyance.

As if drawn magnetically, our bodies are inching closer and closer together. Just before we forge into one solid mass of flesh Maggie, the cat, is forced to flee to save herself from being crushed.

As Maggie turns circles at our

feet trying to find that warmth she just lost, my partner makes one last fluid motion that closes what little gap was left between our bodies completely.

I wrap my arms tightly around her and I hold on for my very life. All this movement has sent the comforter askew and the cold night air is starting to creep onto my naked back. I shiver and use my free hand to salvage the corner of the comforter before it falls to the hard, wood floor below.

It's too late. The comforter has fallen from grasp and is lying in crumpled heap on our bedroom floor. Now with the cold rushing quickly over us, my lover's urgency for closeness has intensified.

With a new found desire for the warmth of my body she pushes herself deep into my arms and forces my arm that was wrapped tightly around her to slip loose from her and

become wedged between my side and the mattress.

Seconds later, I feel a cry well up inside of me and it startles me as it escapes my lips, "Sweetheart, you are pushing me off the bed!"

She wakes only slightly, mutters and snorts as she wiggles an inch or so back toward the center of the bed and lets me scoot my body back into our bed. I reach down and pull our thick comforter back on top of us, tucking the edges around her as best as I can.

Having saved myself from the impending fall to the hard, wood floor below, I breathe a contented sigh and lie back against what little of my pillow she has allowed me to share with her. As I drift back into my winter hibernation, I feel her body inch closer to me. I wrap my arms tightly around her and thank God for bringing her to me.

Unitarian Views

As do many religious leaders, Rev Cynthia Cain communicates some of her thoughts to the UU Congregation every few weeks in the Uniview. Rev. Cain is a Buddhist as well as a Unitarian Universalist and recently sent us these words:

We heard recently from someone who returned from India. Her group met with the Dalai Lama for several days. The meetings focused on dialoguing what they believed were the five most important questions to be considered moving into the new millennium. The group was asked to come up with five questions before meeting with the Dalai Lama. They asked:

How do we address the widening gap between rich and poor?

How do we protect the earth?

How do we educate our children?

How do we help Tibet and other oppressed countries/peoples?

How do we bring spirituality - deep caring for each other - through all disciplines?

The Dalai Lama said all the questions fall under the last one. If we have true compassion, our children will be educated, we will care for the earth, and for those who "have not." He asked the group: Do you think loving on the planet is increasing or staying the same?

His own response was, "My experience leads me to believe that love IS increasing." He shared a practice with the group that will increase loving and compassion in the world, and asked everyone attending to go home and share it with as many people as possible.

THE PRACTICE

1. Spend five minutes at the beginning of each day remembering that we all want the same thing - to be happy and loved, and we are all connected.

2. Spend five minutes cherishing yourself and others. Let go of judgments. Breathe in cherishing yourself, and breathe out cherishing others. If the faces of people you are having difficulty with appear, cherish them as well.

3. During the day, extend that attitude to everyone you meet - we all are the same, and I cherish myself and you. Do it with the grocery store clerk, the client, your family members, co-workers, etc.

4. Stay in the practice, no matter what happens.

If you enjoy learning about a variety of spiritual beliefs, the Unitarian Church has a lot to offer. Look over some of our upcoming activities below.

WHAT'S'UP at UU Church

Worship Services: Every Sunday 10:45 A.M. Jan 2: Gifts we didn't give; Gifts we didn't receive" For fun, bring any gift (unwrapped) you didn't really need or want and you will be able to take home a gift that someone else didn't need! There will be an opportunity for some of us to share our thoughts about these un-asked for gifts. Rev. Cynthia Cain will offer a homily

Jan 9: "Sex, Lies and Religion: (sorry, no videotape)" About one year ago, our UU church in Concord, Massachusetts, was "exposed" on the now defunct Bryant Gumbel

show, "Public Eye", for our sexuality curriculum (teaching SEX at church!) Our denominational response has been to forge ahead with new sexuality curriculums which UUCL is about to undertake. Why should sexuality classes be taught at Church? Join Rev. Cain as she explores some ways in which her life, and the lives of those around her, might have been different had she learned about sexuality in the context of a loving religious community. Warning, she plans to be honest!

On Sunday January 16, the service will be in honor to Martin Luther King. Plans are still being made and we hope to have a musical service.

