

PERSONS FOUND DEFACING
THIS PROPERTY WILL BE
PROSECUTED TO THE
FULLEST EXTENT
THE LAW

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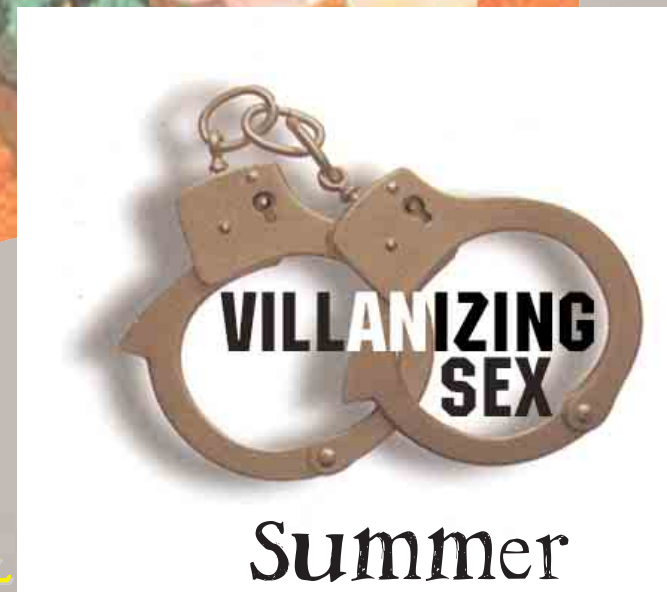
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A PROGRAM OF THE MINNESOTA AIDS PROJECT



Summer
2005



CAUTION: CONTENTS
OF THIS
PACKAGE MAY BE HOT



A PROGRAM OF THE MINNESOTA AIDS PROJECT

check us out at:
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612-373-9165

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MAP RATING

LEVEL 5

Intended for a mature,
sexually active
audience

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apple
45

you
are
hot
hot
hot



A PROGRAM OF THE MINNESOTA AIDS PROJECT

Letter from the Editor

BY MRS. PEDERSON

Dear reader:

In this edition of Shameless we will attempt to take on a tough topic hoping stimulate your thoughts.



A key component of what we do at PrideAlive is aimed at employing a theory referred to as "Diffusion of Innovation". Let me de-mystify this for you. The term refers to the process that is undergone when a concept is introduced into an established group (GLBT community, racial groups, spiritual/religious groups, etc.) with the goal of some sort of overall shift in behavior.

Take the example of the Quit Smoking campaign. I used to be a smoker (Some friend's of mine who give me cigarettes when I ask would state that I still am), and understand the health related risks associated with the activity. The surgeon general has had a warning on the package for years and the warning became increasingly more stringent with each new administration.

First, (within a decade) there were lawsuits naming the tobacco industry culpable for damaging people's health. This, in spite of the fact that it was free will that made them smoke. Second, the response funded by damages awarded in the lawsuit. Finally, a shift in what was being promoted as truth became a groundswell of public understanding and the ball was rolling... this time away from addiction to tobacco.

It has been a number of years since the anti-smoking campaign and the public education effort began, but what has resulted is a public shift in behavior. A shift so strong that entire cities (including Minneapolis) are going or have gone "Smoke Free"

That is an example of "Diffusion of Innovation".

A large behavioral shift as a result of critical mass understanding the intended message and changing behavior based upon the message.

At PrideAlive, much of our programming is message based and intended to cause a shift in a community behavior. In this edition of Shameless, we hope to plant the seeds that will at some point in the near future sprout into a new acceptance of sex being GOOD. I would go one step further and suggest that

sex is awesome AND necessary! Think about it... without it - where would we be? Too existential for you? How about this? Robert Maslow identified it as one of a specific list of "needs" that are relevant to the human condition. Some non-literal interpretations of the infamous "Heirarchy of Need" identified by Maslow in his published theory back in 1954 exclude the more primal needs (evidently to soften the message and make it more palatable to a more conservative audience). Rest assured, however, that the original list of "Needs" included sex and was unapologetic for the inclusion.

