

Homophobia Awareness Project

Poster Contest Launched in Provincial Schools

NGALE's Education Committee has applied for and received funding from the Provincial Strategy Against Violence to introduce a poster contest into the schools this fall. Students will be asked to create posters that relate to the topic of homophobia. On September 16, 1998, information packages will be sent out to every junior and senior high school in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador. Background information has been provided to assist students in their understanding of the issue of homophobia.



Faye Freeman, chair of the Education Committee, along with NGALE chair Derrick Bishop and Beth Lacey, coordinator of the Provincial Strategy Against Violence an-

nounced the project in a press conference on September 15. It is intended to raise awareness of homophobia and the effects of homophobia on Newfoundlanders and our communities, among students and educators in the secondary school system.

In a primarily heterosexual society gay and lesbian youth often feel invisible. The following statistics illustrate some of the problems gay and lesbian youth face in our schools:

- A 1989 survey by the US Department of Health and Human Services showed that gay and lesbian youth are five times more likely to attempt suicide than heterosexual young people.
- 28% of gay and lesbian youth that drop out of school do so because of harassment.
- 45% of gay males in high school report verbal harassment and physical violence as a result of their sexual orientation.
- Researchers have found that 68% of adolescent gay males use alcohol and 44% use other drugs; 83% of lesbians use alcohol and 56% use other drugs.

These statistics suggest that youth sexuality and homophobia present a major challenge to our school system. The homophobia awareness project is an attempt to make educators and students more sensitive to the issue of sexuality with the hope and expectation that it will improve the atmosphere in our schools for gay and lesbian youth.

There will be first, second and third place prizes at each high school level. The prizes will be \$150.00, \$100.00, and \$50.00 respectively. In addition, the first place posters will be reprinted and sent out to each junior and senior high school in the province, likely in early 1999.

Winners of this poster contest will be announced at the Human Rights Fair in December. ▼

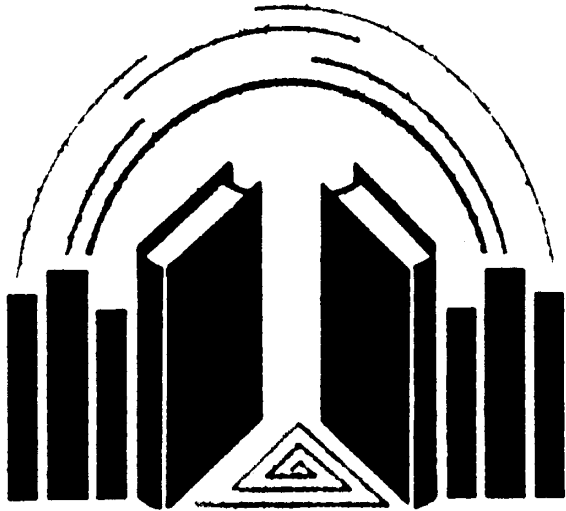
Inside

<i>Herald</i> Reader Criticizes NGALE.....	3
The Gospel According to Pat.....	4
The Religious Right?.....	5
Angela Through the Looking Glass.....	6
The Ladies Who Lunch	7
Local and National News Headlines.....	8
What NGALE Means to Me.....	9
Web Corner.....	10
A Different Kind of Church.....	11
About NGALE.....	12



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WHAT IS OUT-

Outlook is the quarterly newsletter published by NGALE, Inc. (Newfoundland Gays And Lesbians for Equality). It serves as a forum for editorial commentary and a resource for listings of current community events. It's also a showcase for drawing, poetry, humour, and short fiction along with book, music, arts, and website reviews. Each issue contains information on NGALE, its activities, and meeting times for those interested in joining the group. Advertising from local gay-owned and gay-friendly businesses, along with classified word ads and public service announcements round out the content.

Typical production runs are about 200 copies per issue, and Outlook is distributed province-wide. There is no cover charge, with paper and duplication costs covered through donations paid for commercial advertisements. Current issues are also available on our web page, as is postal delivery for a small donation.

Requested donations for commercial advertising are \$60 per full page, and proportional fractions thereof (\$30 for 1/2 page, \$20 for 1/3 page, \$15 for 1/4 page, \$7.50 for 1/8 page, etc.). When paid in advance, 4 ads may be placed for the price of 3. First-time advertisers receive a business card (1/8-page) ad *free of charge*. We can work with camera-ready ad copy, or design one for you. Classified ads may also be placed for a donation of \$1.00 for up to 30 words, 10 cents per additional word.