On Wednesday evenings, from 7 to 9 pm, we have adult forums that include a variety of programs. On the first wed, nights of each month we will focus on "Contemporary Issues in Unitarian Universalism." On Wed., Jan. 5, at 7:00 pm in the Conference Room, Chuck Sohner will lead the discussion on the draft "Statement of Conscience, Economic Injustice, Poverty, and Racism". We may not like these things, but what are we as UUs going to do about them? The subject for the February 2 session is "Responsible Consumption as a Moral Imperative".

On Wed., Jan. 12, and continuing through February on the second and fourth Wednesdays of the month, we will begin a study of "The World's Religions," based on a video series with Bill Moyer and the eminent professor of philosophy and religion, Huston Smith. We will watch an hour video each evening and follow with an hour of discussion. Join us for these stimulating films.

The Royal Sovereign Imperial Court of all Kentucky is planning the Ms. Valentine 2000 pageant to be held on Wednesday, Feb. 9, at Club 141 on Vine Street starting at 9 sharp. They intended to have a full page ad in this space but Christmas confusion set in. Look for their ad for "A Season for Love" next month.



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"Why are there so many songs about rainbows and what's on the other side? Rainbows are visions but only illusions, and rainbows have nothing to hide. So we've been told and some choose to believe it. I know they're wrong, wait and see. Someday we'll find it, the Rainbow connection. the lovers, the dreamers and me." ... Kermit

Diversity Films: *Guantanamera*

On January 9 at 1:30, *Guantanamera*, directed by Tomas Gutierrez Alea and Juan Carlos Tabio, will be shown free of charge at the Central Library Theater. Alea previously directed *Strawberry and Chocolate*, a bitter sweet gay themed comedy, that was the first Cuban film to go into general release in the United States. Those of us that had the opportunity to see this previous film were impressed with the directors ability to weave together politics, social commentary, humour and a bit of romance to charming effect.

A reception will be held following the film in meeting room A on the lower level of the Library. Free parking is available in the lot behind the Library.

Guantanamera, Alea's final film, is a road movie with a twist; a hearse containing the body of a famous diva is transported across the countryside of Cuba. Georgina, the diva's niece

and a professor blacklisted for political nonconformity, and her husband, Adolfo, travel with the hearse towards Havana.

Adolfo uses this opportunity to implement a hearse relay system that only a bureaucrat could love. The protracted funeral procession serves as a metaphor for the deeper problems facing contemporary Cuba. And yet, as they transverse Cuba, the beauty of the land and the vitality and humor of the Cuban people convey hope for the future of the country.

In contrast to her stuffy husband, Georgina, played by Mirtha Ibarra, Alea's widow, reawakens to the joys of life as she reconnects with a past love. Succeeding both as a romantic comedy and a political satire, *Guantanamera* is a fitting end to the career of Tomas Gutierrez Alea. Co-director Juan Carlos Tabio worked closely with Alea, who knew he might not be able to finish this film. Mirtha Ibarra, stars in the film along with Jorge Perugorria, Carlos Cruz, and

Conchita Brando. To Ms. Ibarra, her late husbands film is "a song in praise of life and love." Join us in viewing this engaging film that is also a bold overview of modern day Cuba.

In March, Diversity Films is planning to show *Golden Threads*, a documentary about Christine Burton who founded an international network for midlife and elder lesbians. The film makers, Lucy Winer and Karen Eaton, are coming to Kentucky for this viewing in early March.

We are also planning to bring Lucy Massie Phenix, another lesbian film maker, to Lexington in April. She is the editor of *Regret To Inform*, an Academy Award nominee for best documentary in 1999. Phenix's work has been shown in Lexington and at Women's Music Festivals over the last decade.

We are looking for volunteers, financial sponsors and contributors to enable us to bring these women to Lexington. If you are interested please contact Mary Crone.(266-5904)

IF YOUR MAILING LABEL IS A STRANGE COLOR, PLEASE RENEW...or, if you are not a subscriber, think how nice it would be to receive your newsletter in the mail at the first of every month. It will arrive in a discrete white envelope (do you think your mailman cares?) If you are a student or just basically broke, there is a blank to check off so that you can send what you can afford and we will send you a newsletter---for a while, maybe a whole year! Please Subscribe. We need more subscribers in Lexington to be able to mail at the lowest bulk rates.