If sex is a relevant need, then let's stop the debate over whether we can live without it. Let us, instead, engage in intelligent dialogue about what can be done to de-criminalize certain behaviors that harm nobody when performed between consenting adults. Once the criminality of the behavior is eliminated we can begin to address the stigma associated with the activity. Stigma is often attributed to why behaviors such as unprotected sex occur in the first place. (<http://www.thebody.com/aawh/wad2000/stigma.html>)

In conclusion, let's talk about sex. Let's discuss why we engage in it, why we feel guilty about it, what we can do to be responsible about it and how to have the most fun with it. After all, no matter what the politics of the day - people should not be denied access to preventative health messages solely because of a group of individuals who don't want to openly discuss a topic that makes them uncomfortable. My grandmother taught me a couple of great lessons First, "if you can't

take the heat, get out of the kitchen". I believe what she meant by this was that we are each personally responsible for our own comfort. If it is too warm somewhere or if something makes you uncomfortable, avoid it. I try not to read things that make me angry (intentionally). I know there will already be plenty of stuff that just comes rolling down the tracks at me and that I don't get to control, which will serve to piss me off! Second, "if you haven't got anything nice to say - don't say anything at all". I (we all) have opinions - sure. If they can be validated and proven I may choose to address it. If it is just, however, my own personal opinion - and all I have is that...

Well, I have a wall at home that is perfectly content to listen to me rant and no harm will come of it.

If we could accomplish one thing alone with this issue it would be to begin the process of diffusion of innovation-leading us to a place where gay/bi men begin to assume a greater measure of control over their own destiny by realizing that it is time to be counted. We still live in a world where politics sometimes attempt to dictate morality. This is NOT new material (as you will read in Buggery). What can be new is our response to what we are given to work with.

Happy Reading Muffins!

PrideAlive is the queer men's initiative at the Minnesota AIDS Project. We're a group of gay & bisexual men confronting social issues including homophobia, HIV/STD prevention & heterosexism. We want to construct a space for all queer folk to work together, play together & collectively create community.

Shameless is distributed as a free service to PrideAlive participants. **No public funds are used to produce this newsletter.** To start or discontinue a subscription, contact PrideAlive at (612) 373-9165 or pridealive@mnaidsproject.org.

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MAP RATING LEVEL 5
Intended for a mature, sexually active audience.
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TO OBTAIN BULK COPIES OF SHAMELESS FOR YOU GROUP OR BUSINESS CONTACT KEITH AND HE WILL HOOK YOU UP!

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God Hates Fags

by Dave McWilliams

God Hates Fags - Leviticus 18:22

God Hates Poly-Cotton Blends- Leviticus 19:19

God Hates Haircuts- Leviticus 19:27

God Hates.....

Okay, most of us have seen the signs. Usually they come out in force when there is a politically charged debate- gay marriage, gay adoption, or maybe even the funeral of a murdered boy. In any event, we have the imagery in our minds - a shouting, angry face, attached to a bloated neck, extending to an unwaveringly steadfast arm, wrapped tightly around a sign: GOD HATES FAGS.

It's simple and concise. The message printed on the signs is absolute and irrefutable. There is even a source cited, like a footnote in a respected peer-reviewed article - a footnote from the Bible no less! In the face of such overwhelming proof, is it possible that it isn't true? Or better yet what other things can we plaster onto a sign to warn the sinners of all the things God hates?

Let's see here. What would be something God would hate? I know - slavery! Surely keeping people for forced labor as prisoners would be an abomination. Wait, sorry, God actually likes slavery (Exodus 21:7; Leviticus 25:44). You know I thought for sure that would have been on the list. What else then?

Murder! One of The Ten Commandments is about that one. No, better yet - mass murder! Think of all the hate God has for mass murderers. So, let's go and find some mass murderers and picket the shit out of them. GOD HATES MASS MURDER. It's perfect. What? Oh sorry. Really? 185,000 people? Dead? All at once? (2 Kings 19:35) Clearly, this is the wrong way to go about this. Let's dig in and find out what God hates first and then we'll make our signs. Where should we start?

The Ten Commandments! Clearly!

