



WMGLCC
WESTERN MONTANA
GAY & LESBIAN
COMMUNITY CENTER

The Missoula Gayzette

THE VOICE OF WESTERN MONTANA'S GLBTI COMMUNITY

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GLBTI LIAISON OFFICER OFFERS HOPE



by Jason Stone, Board Member

On Thursday, November 3rd, the Western Montana Gay and Lesbian Community Center hosted a meet-and-greet for the Missoula GLBTI community with Missoula City Police Chief Rusty Wickman, GLBTI Liaison Officer Scott Oak, and Detective Guy Baker. The standing room only meeting was one of several affirmative steps being taken in the echo of recent assaults and hate-related incidents targeted at the gay community in Missoula.

On October 15th, shortly before 11:30 p.m. Wally Catton and Marcus Chebul were assaulted. Although both Catton and Chebul are straight, many in the GLBTI community view the assault as a hate crime because anti-gay epithets were shouted at the two prior to the assault.

In early October, Xavier Old Chief, a sophomore at the University of Montana, was harassed over the course of several weeks because he is gay. According to Old Chief, notes reading "the only good fag is a dead fag," and "a man shall not lie with another man" were slid under his door.

Regrettably, these are not the first events that have sparked concern over safety within the GLBTI community. Missoula has a history of hate-related incidents. Shortly after 3 a.m. on February 8, 2002, fire swept through the home of Carla Grayson and Adrienne Neff, a lesbian couple. They escaped with their two year old son and their lives through a bedroom window.

Police Chief Wickman sought to respond to these events. Wickman has been Missoula Chief of Police for just over six months. He acknowledged the relationship between the police and the GLBTI community has been troubled.

"We've needed to establish a better relationship with the GLBTI community for a long time and I don't think we've done a very good job of that in the past. I apologize this wasn't done three years ago," Wickman said in reference to the arson attack on Grayson and Neff.

Officer Scott Oak is on the forefront of the Missoula Police Department's effort to improve their relationship with the GLBTI community. Oak volunteered to act as a liaison between the gay community in Missoula and the Police Department. "I want to be a direct link between the GLBTI community and the Police Department," Oak said.

Wickman encouraged Oak's activity and actively sought a meeting with the GLBTI community to introduce himself and his officers. It is a targeted approach to build rapport. That may prove to be a difficult task.

While many in attendance were pleased with the interest from the Police Department, there remained nagging questions and suspicion resulting from the perception of the Department's inaction on the Grayson-Neff arson case, as well as the investigation into the death of Jennifer Pate, a transgender woman, who died under suspicious circumstances in 2002. Those in attendance suggested substantial credibility could and should be built by the department by working on these cases and solving them.

Detective Baker, who has offered to work with the gay community on these types of incidents, responded to the charges of inaction by explaining that all investigations are confidential until charges are filed. "It becomes public record only after charges are filed," he said. There is often much more going on than what is apparent to the public. Baker also explained there are issues of proof that sometimes prevent arrest. However, he encouraged those involved in these and other cases to continue to put pressure on detectives.

Wickman later stated that the Jennifer Pate case was resolved by the coroner's jury decision. "If you were to talk with Detective Stepper and Jennifer's mother, you would see the amount of

effort that was put into the case and that Stepper worked very hard on that case," he said.

Not all in attendance were won over by the department. "This is the same song as three years ago," one participant responded, and she was not alone in her observation.

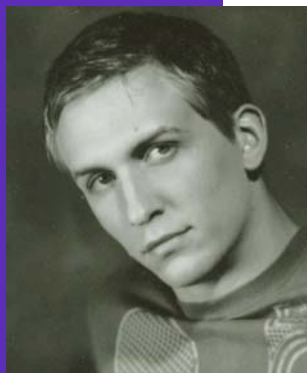
Wickman acknowledged, "...there are barriers between the gay community and the Police Department. I need to know what those barriers are. We are your police department, too."

Wickman emphasized that developing a working relationship is a collaborative effort. While Oak and Baker have volunteered to work specifically with the GLBTI community, part of building a relationship requires the GLBTI community to report hate-related incidents. Hopefully because of the efforts of Oak and Baker, GLBTI victims will feel confident and comfortable in doing so.

Anonymity is often a concern for GLBTI victims of hate-related crimes. One attendee raised the issue of confidentiality when people are in the closet. While it is sometimes possible to report crimes anonymously, problems of proof usually rise to the surface. "Sometimes our hands are tied by the willingness of the victim," Baker said. This reluctance has a ripple effect. Without the assistance of the victim, there are often problems developing the probable cause required to arrest an offender. Community reluctance to report crimes against the gay community because of their sexual orientation results in inaccurate information being relied upon by policy makers.

As a first step to remedy underreporting of crimes against the GLBTI community, Wickman approved a Missoula Hate Crime and Bias Incident Report developed and designed by Officer Oak. The form is available for download at the Western Montana Gay and Lesbian Community Center website (<http://www.gaymontana.com/wmgccc>) and the MPD website. This form allows a person to file a complaint anonymously. While a victim must still give her or his

THE BITTER TRUTH



THAT'S TYPICAL

by Rus Buyok, Assistant Editor

"You are propagating a negative gay stereotype," a rather butch lesbian said to me the other day. "Isn't that the handbag calling the pumps chartreuse?" I answered before she drove away in her pickup truck, mullet flapping in the wind. I set my cosmopolitan down, checked my makeup in the mirror, turned down Cher's greatest hits, and closed the latest Vogue before asking myself, "Whatever did she mean? I'm not the propagating type."

We've all been victims of stereotyping. You tell someone you're gay, and they expect you to jump into a lively rendition of Cabaret. Something like that takes at least a few hours preparation. Or, you chat up a guy all night and for the sake of honesty (which works in theory, but rarely in practice) you tell him you used to be a drag queen. Suddenly you're a leper whose manhood has just fallen out the leg of his pants.

On the other side, a dear friend loves to watch me design and bring a makeup look into fruition. When I started thinking about this article, I asked him why he never played with makeup himself.

"That's just too gay," he said. The response surprised me. He had actually refused to pursue something that fascinated him because of the stigma. Even though he is gay, practicing makeup was a step too far. It passed into the realm of homosexuality subjugated to those more effeminate than he. Even though he has often remarked how butch I am, despite my current career in cosmetics. This made me think, why do stereotypes continue to spread and remain potent in the minds of so many?

Let's face it, most people, gay or straight, cannot or will not get to know the special nuances of every person they meet. Who has that kind of time? To quote Courtney Shane, one of my all time favorite film goddesses, "If I had to be nice to every Pam, Beth and Sherry, I'd have Noah's ark in my phone book." It's easier to lump people together in oversimplified categories. This way we have some idea of what to expect. Not to say this is right or wrong, it's just what we do. Even the most open-minded people meet a new person with some sort of preconceived notions based upon previous experiences.

As you can see, stereotyping influences

both sides of the equation. It causes others to see us not as we are, but as a part of some generalized group. It also causes those who hold the stereotypes to hold themselves back and not experience all aspects of life because of how it may be perceived by others.

Just knock it off. Nobody's propagating anything, and if they are, so what? Do what makes you happy; as long as you're not hurting anyone, who cares what other people think or say? If someone doesn't take the time to get to know you, big whoop. You probably weren't going to take the time to get to know them either. Everyone take a deep breath and realize two things: 1. you have no control over what other people think, and 2. you can only change your own perceptions.

Stereotyping isn't going anywhere. I say mess with their heads. Gay men should fix their own cars, hang ugly art on the walls, sober up, and drive motor homes with cheap barbecues bungee-corded to the front one week and completely redecorate, clean up, and party down the next. It might not change anything, but who can resist a week of tacky parties? ■

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TOP COPS

WINTER SAFETY

by Sergeant Jamie Smith

If you have lived in Montana for any length of time, you know Old Man Winter will be coming along soon to make driving conditions more hazardous. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, transportation accidents are the leading cause of death during winter storms. Preparing your vehicle for the winter season and knowing how to react if you are stranded or lost on the road are the keys to safe winter driving.