For more information contact us via mail at: Outlook, P.O. Box 6221, St. John's, NF, A1C 6J9, via internet e-mail to ngale@geocities.com, or leave a phone message at (709) 753-4297. Also visit our web page at <http://www.geocities.com/WestHollywood/4291/outlook.html>. ▼

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***Herald* Reader Criticizes NGALE**

Letter to *Dear Maria* Column has Facts Confused

A letter to the *Dear Maria* advice column in the August 1, 1998 issue of *The Newfoundland Herald* is critical of NGALE, but contains some inconsistencies which make its credibility questionable. Despite its libelous implications, NGALE was never contacted by *The Herald* before the letter was published to offer a rebuttal.

The letter from "Happy and Alone," addressing a previous writer "Tired of Being Lonely", claims to be from a 28-year-old gay male in a small town who was allegedly harassed five years ago by group members and phone line volunteers who somehow obtained his number. Maria's initial reply to the letter went on to describe the incident as "...meeting a lot of idiots."

However, several facts stated in the letter are incorrect. Firstly, NGALE was established in January 1994, and therefore did not exist five years ago. Secondly, our phone line was not started until later in April 1995, and has never subscribed to Call Display/ Caller ID, which was also not available back then. The only way someone could obtain a caller's number would be if it had been freely offered.

Therefore, if this unfortunate incident really did take place at some time, either the dates quoted were inaccurate, or a different group from NGALE was involved. If it was indeed NGALE, the group's executive never

received any complaint, and the publication in *The Herald* was its first indication. All our phone line volunteers have received several hours of training in crisis intervention, and always operate in pairs to prevent this type of thing from happening. In addition, a constitutional bylaw is in place to permit the forfeiture of ones membership for such behavior.

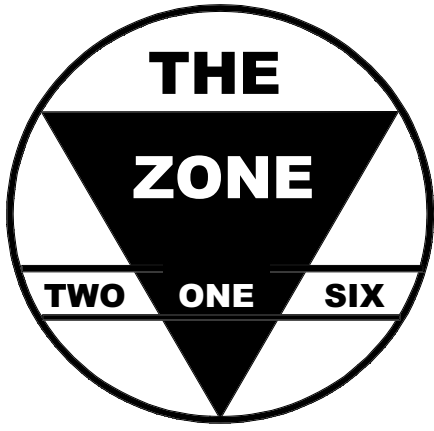
Fortunately, several NGALE members have written to *Dear Maria* and the editor of *The Herald* to set the facts straight, as it were, and a couple of the letters have been published, shedding a more positive light on the group. Readers have been informed of how to contact us (via phone, e-mail, home page, and postal mail), where meetings are held, what we do, and what our Mission Statement is: **NGALE is a community-based, not-for-profit volunteer organization dedicated to providing support and education to and for gay, lesbian, bi-**

sexual, transgendered persons, and the public in general, in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Maria has also given a reasonable response, admitting it was likely "an isolated incident or possibly an unsure person being over-sensitive", especially since no other negative letters have been received. She goes on to say that she will continue to recommend NGALE to other readers requesting information about coming out.

Others wishing to add their support may write to:

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The Gospel According To Pat: 12 Stupefying Quotes From The Rev. Pat Robertson

1. AIDS:

"If, say, we're in a room with twenty-five people with AIDS and they're breathing various things into the atmosphere, the chance of somebody catching it has become quite strong."

2. Feminism:

"Feminism...encourages women to leave their husbands, kill their children, practice witchcraft, and become lesbians."

3. Murder as an act of salvation:

"God told the Israelites to kill them all [the Midianites], men, women, and children, to destroy them, and that seems a terrible thing to do. Is it? Well, that would be ten thousand people who probably would have gone to Hell. But if they stayed and reproduced...then there would be one million people who would have to spend eternity in Hell....So, God in love, and that was a loving thing, took away a small number so that He might not have to take away a large number."

4. How he diverted a hurricane from his corporate headquarters in Virginia:

"Word reached us that a great killer hurricane with winds exceeding one hundred fifty miles per hour was heading directly into our area... I commanded that storm, in the name of Jesus, to stop its forward movement and to head back to where it came from.... It was almost as though a giant hand had come down out of the sky, blocked that storm, and gestured 'Stop!' This hurricane followed orders."