H O M O P H O B I A

an ANAGRAM

BY KEITH PEDERSON

Hatred is not a family value! How many times have you heard this - or read it on a bumper sticker? I have PLENTY! That is why I use Hatred as my first word in the anagram for HOMOPHOBIA. The roots of hatred go way back. Every day there seems to be a news bulletin on some hate based

initiative or crime against and individual or humanity. The interesting thing about hatred is that the more it is discussed the hotter things seem to get. Every group seems to want to place another specific group underneath them. Thereby assigning that group a lower level of worth and credibility. **O**rganic is the second word. Why organic? Because no one individual or group wants to claim credit for a phobia. It's a pervasive, underlying ill and one could say homophobia is a "boil on the butt of humanity". **M**isogyny is my next selection. Why misogyny? One dictionary (MerriamWebsteronline) definition relates homophobia to hatred of the queen. They further define one of the meanings of "queen" as "often disparaging: a male homosexual; especially an effeminate one." Additionally, the Agnosticism/Atheism page at www.about.com has this to say about homophobia and misogyny:

"Is there a connection between homophobia and misogyny? There are good reasons to think so: each position tends to be based upon common assumptions about the superiority of the masculine role and the inferiority of the passive, feminine role in intimate relationships" excerpted from "Homophobia and Misogyny"

This site goes on to state:

The fear of being made "a woman" by another man will send an otherwise shallow and apathetic man into a letter-writing,... remove the following statement due to its being partisan Focus on the Family-contributing, Republican-voting lunatic. Show me a man who hates gays and I'll show you a man who despises women."

Then there is **O**mnipotent. Again, Merriam Webster dictionary enlightens us by simply including in their definition of omnipotent, "having virtually unlimited authority or influence". It has influenced a majority of Americans at the expense of the minority...us. Next, **P**ersecution - throughout history, GLBT persons have been persecuted for the "Love that dare not speak its name". From the Holocaust, to dishonorable discharges from the military to current executions in countries with religious fundamentalist governments, persecution has been present and is still an active practice that separates us from the heterosexual world.

Add to this a pervasive view of homosexuality as being a practice of **H**edonistic perpetration; then all we need is Oppression Bias-incited Anger (**O B I A**) to round out the anagram. The end result is a demonized misunderstanding of homosexuality. Much of what the conservative media portrays about the Gay community is less than favorable. These reports are sometimes outwardly condemning and demeaning.

When I read of these things I ask the question, "what ever happened to the message once promoted by Margo Thomas 'free to be you and me'."

Homophobia cannot be dismissed as politically correct rhetoric. It is much more invasive than that. Michael Alvear of Salon magazine states the following in a review of Byrne Fone 's book Homophobia: A History.

"How did sex between men start out as an admired act of masculinity and end up as a shameful badge of effeminacy? How did homosexual love and sex, which were seen as important to the development of virtue, nobility, and the foundation of a strong society, become the enemy of the state?"

These are relevant and necessary questions. I hope to see the beginning of answers to these questions in my lifetime.

The following is a reprinted article that has had a wide distribution in emails from various sources but it tells the situation so well it is worth repeating it.

Dear Dr. Laura,

Thank you for doing so much to educate people regarding God's Law. I have learned a great deal from your show, and I try to share that knowledge with as many people as I can. When someone tries to defend the homosexual lifestyle, for example, I simply remind him that Leviticus 18:22 clearly states it to be an abomination. End of debate.

I do need some advice from you, however, regarding some of the specific laws and how to best follow them.

a) When I burn a bull on the altar as a sacrifice, I know it creates a pleasing odor for the Lord (Lev 1:9). The problem is my neighbors. They claim the odor is not pleasing to them. Should I smite them?

b) I would like to sell my daughter into slavery, as sanctioned in Exodus 21:7. In this day and age, what do you think would be a fair price for her?

c) I know that I am allowed no contact with a woman while she is in her period of menstrual uncleanness (Lev 15:19-24). The problem is, how do I tell? I have tried asking, but most women take offense.

d) Lev. 25:44 states that I may indeed possess slaves, both male and female, provided they are purchased from neighboring nations. A friend of mine claims that this applies to Mexicans, but not Canadians. Can you clarify? Why can't I own Canadians?

e) I have a neighbor who insists on working on the Sabbath. Exodus 35:2 clearly states he should be put to death. Am I morally obligated to kill him myself?

f) A friend of mine feels that even though eating shellfish is an Abomination (Lev 11:10), it is a lesser abomination than homosexuality. I don't agree. Can you settle this?