First, begin by keeping a "Winter Survival Kit" in the trunk of your car. This kit consists of a bag of kitty litter, a flashlight with extra batteries, a warm blanket, a pair of warm gloves, emergency flares, and a small shovel. The kitty litter and the shovel will come in handy if you are ever stuck on snow or ice. The kitty litter can be sprinkled under the wheel or wheels in order to give them added traction. Use the shovel to dig out excess snow from around the tires so you can get the car moving again.

Next, make sure your car is ready by

taking it to a service station and having them give it a "Pre-Winter Check Up." This includes checking the tires, replacing worn windshield wiper blades, filling up the windshield washer fluid, flushing out the radiator and refilling it with a protective anti-freeze solution, checking all of the belts and hoses, and checking the battery.

A good set of snow tires is recommended for maximum traction, but a good set of all-season radials will do. The most important thing to remember is not to drive around this winter on bald or badly-worn tires.

Replacing worn windshield wipers will help to increase your visibility. After all, you can take every other precaution to prepare for hazardous driving, but if you can't see where you are going you have a terrible problem. That's the same reason for filling-up and keeping your windshield wiper fluid reservoir full. You will need this fluid to clean off the salt and grime that accumulates on your windshield from winter driving. Make sure you use specially designed fluid for cold weather temperatures. Otherwise, it could turn into ice on your windshield and further hinder your sight.

Driving safely in the winter conditions takes a calm mind, a steady hand, and remembering some important tips:

First, before you even get into your car, make sure to clean off all of the snow and ice accumulations. The windows need to be completely cleared off for maximum visibility and your lights need to be cleaned off so the other cars can see you!

Remember, ice takes much longer to stop on than snow. When you find yourself on an icy road, remember to stay calm. Don't slam on the brakes, and do not steer the car with quick, jerky movements. Pump the brakes gently only as needed in order to keep control of the car.

There is no better way to enjoy the beauty of winter than to travel safely and without incident. In addition to these suggestions, sometimes it's best to just stay home during poor conditions. If you are traveling long distances, get off the road and find a warm and safe place to stay until the weather clears. Arriving safely and late is much better than not at all. Be safe! ■

ADVICE FROM THE BARONESS

AGONY & ECSTASY
from mambaonline.com

Q.

Dear Baroness,

Hope all is well with the fabulousness that is you.

I am a single guy and am having the time of my life. Things are going great. But lately I find myself falling in love with the casual guys I "meet".

Is this my subconscious telling me that it's time to settle down? I don't know, maybe I feel lonely or maybe its just time to start looking for Mr. Man and settle down.

I have been feeling a little frustrated with the fakeness of the gay scene I am frequenting. Maybe a change is in order? Can you suggest a few places where a 22 year old can have some adult fun in

the (heaven forgive me) non-sexual way?

Is life ever what you expect?

GD

A.

Dearest G.(orgeous) D.(arling),

Thank you so much for the compliment. The fabulousness which is me is very well indeed.

I am off to Istanbul in two days time, and cannot decide whether to pack red or black lingerie to delight all those Turkish men. Ah, decisions, decisions!

But back to you.

How can you possibly say that you are "having the time of my life", and two sentences later ask if "maybe a change is in order". Darling, recognize a good

thing when it is happening and don't change a thing....yet!

Your subconscious does not talk to you. It is simply there to irritate you and make a lot of shrinks very wealthy. One is lonely or one isn't. One is never maybe lonely, (unless your intellectual powers have evolved into the clear understanding of the phrase "men lead lives of quiet desperation".)

The gay scene is not fake, as you suggest. Perhaps a little frivolous, but that is what makes it such fun. And, sweetest heart, since when could adult fun be non-sexual? Even the best restaurants have gorgeous waiters. Care for some pudding?

As for life not being what you expect... Isn't that the point? Enjoy the adventure!

Love you,

The Baroness ■



The Baroness was born in Berlin, grew up in Rio de Janeiro, 'finished' in Switzerland and then shocked the family by embarking on an acting, singing and dancing career. Whilst singing in a nightclub ("...a critic once described my singing voice as marshmallow syrup, strained through an old brassiere...") she met, and soon after married a Baron.

Two years later she divorced the Baron (but kept the title) and married a very wealthy Italian, who died tragically in a light aircraft accident soon after ("... I was suddenly a very rich woman..."). The Baroness has never re-married and enjoys the freedom that her tremendous wealth and single status brings.

PLEASE NOTE: The Baroness is not a medical or mental health professional. As such, all advice or comment is to be taken as a layman's perspective on the matter. Should your problem be of a serious nature, please consult a professional counselor or medical practitioner. Mambaonline.com is not responsible for any action taken on the basis of advice given in this column.

■

THE UNNAMED COLUMN

TRANSGENDER DAY OF REMEMBRANCE
by Anne Harris

November 20th was recognized as a Transgender Day of Remembrance. It is when we remember those individuals who have been victims of hatred and indifference. There may be no more isolating experience than the one of growing up with the certain knowledge that your internal gender identity and your assigned gender identity don't agree. For most of us who have this mismatch between our mind and body, life is a continuous experience of feeling like we do not fit in at school, family, career, or even with our own body. If/ when we begin to express our inner identity on the outside, we encounter two forms of oppression.

Internalized oppression: the negative, fearful, prejudiced, hateful, messages we buy into from the world around us. Internalized oppression is not only painful, it may account for an estimated 50% suicide rate before age 30 for transgender individuals. Internalized oppression however is only a reflection of the oppression perpetrated by a culture that seeks to reduce everyone to an imagined binary gendered heterosexual world.

As hurtful as internalized oppression is, it's no match for the hateful violence

targeted at the transgender community worldwide. We have felt this violence in Montana with the uncertainties surrounding Jennifer Pate's death (2003, Pattee Canyon). Two years ago, a transgender woman in Hot Springs was dragged from her own apartment and severely beaten. When Sheriff's Deputies arrived, the victim was arrested for assault, despite her battered and bloody body and perpetrators without a scratch on them.

An announcement from the Phoenix, Arizona Day of Remembrance (www.azdor.org) recounts the following:

In November of 1998, Rita Hester, a transgender woman in Boston, Massachusetts, answered a knock at her door. Instead of a friend, however, the person at the door was an assailant who forced entry into her apartment and stabbed her over twenty times. Rita's death that night proved to be the event that focused the attention of transgender people everywhere on the terrible violence often inflicted on trans people.

Beginning in November 1999, the Transgender Day of Remembrance has been observed in many cities worldwide. In vigils and memorial services, we honor the memory of persons murdered during the past year. This includes over twenty persons who have died from anti-transgender

violence worldwide in 2005. Certainly, the total number is much greater than these reported cases.

Amancio Corrales, of Yuma, Arizona, performed on stage as "Dalila" and often went out socially in female role. One night in May 2005, Amancio did not return home, and was found beaten and drowned in the Colorado River. The killer or killers have not been apprehended.

The AmancioProject.org, is a website dedicated to preserving Amancio's memory as well as urging law enforcement officers to continue seeking the killers.

Another example of violence against transgender people shows that it happens to people of all ages. Three year old Ronnie Antonio was beaten to death by his father, Ronnie Paris, who felt the child was behaving "like a sissy" and was terrified the child would grow up to be less than a "real man." Ronnie Antonio Paris died of brain injury from repeated head trauma.