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JANUARY 2000

USE DIRECTORY ON LAST PAGE TO CONFIRM

1 SATURDAY

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<p>2 SUNDAY 10:45 am UU Church 11:30 am LMCC 12:30 am CUUPS (UU Church) 6:00 pm Dignity 6:00 pm SisterSound reh. (Park Methodist Church)</p>	<p>3 MONDAY 8:00 pm AA Step Study</p>	<p>4 TUESDAY 7:30 pm Fairness Lexington (Pride Center) 7:30 pm PFLAG (Chapel Hill Presbyterian Church)</p>	<p>5 WEDNESDAY 7:30 pm GLSO Discussion Group (Pride Center) 8:00 pm Gay/Lesbian AA time tha Miss Mary Christmas Pageant (Club 141) time tha Your Choice Award (Crossings)</p>	<p>6 THURSDAY 7:00 pm Men's Chorus Rehearsal (Pride Center) 7:30 pm UK Lambda (Student Center)</p>	<p>7 FRIDAY 7:00 pm LMCC Games Night (LMCC) 7:30 pm Gay/Lesbian AA tha COLTS (The Phoenix)</p>	<p>8</p>
<p>9 10:45 am UU Church 11:30 am LMCC 12:15 am Interweave Lunch (UU Church) 12:30 am CUUPS (UU Church) 1:30 pm Diversity Films (Central Library Theater) 6:00 pm SisterSound reh. (Park Methodist Church)</p>	<p>10 7:00 pm GLSO Board Meeting - open to the public - (Pride Center) 8:00 pm AA Step Study</p>	<p>11</p>	<p>12 7:30 pm GLSO Discussion Group (Pride Center) 8:00 pm Gay/Lesbian AA</p>	<p>13 7:00 pm Men's Chorus Rehearsal (Pride Center) 7:30 pm UK Lambda (Student Center)</p>	<p>14 6:30 pm Women's Spirituality Group 7:30 pm Gay/Lesbian AA</p>	<p>15 9:00 am Mentoring Workshop (Pride Center)</p>
<p>16 10:45 am UU Church 11:30 am LMCC 12:30 am CUUPS (UU Church) 6:00 pm SisterSound reh. (Park Methodist Church)</p>	<p>17 8:00 pm AA Step Study</p>	<p>18 GLSO NEWS DEADLINE, SUBMIT ADDITIONS AND/OR CORRECTIONS FOR NEXT CALENDAR 273-9649</p>	<p>19 7:00 pm Fairness annual General Meeting (Pride Center) 7:30 pm GLSO Discussion Group (Pride Center) 8:00 pm Gay/Lesbian AA</p>	<p>20 7:00 pm Men's Chorus Rehearsal (Pride Center)</p>	<p>21 7:30 pm Gay/Lesbian AA</p>	<p>22 tha LYONS (The Phoenix)</p>
<p>23 and 30 10:45 am UU Church 11:30 am LMCC 12:30 am CUUPS (UU Church) 6:00 pm SisterSound reh. (Park Methodist Church)</p>	<p>24 and 31 8:00 pm AA Step Study</p>	<p>25</p>	<p>26 7:30 pm GLSO Discussion Group (Pride Center) 8:00 pm Gay/Lesbian AA</p>	<p>27 7:00 pm Men's Chorus Rehearsal (Pride Center) 7:00 Folding newsletters (Pride Center - call Mary to confirm - 266-5904)</p>	<p>28 6:30 pm Womens Spirituality (UU Church) 7:30 pm Gay/Lesbian AA</p>	<p>29</p>

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Religious Diversity Communication between Christians and Non Christians within the LBGT community

by Rev. Patrick Buck

I seem to be developing a habit of writing articles for this publication on subjects with which I have a real but somewhat indirect contact. Several years back, I wrote an article on biphobia in the Lesbian/Transgendered Community from the perspective of the gay life partner of a bisexual male. Now, as a legally ordained and very active Pagan Minister in the Norse tradition, I'm writing about the contacts and conflicts between Christians and non-Christians within our Lesbian, Bisexual, Gay, Transgendered Community.

I remember we had a gathering during Pride Month some years back at the Unitarian Universalist Church (of which my partner and I are lay members). There was an informal discussion of being Lesbian/Transgendered and spirituality. Unfortunately, it turned into a borderline (?) shouting match between liberal Gay Christians and individuals for whom the coming out process included leaving Christianity. While the roundtable was a real eye-opener, I don't think we got anything substantial accomplished. I've often wished over the years we could do something similar but more civil again. Anyone want to take that bull by the horns?