g) Lev 21:20 states that I may not approach the altar of God if I have a defect in my sight. I have to admit that I wear reading glasses. Does my vision have to be 20/20, or is there some wiggle room here?

h) Most of my male friends get their hair trimmed,

including the hair around their temples, even though this is expressly forbidden by Lev 19:27. How should they die?

i) I know from Lev 11:6-8 that touching the skin of a deadpig makes me unclean, but may I still play football if I wear gloves?

j) My uncle has a farm. He violates Lev 19:19 by planting two different crops in the same field, as does his wife by wearing garments made of two different kinds of thread (cotton/polyester blend). He also tends to curse and blaspheme a lot. Is it really necessary that we go to all the trouble of getting the whole town together to stone them? (Lev 24:10-16) Couldn't we just burn them to death at a private family affair like we do with people who sleep with their in-laws? (Lev. 20:14)

I know you have studied these things extensively, so I am confident you can help.

Thank you again for reminding us that God's word is eternal and unchanging.

"Origins: We first ran into this letter in the online

world in May 2000, just after the state of Vermont permitted homosexual couples to contract "civil unions," an official recognition that imparted to same-sex partners the legal benefits of marriage, such as the right to be regarded by hospitals as their partners' next of kin, to make medical decisions on behalf of their partners, and to file joint tax returns. This "everything that is marriage but the name" decision pleased some and angered others, resulting in many heated opinions about same-sex unions in specific, and homosexuality in general, to be bruited in countless public forums."

<http://www.snopes.com/politics/religion/drlaura.asp>

Faggots

"Faggot, as a sacred male sexual firestick, is a venerable term. The faggot as award for divination and sacred firemaking has apparently belonged to the province of Gay male wizards, soccerers, and priests for thousands of years."

- Judy Grahn
Another Mother Tongue

Do Something Radical: **Survive**

By Michael Lee

Fisting, Rimming, Licking, Sucking, Pissing, Spitting, Shitting

Do you do any (or all) of these things when you have sex? Do you know people who do? Do you approve of each of these activities? If you're like most people, there are probably some activities that get you hot 'n' bothered, some you just don't care for, and some that make you downright disgusted. The reality is, when we commit to serving communities of sexually active gay and bi men, we commit to meeting a wide range of people whose sexual practices may be considered "radical." If we only talked to and for people who religiously practice safer sex, who abstain, or who are not part of the queer community, we would miss our chance to build relationships with a considerable chunk of men who may be at risk for HIV infection, and who may benefit from user-friendly advice.

How do we do that? First of all, we don't preach. The instant a PrideAlive worker starts talking about sex in terms of right or wrong, bad, good, desirable, or undesirable, we convey a sense of judgment. People seeking health information are intimidated enough, especially when their questions or concerns relate to sex. Society has beaten the notion of disease as consequence of an unclean or immoral lifestyle into gay people so thoroughly that often, the slightest admission that you've been engaging in less-than-safe activity makes it too uncomfortable to talk to a health professional—let alone a friend or loved one.

Second, we listen and speak from experience. That doesn't mean that every PrideAlive worker has shoved his hand up someone's ass. It means that we understand

the curiosity, desire, and self-consciousness associated with sex, intimacy, and relationships. We also understand how difficult it is to talk about the intense personal feelings associated with sexual identities and practices. Every sexual relationship is also a social relationship, to one degree or another. People tend to engage in and talk about activity that is acceptable within our given social setting, and censor ourselves when we think others won't relate, or approve. So how does PrideAlive reach people who have strong desires and curiosities about sex practices that are more controversial?

In a nutshell, we have to be versatile. We use the language of the communities we serve, and that is a wide range of communities within the queer identity. Not every issue of Shameless, every page on our Web site, or every program activity is geared toward every person in the community. Very little of what we do at PrideAlive is designed for mass consumption. It's written to reach the people who need the most relevant information for the topic we are covering. If a particular issue of Shameless isn't relevant to you, please feel free to pass on it and check us out the next time it's published. Also feel free to contact us and suggest topics you think would be relevant to our community's health. We may not pursue every idea, but we strive to be in touch with the pulse of our community.