5. In response to a television producer who had publicly criticized him:

"You are not merely trying to silence a member of the press, you are trying to silence a prophet of God.... The suppression of the voice of God's servant is a terrible thing. God Himself will me against you--and He will win."

6. Who should be allowed to run for public office in the United States:

"Individual Christians are the only ones really, and Jewish people.... Anyone whose mind and heart is not controlled by God Almighty is not qualified."

7. Drug abuse:

"We have people today who have become slaves to a plant. Cannabis is a plant. So-called Mary Jane, marijuana, is a plant. People are slaves to a plant! Cocoa, cocaine, the coca plant--people are hooked on a vegetable!"

8. The origins of homosexuality:

"I know a homosexual teacher in the place where I went to college. He was trying to have homosexual relations with various students, and I understand about thirty-five percent, thirty-six percent of all the homosexuals in America say that somehow they began this because of an adult who got them involved in it when they were children."

9. The establishment of a government religion:

"The First Amendment says...Congress can't set up a national religion. End of story. There is never in the Constitution, at any point, that applies to the states. None at all."

10. Who his followers obey:

"There is only one ruler over the affairs of man--God Almighty. The Congress and the President are secondary to us."

11. The U.S. Constitution:

"The Constitution of the United States...is a marvelous document for self-government by Christian people. But the minute you turn the document into the hands of non-Christians and atheistic people, they can use it to destroy the very foundation of your society."

12. On the coming religious and cultural war in America:

"The strategy needed for Christian conservatives will resemble in part that of Douglas MacArthur in his campaign against the Japanese in the Pacific. Christians must take all the territory that is available with minimal struggle, then surround and isolate each stronghold and prepare to blast the enemy out of its position." ▼



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The Religious Right?

by Faye Freeman

As a recovering member of the Religious Right, I would like to comment on the error of my former ways. The main problem was that I used to take at face value everything the 'pastor' said. I assumed that if the pastor said it, it MUST be true. I have since learned to question and to form my own ideas rather than having my beliefs spoon-fed to me.

I can't count the number of times I've heard homosexuality being condemned based solely on Old Testament references. There are many Old Testament practices that are no longer applicable in the 1990's (for example -- animal sacrifices) but the Religious Right conveniently neglects to mention these practices that we now consider barbaric.

One story that has been flogged to death, is the story of Sodom and Gomorrah. The story is found in Genesis 19 and it states that God had sent down two angels to

check out the situation. Lot invites them to his house and gives them something to eat. A crowd appears at Lot's door demanding that he send out the two men so that they may "know them". The Religious Right has chosen to interpret "know them" as a euphemism for "rape them" thereby strengthening their anti-gay argument. However, as Reay Tannahill points out in Sex in History, the word 'yadha' (or "know") is used 943 times in the Old Testament but only used 15 times to refer to "knowing" in the sexual sense (Sex in History, page 154).

The story is not complete without pointing out another detail that the Religious Right conveniently neglects -- what about Lot's virgin daughters? Oh yes, this wonderful godly man offered to toss out his virgin daughters to the crowd rather than have them offend his guests. Nice guy!

I don't recall the reference to the

virgin daughters in the Sodom and Gomorrah story ever being stressed. I guess such a reference would only muddy the waters and confuse people. After all, the whole point of the story is to prove how awful homosexuality is -- RIGHT?? You decide. ▼



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Angela Through the Looking Glass

an ongoing feature by Angela Teal

Part 4

I was so comfortable and warm, laying there in that big soft bed listening to the sounds of dawn in the countryside. My bedroom windows were open and I could smell the fields in the chill air and in the distance, cows "moored" their way to the barn. As I snuggled down, I could feel the sensual delight of wearing Mary's silk nightdress. What enchantment had happened here? This white confection of frills, pink ribbons and silk had become a key that had unlocked everything I had hidden away - and given it back to me. All the missing pieces that had been confiscated from my heart and soul - were returned. This garment, by virtue of its eloquent femininity, had become a powerful spell . . . and in that bed, on that fair morning, a young girl felt a happiness she had never known before.