The extreme nature of violence against transgenders makes these crimes singularly identifiable. In 1987, Michelle Byrne was tortured with a hot electric iron to her breasts before her killers cut off her hands and feet and finally beheaded her in Nashville, Tennessee. In 1993,

See REMEMBRANCE, Page 9

COURT JEST



CORONATION EDUCATION
by *Ophelia Uppe-Bouviér, Empress 10 of Montana*

Coronation is a big thing to the devoted Courtier. Every person associated with the International Court System has a story or two about some Coronation somewhere. You just can't be a Court Member without one. I think it's in our bylaws. During my reign, I traveled afar to witness the grand Coronation exhibitions in many intriguing and exotic locations such as Vancouver, WA (at the time, we didn't feel we could get across the border with Timmy) and others. Each one holds special fond memories, and a couple near-death experiences.

What exactly is a Coronation? Well, while 'coronation' by name signifies the beginning of a new reign, in our Court System it is more of a celebration for the reign that is ending.

Consider the British monarchy. If it were the same as the International

Court System, it would be like crowning Prince Charles at his mother's funeral. There would be lots of other reigning queens in attendance, each one thinking their funeral was going to be much more lavish and when it came their turn to die they were going to be even prettier than Elizabeth in her ratty old coffin. At the end of the night, each person in attendance would give Elizabeth a dollar and then they'd all congratulate Charles (and I suppose Camilla, although the gals wouldn't have to work too hard to be prettier than her).

Some Coronations are more elaborate than others. Large theatrical sets in grand hotel ballrooms are not uncommon on the 'circuit' of Courts. It's a personal artistic expression when you see how Empresses and Emperors choose to end their reign. Their themes for the night can be quite extravagant. Here in Montana, we aren't quite so elaborate. Don't get me wrong, our Coronations are indeed spectacular, or at the very least, a spectacle.

It's a great honor to be asked by the monarchs who are "stepping down" to perform at their Coronation, or to sit on their dais during the festivities. I was asked to sit on a dais... I forget who it was, but I do remember thinking "All I can see are people's butts sitting here... Where the hell is my drink?" So just remember when you attend a Coronation and see a bunch of people on the dais, they are probably miserable. I served straight vodka tinted pink with Hawaiian Punch to my dais guests. They might have been miserable, but they had one heck of a buzz.

A Coronation night is unlike any theatrical event you are likely to see in your life. It is part drag show, part Masonic ceremony and part beauty pageant. I wouldn't miss ours for the world, and whole-heartedly encourage you to attend, too. You have until next September to prepare for Montana's annual Coronation, so you have plenty time. You might need the time to brush up on your royal wave and curtsy. ■

special points of interest



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TWENTY QUEER QUESTIONS

with *Dusty Barlow*

I met Deb G. at a dinner party last month, and immediately she became one of my new favorite people. On the menu that night was curried shrimp and a gorgeous salad, but it was meeting Deb that was the most memorable (although the curry was very delectable). Deb is a social worker, and as you will see from her answers below, one of the most opinionated, groovy lesbians out there. Happy Holidays to you all!

1. How did you end up in Missoula? I came to MT in the summer of 1981 and fell in love with the mountains and Missoula. I went back to my home state, quit my job, sold most of what I owned and started over with my then 5 year old son. It was a huge risk for me not knowing anyone really, but I felt guided and since I am an optimist I could only see the positives. Looking back now it was during the Reagan recession and I had to work 3 different jobs the first year to barely make ends meet. The first year here was very hard and quite depressing. I lived through it and have continued to love this Garden City!

2. Do you find Montana to be a progressive state? Overall I would not say so, but there are some pockets of MT that seem a little more progressive. Missoula is probably the most, but even Helena has another Organic Food Store

now made from straw bale!

3. Are you currently in a relationship, or just ho-ho-hoing around? I actually am in a new relationship for the past 6 months and it has been wonderful! Even though we are in two different towns, we have made it work! Recently her breast cancer diagnosis and surgery threw us both for a loop, but that has just moved us to a different level in our relationship. I feel fortunate to have such a fun, loving, compassionate and courageous woman in my life.

4. Do you have any pets? Yes, my wonderful companion Sandy, who had been at the Humane Society for 4 months before I adopted her. She is a 9 year old Blue Heeler and Norwegian Elkhound cross and very loyal. My other female household member is a 15 pound white cat with green eyes named Cradle. She loves being "Queen of the House" and for an old lady cat (she's 16) she is still quite a source of entertainment and loves to cuddle up and be close to me and my gal.

5. Do you believe in aliens? But of course...who are we to think we are the only ones in the universe? Also my friend and I once saw a UFO while we were in college. There was no scientific explanation the news could offer otherwise and we know what we saw...

6. What is your opinion on gay marriage? I am in favor of it, but I think it was a shame the way it was used against our community in the last election. By instilling fear of the "gay agenda" as a "major problem in America," we were used to cover up the real problems our society faces. So, folks did not question the real issues and believed the rhetoric that was fed to them, thus we have Bush again as our president.

7. Have you ever won any contests? Yes, once in college I won an entire tennis wardrobe from the "Clairrol Get into Condition Contest". Looking back I was pretty sweet looking in my tennis clothes but my game sucked!

8. Besides Oprah, who would you like to see run for President of the United States? Well, after what happened to Geraldine Ferraro as a VP candidate, I would hope a woman as president would fare better in these times. Whether you like her or not, I believe Hillary [Clinton] has a lot of guts to take on the "good old boys!" I am not sure the majority of our country would accept her as Commander in Chief when we are at war. We may have come a long way but sexism, racism, and all the -ism's are still alive and well in our society.

See **QUESTIONS**, Page 9

SAFER SEX

GAY CAMP

by David Stalling for FDH & Associates

If you've heard about the condom races and soaking in a hot tub with a group of fellow gay men, you might have the wrong impression of "gay camp." This is no hedonistic vacation. In fact, booze, drugs and sex are forbidden. But don't let that keep you from experiencing one of these tremendously rewarding get-aways.

I have attended two of these annual events: the Gay Summer Camp in Red Lodge last August and the Gay Autumn Retreat at Camp Mak-A-Dream near Gold Creek last month. The retreats were full of informative, worthwhile workshops on topics such as safe sex, living with HIV, spirituality, personal safety, legal issues, drug abuse, addictions and other subjects pertinent to gay men. A powerfully graphic slide show on various sexually transmitted diseases and infections—showing people with lesions, warts and other ailments—that was not pleasant to see, but hit home on the repercussions of not playing safe. A presentation by Missoula policeman Scott Oak was packed full of good tips on how to avoid becoming a target of hate crimes, and

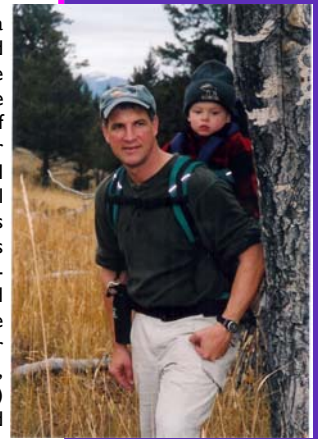
what to do if you do feel threatened. Testimonials from men living with HIV provide real-life, heart-to-heart lessons from men about how they got HIV, how others might avoid it, and how they continue to live good lives. These workshops, and more, are all presented by experienced facilitators and educators in a safe, confidential atmosphere, mixed with good fun. The condom races, for example, involved relay teams placing condoms on wooden phal-luses—with judges ensuring each contestant check expiration dates, put the condoms on properly, and remove them properly in a way that will help stop the spread of sexually transmitted diseases.

But the most valuable part of these retreats, for me, is the chance to meet a diversity of gay men from all over Montana and from all walks of life. Having recently come out, meeting these fellow gay men in such a supportive environment makes me feel more accepted and comfortable with my own sexuality. There is plenty of social time worked into the weekend to swim, hike, watch movies, play games, and talk. I have made friends at these retreats I am sure will last a lifetime.