I was one of those folks who left Christianity after being active in several traditions and spending a year and a half in seminary. I was attending a local Episcopalian parish but not really taking the theology very seriously when it became obvious that my church involvement was creating rela-

tionship-threatening problems between me and my partner. We opted to join the Unitarian Universalist church (a spiritual home for individuals of all beliefs, including some liberal Christians) and I eventually opted for Paganism as my spiritual path. I've never regretted that choice; at most my partner sped the process up. I was already reading a great deal on Paganism and even doing some Pagan rituals.

Now on to the core of the problem: there is in our Community a very strong Christian presence, ranging from very liberal and humanistic to amazingly conservative except on gay and lesbian issues. There is also a substantial number of individuals who have been traumatized by their Christian experience, or who for other reasons do not identify as Christian. There are sometimes misunderstandings and hostility between various religious groups. Hostility damages our Community and its members. I'd like to look at that and explore ways of defusing the problem.

There are definitely people in our community who due to their own background, issues, and residual religious baggage, are ready to believe the very worst about Christians, virtually ANY Christians, including those who are also a part of the LBGT Community. The recent and absolutely false rumor that the Pride Center/GLSO had merged with the Metropolitan Community Church (a Lesbian/Trans majority Christian church) and that a donation to GLSO was essentially a donation to the MCC is illustrative. Amazingly, a number of folks were prepared to believe this, and even to believe that known Pagans were discriminated against in some way.

I think it is a good idea to try to react based on reason rather than

emotion when dealing with individuals of other spiritual paths in the Community. I know someone in the Community whose car, which sported overtly Pagan bumper stickers, received an MCC tract while parked outside a local gay bar a few years back. He swears his was the only one that got a tract under the windshield wiper and was (and still is) very hurt, angry, and upset about the whole matter, which he interpreted as an act of religious intolerance and even Pagan-bashing.

Maybe it WAS, but I can think of at least two other explanations for the presence of the tract (an attempt at setting up a friendly dialogue, the other "traced" cars had left before he got back to his car, etc...) but be that as it may, the damage was done.

Please bear in mind that the atmosphere in our community is very charged religiously, and many individuals are apt to act from raw, gut emotion on this matter. Many of us are very spiritual, even deeply religious. At the same time, many have lost their families due to religion. My partner's sister didn't speak to him for almost eight years after he came out. On the other hand, he has a degree in comparative religious studies which he got AFTER he came out! There are a lot of people walking around with unhealed wounds, and it is very easy to knock the scabs off!

I would ask Christians in the Lesbian/Transgendered Community to remember that many of us have been deeply hurt in the name of their Savior, and that if they feel a need to bear witness to their faith, and even to recruit others to it, to please try to keep it "low-key." Also, when someone goes off on them on matters religious, to try not to take it too personally. Likely as not,continued on page 11

the person is not angry at them or even their beliefs, but rather toward someone or some institution in their own past. Some of us have had more than our share of religious intolerance directed at us. I know it still hurts to have anger projected at you when you are sincerely trying to be helpful, but if you can avoid reacting out of your own sense of hurt and rejection, you may well set the stage for future friendly dialogue. Truly, more flies will be caught with honey than with vinegar.

To those of us who were never Christian to begin with, who have dropped Christianity in favor of some other spiritual path, or who have chosen to opt out of religion entirely, I would ask us all to try to bear in mind that the choices we have made may not be the best choice for everyone else. Non Christians need to keep in mind that the many Christians in the

Lesbigay/Transgendered Community are not the enemy. We are allies in a common cause and should endeavor to treat each other with courtesy, dignity, and respect. We can and should agree to disagree politely and civilly.

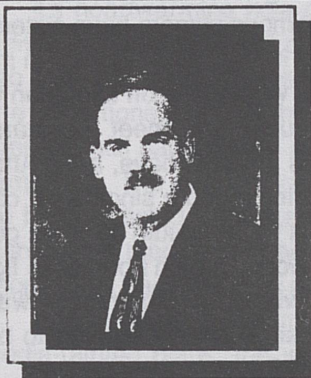
My own attitude is perhaps a good case in point. My problems with Judeo-Christian-Islamic Western Monotheistic theology go back to the foundation myths on which all three of these great religious traditions are based. Nevertheless, as a Polytheist who does not believe that his is the only True Path, I can accept their validity for others, and keep my bluntest and most negative opinions about other people's beliefs to a more private context.

There is nothing wrong with having an opinion, even an unpopular or strongly held one, but there IS such a thing as discretion and respect for the

feelings of others. My own contacts with LesbigayTrans Christian clergy have been friendly and respectful, and we have even shared a number of laughs about how many people in the Community think it is so very strange that we get along well!