I had dozed off and was awakened by the sound of Mary with a breakfast tray . . . I had overslept. I looked at her, sudden fears welling up but she sat on the bed and again, put her finger on my lips (an adorable habit of hers), but I grinned and tried to bite her finger! I sat up in bed and she sat with me as I ate breakfast and we talked about the night before and what had happened. I was amazed at just how much she had sensed and known and was moved at the degree of affection she felt for me. I looked at the open bedroom door and I asked where Andrew was, afraid he might come bounding up the stairs. I wasn't sure how I felt about him seeing me like this, and again, that warmth ran through me.

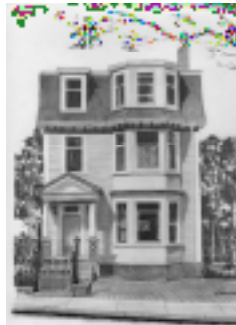
But Andrew was gone for the day playing Cricket. After breakfast I headed for the shower and wallowed in the hot water . . . On coming out I made the bed (no servants this weekend!) and tidied up. I had my dressing gown on and as I finished Mary came in and dragged me off to her room - she was a strong willed little girl. What followed is the stuff that dreams. How many times have I read tales like this and how odd and fortunate - that it happened. It seemed that Mary

had come to a decision that night. That evening, she had given me her nightdress on a sudden impulse of affection and pity. She told me that when I was standing in front of that mirror, holding it against my self, she had watched me change "Your eyes changed, you looked so happy that I wanted to hug you, I've never seen you so happy, I knew it was right . . ." She loved me and I was, perhaps, the sister she always wanted but never had. That night, she had laid in bed thinking and had decided, that for my remaining two day (Bank Holiday Weekend) that I would be a girl. We were about the same size . . . I won't go into the dressing too much - it would detract! But it was perhaps the most exotic and beautiful experience I had ever had. There was an eroticism and sensuality made sweeter by the love we felt, there was a sister's bond and trust that lent a spiritual beauty that filled our hearts. I sometimes wonder if time has embellished this moment and I know, it couldn't. It was perfect the first time. When she had finished I was wearing a beautiful pale-blue summer dress, white petticoat and many other delightful things. My hair was soft and fine and quite nice, but too short. Luckily, her mother owned a collection of really good wigs (due to her own hair - being beyond

the hairdresser's art to restore)! We went to her mum's closet - I had never seen a clothes-closet as big as a room before, with lights and mirrors! I suppose it was really a 'dressing room.' Shoes were a problem, Mary's shoes were slightly too small for me but a pair of her mother's shoes fit me perfectly. On three shelves stood rows of heads with . . . wigs! We experimented and finally picked a wig with Auburn, shoulder length hair, with a sweet mix of waves and curls. When Mary had finished she closed my eyes and guided me in front of the mirror and said "Open your eyes!" and I did . . . I was beautiful. What I saw was a very pretty girl of about 12. I turned and hugged Mary and we both chattered at once . . . And then we plotted! We were going to village of Corfe to visit the Castle . . . my first time as a girl! I was so excited. I borrowed a purse and raincoat, after all this was England! The taxi came and we settled in, two 12 year old girls . . . Her father had an account with the cab company, nothing like a North American Cab, and all she had to do was sign his ticket. I was nervous and felt that I would be found out, that there would be a shout and an accusing finger . . . followed by a hue and cry! But no. Mary, sensing my nervousness, held my hand painfully tight when we walked over the wooden tourist bridge at Corfe. In the end I had to say "You're hurting me" and she suddenly started giggling and then we both broke into hysterical laughter, all the tension going away and people stared at two little girls being silly What a beautiful afternoon. We explored this castle and to all and sundry, we were two pretty sisters enjoying the afternoon. Though she did have to remind me once or twice to keep my knees together when I sat down. The public toilet was a challenge! But, into the 'ladies' I went . . . It was that or explode! Again we laughed and laughed. Later we walked through the old town of Corfe with its ancient stone houses and steep streets, when a voice shouted "Mary! Mary!" and Andrew bounded across the road in his cricket whites, bat under his arm! "We

(Continued on page 9)

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The Ladies Who Lunch

by Ron Knowing

How far has the Gay community in Newfoundland come in the past four years?? There have been a lot of changes in the environment around us. From being a relatively hostile environment for gay men and lesbians St. John's is becoming a much more friendly environment. At a trivial level we might measure this in the proliferation of coffee bars along the Water St./Duckworth St. corridor. However I prefer to measure it in more concrete terms. Last spring I had an opportunity to sell advertising for the Atlantic Canada Pride Guide. I have to stress here that I am not a sales person by any stretch of the imagination. I sold hardware and men's clothing in a previous life sometime, but that was a long time ago and I would be kidding myself if I pretended that I had made anything approaching a living from it. However, Chris Aucoin The Guide's publisher is a friend and said he was in a tight spot for advertising. Could I pinch hit for him and solicit additional local advertising??