The retreats are held by the Montana Gay Men's Task Force, run by FDH and Associates out of Missoula, and made up of gay men from across the state dedicated to reducing occurrences of HIV and helping gay men live healthier lives. In addition to the two events I attended open to all gay and bisexual men, the Task Force also holds retreats for gay and bisexual young men (ages 16-24); HIV positive and partners retreat (for both men and women) called Rising Hope; a gay men's HIV positive retreat; a "Two-Spirit" gathering for Native American Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex (GLBTI) people, their partners, family and friends; and a LGBT Health Summit.

As for the hot tub, the Camp Mak-A-Dream facility has a large one where you can stay up late and chat with other gay men. Sorry guys, bathing suits are required, but there's nothing stopping you from exchanging a few phone numbers.

For more information, contact FDH and Associates Gay Men's Task Force at 1-888-713-4683 or fdh@mtgayhealth.org. You can also check out the Gay Men's Task Force website at: www.montana-gayhealth.org. ■



L WORDS

'TIS THE SEASON

by B. Champlin

It's that time of the year, trees decorated with lights, holly, and mistletoe too.

People are celebrating many things, the birth of Jesus, Hanukkah, and Yule.

There are places to go and people to see and so many things a flutter. It's a time of giving and sharing and putting aside your druthers.

It's a time of year when diversity shows yet another face. And we don't hesitate at all, not a moment lost at the chance to celebrate.

So give some food to others so they can also eat. Give a pair of shoes away to cover someone's little feet.

Diversity doesn't come around just once a year to celebrate. If we celebrate it all year round we may create less fear and hate.

And I saw her write as she typed out of sight...

Love and peace to all and to all a good life!

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HAIKUS

by Annie Martin

Flower's Gift

Yellow flower grows
Sweet aromas drifting up
Day's pleasant greeting

Flower's Duality

Soft pink petals hide
delicate honey inside
Sensation's pleasure ■

FAMOUS LESBIAN QUOTES

Girls who put out are tramps. Girls who don't are ladies. This is, however, a rather archaic usage of the word. Should one of you boys happen upon a girl who doesn't put out, do not jump to the conclusion that you have found a lady. What you have probably found is a Lesbian.

~ Fran Lebowitz

Every woman I have ever loved has left her print upon me, where I loved some invaluable piece of myself apart from me--so different that I had to stretch and grow in order to recognize her. And in that growing, we came to separation, that place where work begins.

~ Audre Lorde

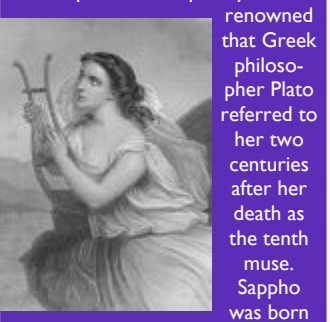
I have lived and slept in the same bed with English countesses and Prussian farm women...no woman has excited passions among women more than I have.

~ Florence Nightingale

Hick darling...I couldn't say je t'aime et je t'adore as I longed to do, but always remember I am saying it, that I go to sleep thinking of you.

~ Eleanor Roosevelt, in a letter to Lorena Hickok ■

Sappho (lived 7th century BC), Greek poet, whose poetry was so



renowned that Greek philosopher Plato referred to her two centuries after her death as the tenth muse. Sappho was born

on the island of Lésvos, probably in the city of Mytilini.

Sappho wrote nine books of odes and a number of epithalamia (wedding songs), elegies, and hymns, but only a few fragments remain. Her poems are marked by beauty of diction, simplicity of form, and intensity of emotion. She invented the verse form known as Sapphics, a four-line stanza in which the first three lines are each 11 syllables long and the fourth is 5 syllables long. Sappho influenced many later Greek poets, particularly Theocritus.

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THE BOARD ROOM

ANNUAL HOLIDAY SOIREE 2005

by Mark Heyka, Board Member

Another Annual Caras Nursery Soiree has come and gone. By the time you read this we will have received over \$700 from the fundraiser! The raffle raised a lot of money and I would like to thank all who donated raffle items and the children who worked so hard selling tickets. The Center would also like to extend thanks to Caras Nursery for their generosity and to their employees who put forth the extra time and effort to make this event a success.

The Soiree is one of the most successful and anticipated Center events and the Board wants to create more events that will be uniquely billed as Center events. We hope the community will anticipate future events with similar excitement. You can look forward to a formal Black and White Ball in the next few months. We are hoping, as a Community Center, to provide a range of activities designed to reach out to the whole community. While we know that not every event is right for everyone we are hoping that by

providing a variety of events to choose from we can reach everyone.

As a resource center for the people of Western Montana, we want to offer avenues for socializing and meeting new people. This next year we are going to try to offer more options for fun in the area. We are here for you. If you have any ideas, please let us know by contacting the Center by email, phone, or just stopping by.

Once again we would like to extend our thanks to all who put their time, money, and effort into the Soiree. We also would like to thank you for coming out to support us again this year. Without the community and your support we would be unable to keep the Center alive. We hope to be able to continue serving our community in the coming years.

Don't forget to mark your calendars for 2006, the next Soiree will be held, per tradition, the Saturday before Thanksgiving. That will be November 18th next year. ■

FEATURED COLUMNIST

GOD HELP ME, I'M A HICK

by Joan Opyr, 10-11-05 for NewWest.net

I've left the comfortable familiarity of Moscow, Idaho for, first, New York City, and second, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, England. I'm sitting right now in the JFK Airport, with six hours to go before my flight. Can you say hick? I think you can.

This is my first trip to New York. I've been to London, Paris, Edinburgh, Liverpool, Manchester, Seattle and Spokane (many times), Portland, Charleston, Detroit, Columbus, Boston, Washington, DC, the late, lamented New Orleans, Atlanta, Orlando, and Miami. I grew up in Raleigh, North Carolina, which was a mid-sized city when I lived there but has now grown to a monstrous 300,000 thousand—one million if you consider it as part of the Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill Triangle.

Once upon a time, I thought of myself as a city girl. My family's idea of a good time when I was a kid was to drive down Wilmington Street of an evening and count all the hookers. We'd grab a dozen hot Krispy Kreme doughnuts at the all-night shop on Blount Street for sustenance, and then take another spin downtown, this time to number the drunks staggering out of the sleazy bars. At nineteen, I spent a year in Glasgow, Scotland attending the University of Strathclyde. I wandered the streets at all hours, sometimes sober, sometimes not. I knew my way around a city—any city. The noises—the traffic, the sirens, the trash trucks—didn't bother me. I could sleep through any racket, and I could ignore any smell.

I've lived in Moscow, Idaho now for twelve years, and not in town, but eight miles outside of the city limits, in the country. My house is surrounded by wheat and pea fields, a horse pasture and tall hills covered with pine trees. Turkey, deer, elk, porcupine, pheasants, coyotes and the occasional moose meander by and, despite the frequency of these wildlife sightings, it's always a big event. We each break out our personal binoculars (six people in the house, six pairs of bin-

oculars) and argue about the number of points on this deer's rack, or the size of the tom turkey standing at the bottom of the draw. I say the size of a hobbit; my mother-in-law says Danny DeVito. Whatever—he's big. And here's the thing—I'm missing my chance to shoot him; and an elk; and a pheasant because I'm spending the next two weeks traveling to New York and London and Newcastle-upon-Tyne to promote my book, Idaho Code, and this bothers me. This bothers me a lot.