Finally, let us seek to have and show compassion and respect for individuals in religious transition, including those who just can't seem to make up their minds. By showing some common courtesy and endeavoring to get along, we can work productively together on the many issues that effect us all!

Patrick Buck can be reached by email at jordsvin@aol.com. He also has a Norse Pagan web site at <http://users.aol.com/jordsvin/kindred/kindred.htm>.



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YESTERDAY'S TOMORROW

By Renette F. Jones

My sister and I made plans for the year 2000 more than 3 decades ago. We spent hours on the muddy-brown colored tile floor, paging through stacks of hand-me-down issues of Jet and Ebony. One magazine subscription had to serve several households, and by the time we were given the dated copies, it was all right to rip out our favorite pictures. There were plenty of images of perfect people living in perfect places. My sister and I had plans of sharing in this ideal world.

My dream was to have one of those warehouse apartments, big and roomy. The ones that don't have any walls, it's just one huge room. I wanted one that was high in the sunny sky and filled with orange, lime green, and yellow one of a kind furniture. The surrounding walls would be the color of coffee, that special drink that would supposedly make you black and that's why children couldn't have any. By the year 2000 I would be an adult and black and I was going to surround myself with coffee.

My sister Vickie wanted a pad in some city up North. She was going to have zebra patterned furniture in the living room, and a round bedroom with a round bed, and fancy silk curtains and all the other lacy do-dad stuff that hangs off the curtain rod. And her apartment was going to have a garage so that she could drive up the elevator shaft and park her car next to the kitchen.

We would have breakfast in the other Paris (wherever that was), like those people in the ads. We would

have charisma (whatever that was). We would have clothes like the skinny light skin models in the pictures. We would strut our stuff and pose with both hands on her hips and one leg thrust forward for emphasis. When no one was looking, we practiced the pose; it would have been bad news if we had gotten caught trying to be grown, putting our hands on our hips and shaking our narrow butts. It would have been just as bad if we had gotten caught putting butter on our lips. I didn't care for slick lips, but Vickie liked the model's lipstick and butter was a good substitute. To me, those models looked like they had cold chili grease all over their mouths.

You know the look. Every other woman on television or behind a podium wears the stuff. It looks like the orange grease that settles on top of a bowl of cold chili. During the 60s, slick lips was the hip happening cool moma groovy thing. Can you dig it, Baby! I was hoping that by the next century, the women would still be around, but the chili would be back in the kitchen.

Of course, by that time my sister and I would be mature and sensible women. Everyone else we knew would be bent backwards with age. That didn't include my make believe Black Barbie Ken husband, he would remain forever ageless. (I didn't like Barbie or Ken.) Vickie said that he would have to be a vampire if he weren't going to get older. And who wanted a plastic-head man anyway, I should take a second look at the men in the magazines.

I didn't care for another look, if I had to have a husband, then damn it he could sleep in his box, be a vampire, and not age. (I had a penchant for curse words back then.) I would

keep him nearby for those times when you needed a husband. The magazines said there would be times like that, and I definitely didn't want to be an oddball. My boxed man's limbs would remain in tact and his clothes wouldn't get dirty or lost, unlike our other dolls. I would keep him in the back of my closet and if the gas heat made his plastic go soft and crack open, then it wouldn't be my fault.

But I had a change of heart when the girl next door joined in our adventure. She wanted a complete family, so I gave her my imaginary store bought husband because she said that I could have a career instead. Plus, I needed the imaginary closet space for my roommate's clothes. She and I would have to have lots of outfits for when we danced on Soul Train and met all the famous singers and their sisters.

All famous singers have sisters, don't they? Well, they should. In my world, we were going on television to make it funky and meet the stars. And I was going to have, a big Afro, hoop earrings, and a single seat car to take us to the studio after we got off from work. (I didn't bother to figure out where the roommate was going to sit.) We were going to be single and free.

Getting children would be a part of the year 2100 plan. Because by that time scientist would have long ago figured out how to make everyone young and alive again. And when it would be time for children, we'd all show up at the K Mart blue light special and get a fresh baby. We'd have to get there early, because everything goes quick at those sales.

If we couldn't hitch a ride to K-Mart in ... *continued on page 13*

Lexington, then we'd save some money and walk downtown to Dollar Store and buy a prepackaged discount baby off the shelf. That would be the third isle to the left of husbands in a pink Barbie box. We had it all figured out. Nothing was going to be a problem because Black women were on the way to being the 'I' in it and we intended to be there.