Thus with rate cards in hand and a slightly too tight tie around my neck I hit the streets, or perhaps I should say, the phone. Using the phonebook and my knowledge of gay friendly businesses in the St John's area I began to look for potential advertisers. I have been around St. John's doing gay rights stuff for almost ten

years but I had never had an opportunity to actually "sell" gay pride in Newfoundland for money. I think one of the things which surprised me most during this process was the variety and breadth of support for the gay community which came out of business as I called and moved around the city looking for ads. I had expected ads from the bars and restaurants in the city. I was more surprised by the ads I was able to pick up from bed and breakfasts, professionals, and regional businesses. There is a broad base of support in Newfoundland for the principle of equality, and specifically for the principle of equality as it plays out in terms of continuing fights against homophobia, racism, and sexism.

While it is fine to talk about support of the gay community and equality in St. John's it is a very different thing to talk about it in the context of rural Newfoundland. While the opportunities and lives of gays and lesbians have improved in St. John's, it is slightly hypocritical to talk about gays and lesbians without pointing out that many gay and lesbian youth are growing up in rural Newfoundland without the support and the role models which are more accessible in St. John's because the gay community has become so much more visible and accepted. Studies from the

United States give us some idea of the challenges faced by young gays and lesbians. Gay youth are five times more likely to commit suicide. 8% of gay and lesbian students dropout

of school due to harassment. 68% of adolescent gay males use alcohol and 44% use other drugs. 26% of gay and lesbian youth are forced to leave home because of conflicts with family over their sexual identity. In short Gay and Lesbian youth in our schools are at high risk.


In September NGALE is launching the first Homophobia Awareness Project in the schools of the province. The reaction to this project, a poster contest for secondary school students, will be one measure of the degree of support for equality and change which exists in our school system. We might find that not all the resistance to the HAP comes from rural areas. But, it is the gays and lesbians growing up in the remote parts of our province who face the hardest path and these are the ones most at risk in our system. We shouldn't forget them as we sit back and admire the accepting community we are building in St. John's.



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Local, National and World News Headlines

Newfoundlander Receives 15-Year Jail Sentence in Mexico

Dennis Hurley, a 35-year-old native of Badger, was sentenced to 15 years in a Mexican prison for killing his lover on January 28, 1993. Murray Haigh, a landscape architect originally from Vancouver, was found to have suffered a blow to the head and bruising from a blunt object. He was 46.

The two were vacationing at a resort in San Miguel de Allende. Haig was found face down in a bathtub, and Hurley insisted he had committed suicide. After failing to show up the next day for police questioning, Hurley fled by bus to Texas, then took a flight back to Toronto. He was later extradited back to Mexico after officials there charged him with second-degree murder.

Appeals at the trial included those from gay and lesbian groups citing Mexico's poor treatment of gay people. Although Hurley's lawyers argued there was insufficient evidence, the court ruled that he stood to gain financially from Haigh's death, and had near exclusive opportunity to kill him. Hurley saw his partner of four years kissing another man, and was the sole beneficiary of his estate.

Allan Rock, federal justice minister at the time, approved the extradition in September 1997, on the conditions of Hurley's guaranteed safety, a quick trial, and

the ability for Canadian Embassy officials to visit him in prison. His sister Isabel Hayes in Alberta launched a fundraising campaign to help cover the nearly \$200,000 in legal and court fees.

Hurley, currently being held in a segregated cell, is described as being extremely depressed over the conviction, and continues to maintain his innocence. ▼

TWO MEN DEMAND RIGHT TO BE MARRIED

By Sarah Binder
Canadian Press

MONTREAL -- Two men who want to get married after living together for 25 years began a legal battle Monday that could become a watershed for gay rights in Canada.

Michael Hendricks and Rene Leboeuf want to be recognized as legally wedded, a civil status currently denied same-sex couples in Canada.

Hendricks is a well-known activist in Montreal's lively gay scene but he said it wasn't so much principle as time that drove him to pop the question. He's 57 and Leboeuf is 43.