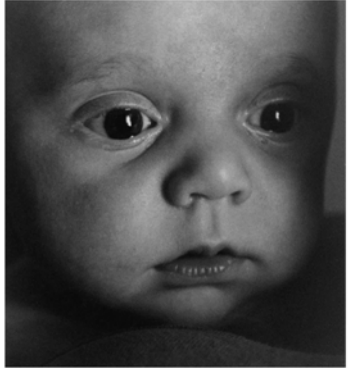
Why? Because the streets of New York are covered in uncollected garbage and it smells really bad. It's raining here and the city is experiencing flash flooding. And I find that although I'm loving the late night kosher delicatessens and the fact that I can get a latte without having to get into my car and drive eight miles—I scarcely have to walk twenty feet—I miss the peace, the quiet, and the open landscape of Idaho. I fire a rifle and a shotgun on a regular basis at home, and yet I find that the noise of the subway trains rumbling beneath the streets make me jump. Cabbies blowing their horns make me jump. (The horn is apparently an integral part of the New York cab's transmission—the driver cannot move forward without blowing out at least half a dozen blasts per second.)

And, finally, there's the yelling. Idahoans are not known for their quiet, dulcet voices, but they are all horse whisperers next to the average New Yorker enjoying a cell phone conversation. Your hemorrhoids, your mother, your mother's hemorrhoids—these are all suitable topics for public pronouncement. Of course, there is a kind of privacy in a crowded city that doesn't exist in a small town like Moscow. The likelihood of anyone next to you on a subway train knowing (or caring) who you is close to nil. In tiny Moscow, on the other hand, you can't visit the toilet in McDonald's without someone phoning the big news home for you.

Don't get me wrong. Oddly enough, I think I like New York. The people (well, most of them, anyway) are remarkably friendly; the streets are well-lit and feel

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Weddings Senior Portraits Couples
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safe; and everything is within walking, bus, or subway distance. The food is fantastic. I could get to like visiting here, but I'd miss my turkeys, and my deer, and my elk, and my coyotes. I'd miss my peace and quiet. I'd miss my wide-open spaces.

I want to wear my Carhartt overalls and walk down the draw hunting pheasants. I like the bad coffee I make at home just as well as the good coffee I buy here. I want my newspaper to be boring—I want to know who's got a Boone and Crockett, not who's just been buggered or beheaded. I'm just a [hopeless] hick. That's all there is to it. And the sooner I get back to Hicksville, Idaho, the happier I will be. ■



About New West: New West is a network of online communities devoted to the culture, economy, politics, envi-

ronment and overall atmosphere of the Rocky Mountain West. In a time of dramatic change, New West aims to serve as a nexus of dialogue and a smart guide to the news and issues that are affecting one of the greatest places on Earth. We aim to foster a bond among communities that may be distant in geography or occupation, but share common interests and hopes for the region as it wrestles with growth and change. We stand for forward thinking about the big picture and believe that citizen engagement will be instrumental in the development of the region. On our Web sites you will find commentary and original reportage on the big issues, as well as a wealth of fun and useful information on everyday matters ranging from gardening and animals to books, film and travel. You will also find places where you, the reader, can make your ideas and opinions heard through our "Unfiltered" sites. We hope you'll join us in the conversation. Our monthly print magazine will debut next year. ■

NATIONAL & WORLD NEWS

SPOKANE MAYOR OUSTED IN GAY SEX SCANDAL

John K. Wiley, Associated Press
Wednesday, December 7, 2005 / 09:35 AM

SPOKANE, Wash. -- Mayor James E. West must leave office this month after voters recalled him in a special election sparked by allegations he used a city computer to woo gay men over the Internet.

West, 54, must leave his position when the election results are certified Dec. 16. He has not been charged with a crime, but FBI agents seized computers from his home as part of an investigation.

"I said I'd abide by the will of the voters, obviously, and they've spoken," West told The Associated Press Tuesday. "I'm at peace with their decision and disappointed." The recall election was launched by a local resident, Shannon Sullivan, who said she felt vindicated by the results.

West, a former Boy Scout executive and sheriff's deputy, was elected mayor in 2003 after serving more than two decades as a conservative Republican in the state Legislature, where he voted against gay-friendly bills.

A little more than half of the 110,000 ballots mailed to voters were counted in the first batch of results released Tuesday night. Of those, 38,718, or 65 percent, voted to recall West, while 20,681, or 35 percent, voted to retain him.

The recall campaign began after the Spokesman-Review newspaper reported in May that West was a closeted homosexual who visited gay chat rooms using his city-owned laptop computer, and offered internships and other favors to young men he hoped to have sex with.

Sullivan, a single mother with a high-school education and no legal background, shepherded her petitions for a recall vote through superior and state high court challenges brought by the mayor's lawyers.

"It's been a long, hard seven months," she said Tuesday. "Elected officials need to be held to higher standards." Shannon has said she started the campaign after finding herself at a loss to explain newspaper reports of West's behavior to her 9-year-old son.

West has denied any wrongdoing. In a newspaper ad, he acknowledged making "personal mistakes" but insisted he had "never done anything to harm our city."

West has denied any wrongdoing. In a newspaper ad, he acknowledged making "personal mistakes" but insisted he had "never done anything to harm our city." ■

ANTI-GAY EFFORTS TARGET FORD, WELLS FARGO

Larry Buhl, PlanetOut Network
Monday, December 5, 2005 / 04:37 PM

Wells Fargo Bank and Ford Motor Co. are the latest targets in a war launched by anti-gay groups to punish corporations for gay-friendly policies, and, in the case of Ford, one right-wing organization is apparently claiming victory.

Last week, Focus on the Family withdrew its funds from Wells Fargo, citing "ongoing efforts to advance the radical homosexual agenda," according to a statement by Jim Daly, Focus's chief executive officer.

"Those efforts are in direct opposition to the underlying principles and purpose of Focus, and thus a decision of conscience had to be made and a stand taken," the statement said.

Focus on the Family's primary complaint was Wells Fargo's support of the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation. The San Francisco-based financial giant had agreed to match contributions to a GLAAD media campaign fund.

Wells Fargo indicated that Focus on the Family's decision would not affect its policies toward the LGBT community.

"Wells Fargo firmly believes it is our responsibility to serve every segment of our community, and we view our support for the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community as part of our broader commitment to diversity," Wells spokeswoman Melissa Morey told PlanetOut Network.

Another company in the crosshairs of an anti-gay group is Ford, which was threatened with a boycott from the American Family Association last spring due to its pro-gay policies. The American Family Association suspended the boycott when Ford engaged the group in discussions in June, and last week lifted the boycott completely -- just after Ford decided not to renew advertising campaigns for its Jaguar and Land Rover brands in gay publications, including the Advocate and Out magazines.

Neither Ford nor the American Family Association disclosed what formal agreement, if any, had been reached. But a prepared statement by AFA chairman Donald Wildmon last week suggested that Ford's decision was linked to AFA's pressure.

"They've heard our concerns; they are acting on our concerns. We are pleased with where we are," Wildmon said.

Ford spokesman Mike Moran, however, asserted that the company's decision was "for business reasons, not a social statement."

"We advertise our brands wherever it makes business sense," Moran told the PlanetOut Network. "Jaguar and Land Rover continue to face pressure on their marketing budgets and can't support as many publications next year." Moran added that the Ford and Lincoln Mercury brands were never advertised in the gay and lesbian community and will not be, and that Volvo is making a big marketing outreach to gays and lesbians.

Mark Elderkin, president of PlanetOut Inc., which owns the Advocate and Out, said his company had not heard directly from Ford and declined to speculate on the reasons for the automaker's advertising decision.

"Advertisers come and go due to various economic reasons," Elderkin said. "Ford is saying that its decision to not renew its ad campaign is due to business issues, not gay issues. I can't assume otherwise."

Moran suggested that the timing of AFA's boycott end and Ford's advertising decision was coincidental.

"In our view, AFA's boycott ended because, due to our dialogue with them, their officers have a better understanding of the principles that drive our company's policies as well as our wish to not engage in political or socially charged debates," he said.