Some would argue that by even talking about unpopular sexual activities we are encouraging people to try them. Some have claimed that we in fact promote riskier activities, and that we cannot be trusted to educate our constituents. It's easy to make that kind of argument when people take snippets of our publications, pull them out of context, and disseminate these as "proof" of our incompetence. Given that many of these same people grow outraged at Buster Bunny, SpongeBob Squarepants, Tinky Winky, same-sex couples, domestic partner

benefits, and human rights laws, the question we'll continue to ask is, who would you trust with health education among gay and bi men? People who work to oppose any systemic recognition of queer people in the larger community? Or, gay and bi men who are trained health professionals, applying their knowledge and values to the mission of building a healthy queer community?

Your PrideAlive Program: A Work in Progress

So what's wrong with PrideAlive and the Minnesota AIDS Project? Well first of all, we don't reach as many of the people in need our most vital information as we'd like. The sense of stigma, shame, and judgment associated with any material that is HIV-related will keep some folks from ever connecting with us. Conversely, we're clearly reaching the eyes of some people who don't need our sexual health messages, who don't see all that much value in promoting overall queer health, and who speak of "our friends in the gay and lesbian community" while supporting initiatives that would undo our human rights laws, permanently eliminate recognition of our relationships, and limit our ability to talk about a sexually-transmitted disease with sexually explicit (and accurate) language.

What else is wrong? Well, we don't always get publications like this one out in a timely manner. Our web site could be updated more often. Occasionally we don't call people back right away, and it isn't easy to find a drop-in community space tucked into the back of an office building, on the second floor. We'd love to offer you the rapid HIV test when we're doing outreach, but frankly, it's so expensive that for the short-term MAP can't afford it. And, depending on whom you ask, we're either out in the bars with safer sex kits way too often, or not often enough. In other words – your PrideAlive program is run by a bunch of human beings.

What's right with PrideAlive begins with the values of the Minnesota AIDS Project, values that date all the way back to this organization's origins. We absolutely believe – and will continue to believe, until the last dollar of support is stripped from this program – that a major key to ridding the world of AIDS lies in the growth and emergence of a healthy and vibrant queer community. PrideAlive's vision of that community is grounded in the lives and experiences of our participants. It's a community where people try hard to respect and accept each other's differences, where we confront the unpleasant and the uncomfortable by talking about it, conveying what we feel is "real" about each problem, and finding solutions that, however imperfect, recognize and include the unique talents and needs of everyone involved. This kind of relationship is what we strive to bring to everyone when we hit the streets for outreach, camp out in chat rooms to answer questions to those cruising online, host social and educational events, and when we produce our signature publications.

Does this sound radical? In these times, when many prefer to define issues in black-or-white absolutes, probably yes. But for many, so is the notion that queer people can be sexually active and still lead long, healthy, happy lives. A great deal of propaganda will tell you that the "truth" about GLBT people is that we die younger and less happy, enslaved so fully to our desire for hedonism and selfishness that we hurt everyone around, including ourselves. That's why – more than just practicing good common sense – reducing your risk for HIV infection is still one of the most radical acts a queer person can commit. Every gay or bi man who manages his sexual health – by using condoms, getting tested for HIV and STDs regularly, talking with friends and partners about sex, whatever works – gives himself another opportunity to live, grow, and thrive. And that's an opportunity to prove wrong the implicit, devastating notion that queer is just simply wrong, a mark of failure, a character flaw of the socially undesirable.

(continued on Page 10)

Buggery

by Jay Dorsey

In 1533 the first official action was taken against individuals who take it up the bum. The act of anal intercourse (sodomy) was originally referred to as Buggery in England – in fact on most British tele one will still hear reference being made to buggers, rather than the oft thought crude American reference of butt fuckers. (Those Brits – always trying to minimize our language).

Wikipedia.org reports “The Buggery Act of was piloted through Parliament by Thomas Cromwell”. “The Buggery Act was adopted in England in 1533 during the reign of Henry VIII, and was the first legislation against homosexuals in the country. It was also one of the first anti-sodomy laws passed by any Germanic country. All Germanic codes up to this point ignored sexual acts except adultery and rape”. One of the interesting things about the early legislation was that “the Act made buggery with a man or beast punishable by hanging, a penalty not finally lifted until 1861”

The reign of legislation against the simple act of inserting a penis in an anus continued to be a real pain in the keester for most gay men in America until the year 2003 when a shout of glee was heard across much of America as many individuals prepared to go where few have gone before. Lambda Legal Defense Fund along with other Gay Rights groups successfully overturned sodomy laws that were still on the books in 13 states in the US.