"In concrete terms, it'll give us recognition," Hendricks said. "We'll be able to share our pensions and of course the inheritance.

"If I pass on, he'll be left with nothing. If we're married then we'll be covered and assured."

While some churches in Canada hold same-sex wedding ceremonies, no province recognizes the union as an official marriage.

British Columbia and Ontario have extended some spousal rights to same-sex couples, recognizing them

as common-law relationships.

"But no one really recognizes the fact that we are complete citizens," said Hendricks.

Quebec's Parti Quebecois government made gay rights part of its election platform but it has not moved to bring in the promised extension of spousal benefits, Hendricks noted.

He and Leboeuf are prepared to wait the case out all the way to the Supreme Court, potentially several years off.

"We're young enough for that," Hendricks joked.

What could become a test case for civil liberties in Canada began at theatre Monday with the couple and their lawyer going through the motions of seeking a marriage license.

Hendricks and Leboeuf, dressed casually, arrived at the courthouse arms linked, gave media interviews and kissed for the news cameras on the threshold of the marriage license office.

They and their lawyer, Stephane Gendron, met with Louise Lebrun, assistant clerk for Quebec Superior Court, who read them the section of the Quebec Civil Code saying a marriage license is granted only to a man and a woman. Then she formally rejected their application.

Gendron immediately filed a document he had prepared in advance requesting permission to challenge the law.

Gendron will argue that the two are victims of discrimination. He says the Civil Code violates the province's Charter of Rights and Freedoms which has forbidden discrimination against gays since 1967.

He will also challenge Quebec's right to decide who can get married, which he claims is a federal jurisdiction.

"The 1867 Constitution says the federal government has the power to legislate on marriage, the quality to get

(Continued on page 10)

What NGALE Means to Me

by James E. Clarinet

Normally in my column here, I rant about things that I see wrong within our community, such as stereotyping, segregation of bisexuals, and people against Pride Week. But this time around, I thought I'd write about something right, and that is the group known as NGALE, and what it has meant to me.

You see, I was introduced to NGALE about 2 1/2 years ago, and I don't know what I would have done without it. As you can imagine, it wasn't easy for me growing up, but I managed to survive. Even in my university years, I managed to keep my sanity while living in the closet. It was just before meeting NGALE that I started coming out to my close friends. It was a very difficult time in my life and I wish that I had the support of NGALE during that difficult time in my life.

Upon meeting the group, I was introduced to people whom I now consider very close friends. And I have also become more comfortable with myself as a gay

man. It was through NGALE that I met my current boyfriend, whom I have been with now for over a year and a half. And I couldn't be happier with my life now, at least on the personal side of it.

To anyone out there reading this, who is questioning their sexuality, considering coming out, or is simply looking to meet other gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgendered people, I would encourage you to come to a meeting and find out what we're all about. It's not a dating service. It's not a bunch of "fags" and "dykes" gossiping about others. We are first and foremost a support group, here to help anyone that we are able to help.

As this may or may not be my last article for this newsletter, I thought it appropriate to tell everyone what the group behind this newsletter has meant to me. I will miss it terribly if and when the time comes that we have to part. ▼

(Continued from page 6)

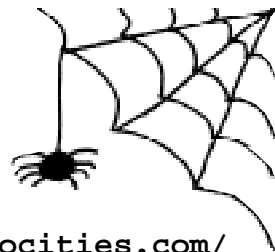
won! We won! It's so marvellous!" and he told her all about the match as I stood there rooted in terror. He glanced at me once or twice, a faint, puzzled smile and then there was a silence as he really looked at me. I felt everything starting to cold and grey and that's the last I remember - until I found myself sitting in an armchair in the Lobby of the Greyhound Inn. Andrew was crouched down, looking at me, his eyes concerned and Mary standing there, looking really frightened. His hand held mine and he said "Mary told me, I think I knew anyway. Don't be afraid, please. I think you're beautiful and this," and his eyes swept over my dress . . . "Is who I think you really are. Please don't be afraid of me." And a look of, almost pleading came into his eyes and it was then that I knew, I was falling in love with him. I smiled and all my fears melted away . . . He grinned "Now Angela," and he grinned, "Yes, Mary told me your 'real' name, how do you feel now?" Apart from the small bump on the back of my head from landing on the pavement (sidewalk) . . . I was beginning to feel better than I had in my whole life! I smiled at him, my heart reaching out and was amazed to watch his eyes grow so soft and warm. Mary took me to the ladies where we did our hair and I washed my hands and face . . . She was back to herself, chattering, and told me that she had told Andrew about me long before, months ago. We had dinner at the Greyhound with Andrew . . . It was day two in Heaven. ▼

AIDS WALK 1998

Come along to Quidi Vidi Lake on Sunday, September 27th at 12:30 pm to help on this annual fundraiser for the Newfoundland and Labrador AIDS Committee. Last year, NGALE members raised over \$1000, 30% of which was donated back to the group! Call (709) 579-8656 for more information.