Nevertheless, that debate has started, and such comments have done little to quell the growing concern among gay activists that the anti-gay right is having an increasing effect on corporations.

"Signs that Ford may have capitulated to right-wing extremist groups are deeply troubling," said Joe Solmonese, president of the Human Rights Campaign, in a written statement.

"Ford has been a friend to gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender consumers and employees in the past and through its policies and advertising has shown great support for fairness," Solmonese said. "We call on Ford to reject the American Family Association's assertions that a deal has been reached."

The Human Rights Campaign and several other national LGBT groups signed a collective statement Monday asking Ford to meet with LGBT representatives about their concerns.

Activist blogger John Aravosis went further in putting the heat on Ford. Writing on Americablog.org, Aravosis vowed to give the company a PR headache similar to the Microsoft firestorm he helped to orchestrate this year.

"They (religious conservatives) want to destroy us by going after every company that dares not treat gays like they're diseased pariahs," Aravosis said. ■

WAL-MART UNIT HEARS GAY WEDDING BELLS

by HEATHER TIMMONS of The New York Times
Published: December 7, 2005

LONDON, Dec. 6 - Asda, Wal-Mart's British subsidiary, has introduced a line of wedding cards and "commitment rings" this week - just in time for the country's legalization of gay civil partnerships.

A Wal-Mart subsidiary in Britain is selling wedding cards and matching rings for same-sex couples, who can soon enter into civil unions there. "Wedding day wishes, Mrs. & Mrs.," reads a pink-toned greeting card. A blue card decorated with two top hats says, "Congratulations, Mr. & Mr." The company will also sell a line of matching gold rings with diamond insets starting at £60 each (\$104).

Monday was the first day that same-sex couples were able to apply for a civil partnership. The first gay and lesbian marriages in England will take place on Dec. 21, and a long line of well-known Britons have already said they plan to pledge their troth, including the singers Sir Elton John and George Michael.

See WAL-MART, Page 9

OUT OF BOBBY'S CLOSET



PURSES AND MURSES AND BAGS, OH MY!

by Bobby Tollefson, Board Member/Chief Editor

(Reprinted and adapted from CenterSpeak January 2005 issue)

At the end of every year there is a critical query to be answered: What will be the top fashion trend for the upcoming year? In the last few years we had low rise jeans, "ghetto" gold jewelry, pink for boys, and simple, solid-colored polo shirts (collar up) to name a few. So what is on the style plate for the next year? Ladies and gentlemen, I introduce (or reacquaint you with) the urban bag, my fashion prediction and recommendation for 2006.

Why this bag, you might ask? Well, everyone needs that little place to put your gadgets and gismos. No, I am not referring to the "goody" drawer in your nightstand. I'm talking about a place to put your wallet, checkbook, cell phone, pocket pc, cigarettes, gum, lip gloss (yes, some of us boys wear it too), etc. The urban bag is a small unisex bag for the post-millennium urbanite who might find cargo pants a bit limiting (we all know that cargo pants are basically a lesbian purse). My dearest lady friends, I am speaking to you too... especially the ones that hate the idea of carrying a "girly" purse. The cargo pants simply must go back in your closet so that they can make another appearance in 2020 when they come back in style (besides, adding bulk to your hip/thigh area is usually not a good thing).

As for you "boyz" out there... I am sure many of you

have hang-ups about carrying this kind of bag. We have all heard the cracks about "murses", "man bags" and even the "European carry-all". Well, guess what boys? Our metrosexual counterparts are outdoing us in the style department. Straight men in NYC, San Francisco, DC, and even Dallas have embraced the urban bag and they are carrying them with pride. Okay, so I realize this is Missoula, Montana, but the point is that it is due time that we join in. I have seen too many wallets busting at their seams and pockets stretched like a Pam Anderson bra (okay, so adding bulk to your pockets might be a good thing if you are guy).

Now you are probably wondering what an urban bag looks like. Let me sketch you a mental Monet. There appear to be four distinct styles: utility, satchel, sling and messenger. These can all either be casual or dressy. In my opinion, the urban bag should have the following properties. First, it mustn't be mistaken for a purse so it needs to be distinct. It needs to be small enough so that it isn't considered simply a bag and large enough where it isn't considered a clutch (8" wide x 10" high is perfect for utility and satchels, but messengers and slings will be a bit larger). It should have a strap which you will typically wear from left shoulder to right hip (or vise-versa if you are left handed). It needs to have several easy-access individual pockets (four minimum) and a simple design. A briefcase, backpack, gym bag, laptop carrier or overnight bag doesn't count!

I will admit, this fabulous necessity is a little hard to come by, but not impossible. I started my search for the perfect urban bag on such Internet sites as <http://www.next.co.uk/> which is a high end retail clothing store in London. They had the most perfect satchel bag in black leather. Unfortunately they don't ship to the US. I checked several other sites in London and the US, but many of the bags I wanted were either too expensive or I wasn't able to get them delivered here. But don't despair my fashion-minded friend, companies like Diesel, Banana Republic, Ecko and Gap are joining the ranks to add it to their men's fashion lines. In Missoula, however, I was a bit short on luck. Dior,

Fendi, the Hermes Birkin... the list goes on (and so can the waiting list). Even if you had such a designer bag in "Zoo" city would very many people even notice or care? After much searching, I did find a bag at the most unexpected place (I won't admit where) that I carry with me now. It is an excellent starter bag, very affordable and will blend nicely into Missoula atmosphere. The company that makes it is called Eastsport and this bag fits into the utility category (they actually call it a "gearbag"). It is black so it goes with nearly anything. So, when it comes to urban bags (I can't believe I'm about to say this...) start cheap. Well, I guess I mean reasonable. If you do prefer the high end bag, Gucci, Prada and Louis Vuitton have some lovely choices in leather.

Make your New Year's resolution this year a fashionable and practical one. Be fashion-forward and try the urban bag. Heck, buy one in every color (I think Mae West said "Too much of a good thing can be wonderful"). Then, take that bag out for a cocktail to celebrate. Not only will you love it, but you will take it everywhere with you. Oh, just one more thing... for you folks still wearing the yellow Lance Armstrong bracelets, it's time to upgrade! It is a good cause, but even charitable fashion trends must come to an end. Maybe shelve the yellow for a while and try pink, for breast cancer.

Out of Bobby's Closet is written by Bobby Tollefson, a Missoulian who has lived here over 16 years and Montana all of his life. His column will feature gay and lesbian issues (of course), fashion, gossip, movies, trends, advice, relationships, sex, culture, politics, and religion and it will appear once a month in The Missoula Gayzette.

Dedications: This column is dedicated to my late father, who incidentally would never carry such a thing.

Please send questions and comments (or requests for advice) to wmgccnews@hotmail.com. Be sure that you put "The Missoula Gayzette" in the subject line. ■

BOARD MEMBERS WANTED!

by Nick Engler, Board Member

The Center is looking for a few good women and men to serve as members of its Board of Directors.

The Center Board is a working board, not an advisory committee, and Board members spend between 2 and 20 hours a week working for the Center. The principle duty is to ensure the financial solvency of the Center (i.e. raising money for the financial stability of the Center). The principle requirement is a willingness to do the work necessary for the future health of the Center.

Board members need to be committed to securing the constitutional right to privacy, equality, and dignity of GLBTI individuals, and committed to diversity and multi-culturalism within the community and the Community Center. Non-GLBTI allies and friends are also encouraged to apply. While not a specific requirement board members should be a resident of Western Montana, but must be a paid member in good standing

with the Community Center.

Other responsibilities include: volunteering time and energies toward the Center's growth and development; participating in Center programs and activities; participating and creating fundraising activities; serving on Community Center committees that perform the miscellaneous business of the Center.