Along the way our plans got waylaid due to life becoming day to day living for three Black women. And now the year 2000 is here. I've had my big Afro, and the finger popping loose booty roommate in the mini skirt and boots never materialized. Vickie has gotten rid of the zebra patterned furniture and she changed her mind about the circular bed. The girl next door moved to the city with a guy named Ken. First minute 2000 smells and feels very much like last minute 1999.

It's heartwarming how our children's play somehow got crocheted into our future display as women. The evolutions from all the revolutions are still painted with a layer of sameness. The world is not quite as we had predicted. Many should be thankful, or there would be a lot of people bent backwards by now.

And in spite of the misguided media-tainted plans, the warmth of the sun is just as stimulating as I had imagined it would be in my warehouse apartment filled with fruity furniture. Coffee, orange juice, whole-wheat toast, and the love of a beautiful woman are much sweeter than breakfast in the other Paris with a skinny model wearing orange residue. And the coffee never did make me any blacker.

Soul Train was out of the ques-

tion, but I do a mean shuffle with the vacuum cleaner. I am a one-woman show when I snatch the broom from the corner (an impromptu microphone) and sing my heart out. Sometimes I get carried away and make a day of my solo performance. Don Cornelius doesn't know what he missed.

None of which does a thing for the dirty dishes in the sink or the clean underclothes that need to be sorted. It's not beyond me to mix up the bras while I'm dancing the 'jerk'. The error has nothing to do with past daydreams of tiny charisma bras worn by Ebony models. There is now an appreciation for women size underclothes made for women size women. The gratitude can be so overwhelming that it has been known to cause one to put an undergarment on the head and dance around the kitchen to the tune of 'Strokin'.

That's one of the reasons this century is going to be a keeper, goodness is not gone. Vickie and I are making plans for the year 2100. We didn't miss the mark too bad with our last itinerary. This time we will use the Internet and make bigger, better, and faster plans.

.....Intercultural Lesbians

Gender Bending Tree

Edited from an article in the Dec. 2, 1999 edition of the Louisville Courier-Journal. Courtesy of The Letter - Kentucky's gay, lesbian, bisexual & transgender newspaper.

For most of its adult life--now 150 years and counting--a giant ginkgo tree in Louisville's Cave Hill Cemetery was presumed to be male. Thought to have been grown from

seed provided by Kentucky senator Henry Clay, the tree is one of the largest known ginkgos in the world.

But in the past ten years, as it approached its dotage, it's been doing something few other ginkgo's are known to have done: sprout berries, an activity performed only by females. The prolific fruit seems to be growing from one branch--called a sport or witch's broom--about fifty feet up.

Only six other ginkgos are known to have possessed both male and female traits: four at the University of Virginia in a 1982 survey, and two in the whole of Japan in a 1931 survey.

Peter Del Tredici, director of living collections at Harvard University's Arnold Arboretum, says such gender shifts are actually not that unusual. "Maleness to femaleness is a continuum, not an absolute distinction," he notes. "Biology is much more flexible than we give it credit for." He thinks the Louisville tree may be suffering a "breakdown of communal support systems" as a result of old age.

"I think it's a cool tree," adds Lee Squires, the cemetery's superintendent.

Ginkgos are among the oldest known species of trees, and one of the toughest. A ginkgo at ground zero in Hiroshima in 1945 was shattered by the first atomic bomb but sprouted leaves eighteen months later.

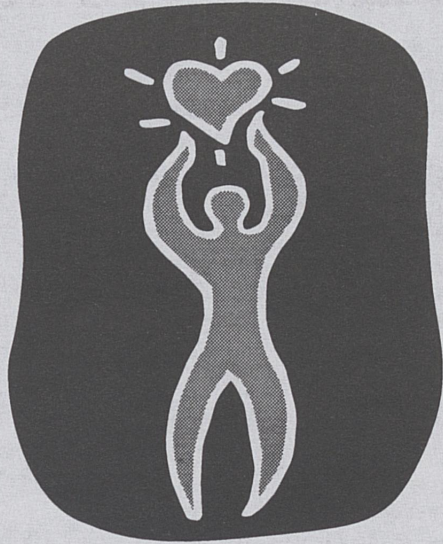
Ed. Note: Perhaps the lesson here is that being able to include characteristics attributed to what our culture sees as two genders within one being is a gift that encourages creative survival...and beauty.

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(Dawn) .dwilsoo@ukcc.uky.edu.....	(Ann)(502)672-8673

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