The Web Corner



Each issue we'll take a look at several local, national, and international sites on the World Wide Web which contain information of interest to the L/B/G/T surfer.

- The Women's Centre / St. John's Status of Women Council (<http://www.geocities.com/Wellesley/4946>) - A new page still under development for the local women's community.
- EGALE (<http://egale.ca/~egale/>) - Home of the Canadian organization committed to advancing equality and justice for lesbians, gays and bisexuals at the federal level.
- GLAAD (<http://www.glaad.org>) - The Gay and Lesbian Alliance against Defamation, fighting for fair, accurate and inclusive representation as a means of challenging discrimination based on sexual orientation or identity.

Don't forget to visit NGALE's own home page at <http://www.geocities.com/WestHollywood/4291> , or send us e-mail at ngale@geocities.com . ▼

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"That's just angry queens [saying I shouldn't play a womanizer on the new NBC sitcom Encore! Encore!]. I should only play flamboyant gay roles? I have no desire to be a role model for anybody. But in a sense I feel like I have been because I've played a wide variety of gay characters. ... There are two gay characters on [Will & Grace] -- plenty for one network. They don't need me prancing around."
 --Actor Nathan Lane
 as quoted in the Miami Herald, Sept. 6.

NGALE 1998 New Year's Eve Gay-La

Wow It's September again, where has the year gone, and besides back to school, it is time to think about the social event of the year. Of course we are talking about the NGALE New Year's gala. Last year was the first annual gala, and what a hoot it was. The dress code was as formal as you like, the dinner was a turkey dinner with all the works catered by the delta, the venue was the Bowring Park bungalow and the entire evening was fantastic. The price was right; the music was great, dancing marvelous, and the silent auction interesting. We also had the best view from the verandah of the fire works set off downtown. Guess what? The same again this year! Only better if you can believe that. Don't leave the ticket purchase to the last minuet there are only a limited number available, ask any NGALE member about the fantastic time they had last year and how to purchase tickets. See you there and Happy New Year !!! ▼

(Continued from page 8)
 married, the people. The province has the power to legislate only on the celebration of marriage, like you need a president, two witnesses, a public ceremony.
 "That's it, that's all."
 And nothing in the federal legislation prohibits same-sex unions, he added.
 A date for their case to be heard in Superior Court will be set Dec. 15.
 Gendron filed a similar challenge of the ban on same-sex marriages last January but the couple in that case decided not to proceed. ▼

A Different Kind of Church

by Reverend Katie Stein Sather

How would your life have been different if your religious community accepted everyone alike, gay or straight, female or male?

How would your life have been different if your spiritual community was open to religious ideas beyond than the usual Christian ones?

Unitarian Universalism is a serious spiritual alternative for the bisexual, gay, lesbian, and transgender community as well as the wider community.

The Unitarian Universalist approach to spirituality is fundamentally different from religion based on the idea of "creed" or a static "revelation." We do not say that life's ultimate truth has been revealed in any particular sacred book. We say that together we must seek to understand the meaning of our lives. We gather in a sense of wonder before the mystery of life. In our search, we have the voices and visions of every period and place in the record of human experience from which to draw. If you seek a place where minds are free, and the issues of our lives and times are examined critically and hopefully, perhaps you belong in a Unitarian Universalist congregation.

Because we aren't accountable to the Apostle Paul, to a central ecclesiastical authority, or to any body of dogma, we Unitarian Universalists think our own thoughts, always valuing the critical ques-

tions as much as the available answers. We are open to new knowledge and bold ideas. Ours is a tradition of strong and prophetic voices calling for a larger vision of life. It should not surprise anyone that, of major religious bodies, we have among our professional ministers by far the highest percentage of women-and of openly bisexual, gay, lesbian, and transgender ministers. It is not surprising that Unitarian Universalists have long called for the full inclusion of bisexual, gay, and lesbian people in church and society.