A member of our non-profit Board has three legal obligations: diligent, informed participation in business of the Board and Center; to act in good faith and in the best interest of the organization; and, to ensure that the organization operates in keeping with the laws and rules governing its formation and status, and in accordance with its own by-laws and mission and those of the state in which it is incorporated.

Please note that we have several positions to fill. For an application please contact the Center at 406-543-2224 or email us at wmgcc@gaymontana.com. It's time to get involved with our community!

MEET THE BOARD!

1. MARK HEYKA
2. NICK ENGLER
3. BERNIE KNEEFE (CO-CHAIR)
4. DEVY RAYE
5. PAULA ERWIN
6. BOBBY TOLLEFSON (CO-CHAIR)
7. JON FREELAND
8. JASON STONE
9. RICHARD FIFIELD
10. LAURA DOLL
11. JIM TOEVS
12. VACANT
13. VACANT

PLEASE HELP US FILL THESE VACANCIES! ■

LIAISON (continued...)

name in order for criminal charges to be filed, the reports will nevertheless help establish a paper trail of hate-related incidents in Missoula. Oak hopes that regardless of the circumstances, GLBTI people will eventually feel comfortable talking to him and feel confident he can help them.

Although Oak and Baker are supportive of the GLBTI community, there were assertions that others on the police force are not as gay friendly. "I know," said Wickman. "We have to clean up our own backyard, too."

Members of the group suggested sensitivity training. When asked, Wickman cited already staggering training costs, but stated that training was ongoing. Although some in the group vocalized skepticism on the effectiveness of such training, others asked what the GLBTI community could do to help fund it.

While the meeting was modest and the proposals measured, it reflected hope for a future relationship between the Missoula City Police Department and the GLBTI community. Wickman promised other meetings and events in the following months that will be designed to promote and cultivate this relationship. The GLBTI community is taking him at his word. ■

QUESTIONS (continued...)

9. What is your favorite restaurant in Missoula? Sa-wa-dee. What is your favorite meal there? I have several but I love their fried tofu appetizer with peanut sauce, any of the soups and the curried shrimp and veggies!

10. Where is your favorite place to picnic? Anywhere in the mountains after a nice day hike. One of my favorites is the Blodgett Falls.

11. If you could invite any three people in history to a dinner party, who would they be? Indira Gandhi, Eleanor Roosevelt, Audre Lourdes.

12. Any beauty secrets? A smile, a haircut you love, a great balancing moisturizer for the face, and a joyful and playful spirit that shines from the inside and exudes out to the world!

13. Are you a spiritual person? Yes, very much so. It is an important part of who I am. Too broad of a subject to go into, but suffice to say I have more than one guardian angel and guides that have saved my life more than once over the years.

14. What is your favorite television show? I don't watch enough TV to have a favorite. I prefer to read, listen to music or I'm busy with other interests in the evening. But, when "The L Word" season begins I will get friends to tape it and will watch it then.

15. Have you ever been arrested? No, but I took on City Hall and closed down an inhumane city dog pound when I was younger. By going door to door with a petition, photos and showing the citizens of the small community the deplorable conditions the animals endured, people rallied and we made changes. Law enforcement thought we were "nuts" and probably wanted to lock us up, but they really couldn't since 3/4 of the town signed the petition and about 1/4 packed city council chambers. Those would be referred to as "the good old days" when you gave public comment to the city council and they listened to their constituents.

16. What is your favorite Madonna song? "Nothing Really Matters" from the Ray of Light CD.

17. Besides Heidi Meili, who is your favorite local news anchor? No favorite anchor, but Mark Heyka is my favorite weatherman!

18. Any funny encounters with celebrities? The last time Lila Downs was performing at the University of Montana, my son, his wife and I went down stairs after the show. We didn't see her or anyone for that matter. For some reason my son did this unique whistle we used to do when we were looking for each other in a crowd. She heard it and came out of the dressing room. She was surprised to see us instead, but explained someone in her band does that as well and she found it humorous that he did too. She was very gracious, and we ended up talking with her in English a little, but Spanish mostly for the next 15 minutes. She is such a wonderful and sincere woman, what a treat it was to meet her. Lila has such an incredibly powerful voice and on stage her chest expands like I have never seen, giving her a larger than life stage presence. So, I was surprised to find she is a very petite woman who just wears big heels to look taller on stage.

19. Who is your favorite local musician or band? Depending on my mood... I love to dance to Sweet Low Down and Zoo City, Full Grown Men or if in the mood for bluegrass, The Broken Valley Road Show. My fave folk singer of course is Ms. Amy Martin. She's hot!

20. Do you like my hair? Yes DUSTY...it is fabulous!!! ■

REMEMBRANCE (continued...)

Brandon Teena was raped, shot, and stabbed in Nebraska. The same year Christiaan D'Arcy was strangled, bound, and locked in the trunk of a car that was set on fire in Hartford, Connecticut. Amanda Milan's throat was slashed in 2000 at New York's Port Authority bus terminal as bystanders cheered their approval. Lisa Black was stabbed in the eye and beaten 20 times with a hammer.

For some persons, it is not enough just to end our existence. We must be the focus for all their rage, fear, and ignorance as they attempt to mutilate and destroy what they refuse to accept while we live. The Transgender Day of Remembrance is a time to stand up against this violence and say "NO MORE."

Please go to Gwen Smith's on-going project dedicated to remembering our dead at <http://www.gender.org/remember/>.

Please, live free and stay safe!

Anne is a Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor. She serves the GLBTI community and was a founding Board member of the WMGLCC. She initiated the Transgender Support Group in 1996 (see events calendar for more info). ■

WAL-MART (continued...)

"Ever since gay weddings were given the official go-ahead, we've had a number of customers asking if we could introduce gay cards," Ed Watson, an Asda spokesman, said. "With the launch of our new range, we can ensure that our customers can celebrate every marriage - whether it is between him and her, him and him, or her and her," he said.

Critics of Wal-Mart, however, accused the company of hypocrisy, contrasting its marketing of gay wedding cards in Britain with its stricter controls in the United States. Wal-Mart has pulled some mainstream magazines from its shelves and refuses to carry some popular books because of their content, among them "America (The Book)" by Jon Stewart and "When Will Jesus Bring the Pork Chops?" by George Carlin.

"They want to be all things to all people anywhere but in the United States," said Tracy Sefl, research director for Wal-Mart Watch, an advocacy group based in Washington. "In the United States, they have a conservative, right-leaning business model."

No one from Wal-Mart was available to comment on the issue, Jami Arms, a Wal-Mart spokeswoman, said, speaking from Wal-Mart headquarters in Bentonville, Ark.

Asda, Britain's third-largest retailer, was purchased by Wal-Mart in 1999. Since then, however, it has carefully maintained its independence from its parent, London analysts say.

Asda "is a lot more comfortable selling music or books or magazines that Wal-Mart might consider risqué," said Bryan Roberts, an analyst with the London consulting group Planet Retail. "It would be foolish for Asda to exclude any of its customer groups for the sake of a political and moral stance on any issue."

Richard Perks, an analyst with the Mintel International Group, a London research firm, said, "I would like to think that Wal-Mart would recognize that what may be suitable in some countries would not be suitable in others, and that any subsidiary would be allowed to market" as it saw fit.

Some Asda campaigns might seem shocking to Wal-Mart shoppers in the United States. Last year, for example, Asda announced it was "rolling back" the price of condoms in time for the Christmas party season.

"We are trying to illustrate that protection against sexually transmitted infection is easy, even more affordable and accessible," Tony Page, Asda's non-food director, said in a statement at the time. The company's stores will be open late, Mr. Page's statement said, in case customers "unexpectedly get lucky."

It also listed stores by condom sales per square foot. Asda's store in Chesser, a section of Edinburgh, took the top spot.