One of our central principles is the affirmation of the inherent



worth and dignity of all persons, and the Unitarian Universalist Association has implemented an affirmative action program to place bisexual, gay, lesbian, and transgender ministers in our churches. Its presidents have spoken out against anti-gay foster care policies and other forms of institutionalized homophobia. Is Unitarian Universalism totally free of homophobia? Of course not. But whenever Unitarian Universalists are called on to take a position on

bisexual, gay, lesbian, and transgender issues, the sentiment is always overwhelming: the human family is one, and the fears and hatreds that divide us must be overcome. Human loving and human sexuality are not less sacred and good when shared between members of the same sex.

We are all religious, spiritual creatures, driven to find meaning in our lives. If you have trouble finding meaning in creeds and commandments of traditional religion, a Unitarian Universalism may be the place for you.

We want you to know that there is a UU community forming here in St. John's, the Avalon Unitarian Universalist Fellowship. We meet Sunday mornings at 10:30 am at the Wedgewood Park Recreation Centre, in the annex across the parking lot from the main building. Afterwards, we usually spend an hour or more chatting and sharing coffee and munchies. If you have questions, or would like a ride, please call Katie Stein Sather, at 895-0478; check us out online at www.uua.org. Everyone is welcome to join us. ▼

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: "I've been seriously offended by the :
: lack of decent jokes on the subject, :
: and believe me, if there were any :
: more out there, I would have heard :
: them." :
: --Singer George Michael on his April 7 ar- :
: rest in a Beverly Hills "tea room." :
:

Our Mission Statement

NGALE, Inc. is a community-based, not-for-profit volunteer organization dedicated to providing support and education to and for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered persons, and the public in general, in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

The Lesbian/Bisexual/Gay/Transgendered Support and Information Line

Call us at (709) 753-4297 [753-GAYS]. The Support and Information Line offers live consultation from trained male and female volunteers between 7 and 10 pm on **Tuesday** and **Thursday** evenings. A voice mail system and pre-recorded information is available throughout the rest of the week. An information package is also available for mailout. We do not subscribe to *Call Display* or *Caller ID*.

NGALE currently meets on the first and third Wednesdays of each month in Conference Room C at the Corporate Office of the St. John's Health Care Corporation, located on Waterford Bridge Road across from the Bowring Park duck pond. Look for the "Corporate Offices" sign on the brick building with the wheelchair ramp to the left of the parking lot. Meetings start at 7:30 pm and run to about 9:30 pm. Coffee or a snack at a nearby restaurant often follows afterward. Business matters are discussed at the first meeting of the month, while the second meeting is used for less formal support and social discussions.

Social Events

NGALE often has informal social events on alternate Wednesdays from meetings (i.e. the second, fourth, and sometimes fifth). We might go to see a movie, bowl, meet at a local pub, go on a nature walk, etc. We occasionally have more organized gatherings such as pot-luck parties, dances, and sometimes bring in relevant films to local theatres (such as *Priscilla Queen of the Desert*, *Jeffrey*, and *Love! Valour! Compassion!*) to raise funds and public awareness. Members often attend other community events as a group as well. We participate in the AIDS Walk and Pride Week activities, as well as seeing relevant films brought in by The MUN Film Society (such as *The Hanging Garden*, *Lilies*, *Priest*, *Beautiful Thing*, and *The Celluloid Closet*, or plays at The LSPU Hall (like *Lemons*, *Under Wraps*, and *Charlie and the Angel*).

Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/ Questioning Youth Group and PFLAG

The LGBTQ Youth Group meets on a monthly basis, currently the second Wednesday. Call the Support and Information Line (above) for location and time, and also for information about our PFLAG (Parents and Family/Friends of Lesbians And Gays) group.

Current Events for Fall 1998

October 7 & 21, November 4 & 18, December 2 & 16 (Wednesdays): NGALE meetings
September 30, October 14 & 28, November 11 & 25, December 9 (Wednesdays): NGALE socials

September 27 (Sunday): AIDS Walk (see page 9 for more information)

October 4 (Sunday): Walk for A Cure (see page 5 for more information)

Visit our web page at <http://www.geocities.com/WestHollywood/4291> or call the Support & Info Line (see above) for up-to-date event news.