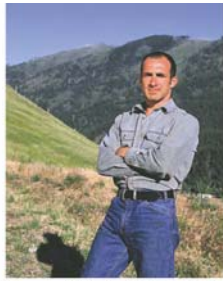
This October, Asda cut prices on liquor and beer as part of a pre-Christmas promotion. "Our latest round of price cuts will ensure our shoppers don't pay any more than they have to when it comes to stocking up on booze this Christmas," said Mike Regnier, general manager for Asda beer, wines and spirits, in a news release.

The company also added that it has retrained employees to ensure that customers who look younger than 21 are asked for identification. (The legal drinking age in Britain is 18.)

The cultures of Asda and Wal-Mart are "very different," Mr. Watson, the Asda spokesman, said. Then again, he added, the cultures of America and Britain are very different. ■



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Contact the WMGLCC at 406-543-2224 for information on drop-in hours and programs or more information on events. We post events for the current and upcoming month. You can email your events to wmgclccnews@hotmail.com.

Center Weekly Events	Recurring Monthly & Weekly Events (continued...)
Monday, Gay Men's Chorus Rehearsal, 7 to 9 pm	"Strong and Getting Stronger: Men Who Take Themselves Seriously" (a process discussion group for men who have sex with men), every Tuesday from 7 to 9 pm, call Andrew Laue, LCSW for more information
Tuesday, Lesbian Chat Group, 7 pm	
Thursday, Men's Night, 7 pm	Do you like to read? Do you want to discuss lesbian and gay-related fiction with other folks? Come to the Myron Brinig Guild. Newcomers (and slow readers) are welcome. The book club is open to anyone interested in gay male, lesbian, bi, trans or queer-oriented books and leans towards fiction, low and high. Occasionally we stray into nonfiction territory, and there is a common expectation that whatever the selection, it will be good storytelling. Members of the group bring suggestions for future readings, and the group is conscientious about honoring different choices. For more information, email MyronBrinigGuild@aol.com
Saturday (1st and 3rd Saturdays only), TG/TS/Intersex Group, 5:30 to 7 pm	
Recurring Monthly & Weekly Events	December Events
WMGLCC Board Meeting, 1st & 3rd Wednesday every month, 7 pm at the Center	10th (Sat), 9 pm to 3 am, The Holiday Dance, The Green Room / Red Light Lounge, \$7 cover, for more info email Kris Monson at kmo@kmoproductions.net , [Missoula]
GLBTI Community Potluck, 3rd Saturday every month, 7 pm at the University Congregational Church Fireside Room (405 University Avenue)	17th (Sat), 8 pm (door) / 9:30 pm (show), Mining City Christmas on the Hill (ISCSM co-function with BASS) at Blaine Community Center, 975 N. Main Street (Walkerville), for more info email Miss Jade at missjademt@gmail.com , [Butte]
PFLAG Missoula / Five Valleys Meeting, 3rd Saturday every month prior to potluck at the University Congregational Church, call 406-721-5013 or 406-541-0163	January Events
HIV+ Monthly Dinner, 3rd Tuesday of every month, 6:30 pm at the University Congregational Church, call Nancy at 406-543-4770	12th (Thu), 7 pm, Meet-and-Greet Update w/ Missoula PD Chief, Command Staff, and GLBTI Liaison Officer at the WMGLCC, for more info email Scott Oak at mpdliaison@gaymontana.com , [Missoula]
Gay & Lesbian AA Meeting, every Monday, 7 to 8:30 pm, call Randy at 406-726-3525	
U of M Lambda Alliance General Meetings, every Monday, 7 pm at the UC (Room 330), call 406-243-5922 for more info	
"Living Forward Group: Men Who Are Living With HIV", every Wednesday from 7 to 9 pm, call Andrew Laue, LCSW for more information	
Please let us know about upcoming events for the community!	

BULLETIN BOARD

ANIMALS (none)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The WMGLCC has a virtual center at YAHOO! 315 members strong and growing. Visit us there for Community Calendar, Message Board, Chats, and more at http://groups.yahoo.com/group/wmgclcc_com

The Bi MEN NETWORK: The world's premier resource on earth today for bisexual, bi-curious and gay men! "You are not alone!" www.bimen.org

EMPLOYMENT (none)

LOST & FOUND (none)

OTHER

Do you want your coming out at work story to be told?

Award-winning documentary filmmakers seek dynamic subjects for a sensitive, smart documentary

called "Out at Work". This one-hour documentary will air on LOGO, the LGBT network from Viacom and MTV Networks, and will profile Americans who are planning to come out at work within the next few months, or are currently faced with challenges because they are out at work. If you are...

- Planning on coming out at work, but worried about the repercussions...
- Starting a new job or position where you have to come out all over again...
- Only partially out at work, but want to take a bigger step... then we want to hear from you!

Please email cwade@cynthiawade.com and include as much information about yourself as possible: name, location, complete contact information including phone and email, and a photo if possible. Your story may just become an inspiration for others embarking on this journey.

PERSONALS (none)

RENTALS / ROOMMATES (none)

RUMMAGE / MOVING SALES (none)

SERVICES OFFERED (none)

SOCIAL EVENTS

Inviting lesbians to join a "few good women" who enjoy beating their drums and having fun at the same time. The "Drumming Dykes" performed at PRIDE celebrations in Helena this year and have been asked to be the grand marshals for next year's PRIDE. We practice on Tuesday nights from 6 to 7 pm at the Center (every other Tuesday right now). Please call Bernie at 406-370-8996 or email bkneefe@yahoo.com for more info. Come and join us. We DO have a gay old time!

TO GIVE AWAY (none)

WANTED (none)

SEE PAGE 4 SIDEBAR FOR PRICING & INFO. ■



WMGLCC
Western Montana Gay & Lesbian
Community Center

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Feel free to submit letters to the Editor (attn: Bobby) to wmgfccnews@hotmail.com ■

CIRCULATION COUNTER

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In Montana, where opportunities to socialize with other GLBTI (Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex) people are few, a community center is a valuable resource. After much work by a task force made up of many of people, The Western Montana Gay and Lesbian Community Center (WMGLCC) opened in Missoula, Montana October 11, 1999.

The Western Montana Gay and Lesbian Community Center supports the work of all community members in their goals of creating and sustaining a healthy community. The Community Center is open to all members of the community including: Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, [Intersex], and supporting individuals.

The Community Center strives to:

1. Provide opportunities for interaction, both formal and informal, among members of the [GLBTI] community [of Montana];
2. Offer accessible location for educational, social, and community events;
3. Furnish inviting and safe facilities and services;
4. Serve as a resource for members of and visitors of the Western Montana community;
5. Support diversity and celebrate multiculturalism;
6. Offer programs to influence behavior by using social networks to consistently deliver STD risk reduction interventions.

The Community Center will meet the needs of the community through involvement by individual members of Western Montana. The Center will support education, advocate for social justice, and facilitate communication within the community. ■

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

The Missoula Gayzette has been in circulation now for five months! When it was first started (back in August) the circulation was no more than 300 copies. The size of our publication at that time was one double-sided page. The Missoula Gayzette is now 12 pages and our distribution is up to 800 copies! We have come a long way in five months.

In January, we will be starting volume two. We have had great success in obtaining talented writers that produce amazing content. However, as this publication grows, we are finding it necessary to ask the community for help. I have been approached by individuals that have had some negative comments about the content and the opinions of our writers. This is how I respond to that: "If you don't contribute, don't complain."

Now, I know that there are many talented artists in the Missoula GLBTI community. Please share your talent with us. We ask that you submit your articles so we can share them with the community. You can be a featured columnist or request to write for one of our permanent columns. Submit your material to wmgfccnews@hotmail.com. Thank you and have a wonderful holiday season! ■


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