“Today is a major victory for GLBT people in the USA. The Supreme Court ruled that it is against the Constitutional right to privacy to create and single

out a class of people for the purposes of discrimination by making their sexual activities illegal. The Anti-Sodomy laws of 13 states were struck down today. Lambda Legal Defense and other Gay rights groups forced the issue into the Supreme Court using a case of two men who were arrested in 1998 for having sex in their own bedroom when police entered their apartment responding to a fake report of a robbery in progress by a neighbor with a grudge. In addition to being jailed and fined the couple was forced to register as sex-offenders which would preclude them from many jobs and legally stigmatize them as sexual predators.”

<http://www.bodieslikeours.org/forums/archive/index.php/t-463.html>

Why should any of this be of concern to the participants of PrideAlive and the fellas we love? Well, it is because there is a specialty condom on the market that is a great little tool for “Bottoms” (receptive anal sex partners). The tool is marketed under the name of the female condom and is manufactured by the AEGIS Company under the name of the “Reality condom”. The condom at one time was being considered for distribution as an anal condom. While uncertain, it is thought that a big reason why the condom did not successfully make it to market in that capacity was due to current sodomy laws on the books at the time.

PrideAlive has continued to support the use of the Reality condom for use by bottoms as a way for them to have greater control over their sexual health. This happens because the condom can be inserted hours (up to eight) before actually getting fucked and is quite durable (decreasing the risk of breakage during the actually act of buggery). After all, is sometimes

difficult to see what is going on in the back door when you’re facing away and latex can break during a “hot time in the old town tonight”.

The Reality condom is polyurethane rather than latex which means you can use different types of lube to enhance your pleasure – in fact, oil based lubes are fine with this product. Things you will want to avoid include using the same condom with multiple Tops (insertive partners). While the product is durable enough to take plenty of action, the risk of STI/HIV exposure from top to top is significant if they are diving in the same pool (if you catch the drift). The other things to note are that the condom has an inner ring that can be removed and if left in can cause irritation to either the top or the bottom.

To gain more information on this product feel free to contact one of the staff at PrideAlive or just track one of them down during an outreach run to your favorite watering hole. Life is short, buggery is now much more common than ever and if you bottom, you have a way to take control like you never have before.

So as they say in British Pub and American Sports Bars alike (ok sometimes I hear it at a piano bar too) “Bottoms Up”.



Do You?

Suck It
(Engage in Oral Sex)

Stick It
(Have sex While Drunk or High – Or
Have sex With Someone Who Does)

Click It
(Look for it Online)

Tweak
(Use Crystal meth)
If so, you may be at risk for
contracting Syphilis.

The bad news is it is easy to catch
and the good news it is easy to cure.

Consider getting tested today

SET YOUR SITES ON KNOWLEDGE

Here are some great Web sites available to assist you in finding more information on how to maintain and/or improve your health without abstaining from sex. Many of these sites are also featured regularly on www.Manhunt.net.

PNP (party and play)

Here’s a great site for obtaining general knowledge about crystal meth. This site also offers a self-assessment to help you determine if it is time for you or someone you know to seek help with addiction.

LIFE OR METH : A London-based, global crystal meth abstinence and empowerment resource for gay men.

<http://www.lifeormeth.com/>

TWEAKER.ORG “The primary reason we exist is because so many gay men are getting HIV and other STDs while high on speed. It’s a serious issue here in San Francisco and becoming a much bigger issue nationwide.”

<http://www.tweaker.org/>

DISEASE

Our own Minnesota Department of Health not only has a great site for general health related information but they rock when it comes to giving first-rate info on the bugs we can catch while engaged in Buggery and other acts.

<http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/idepc/diseases/syphilis/index2.html>
<http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/idepc/diseases/syphilis/animation.html>

PREVENTION

Avert
“AVERT is an international HIV and AIDS charity based in the UK, with the aim of AVERTing HIV and AIDS worldwide.”

<http://www.avert.org/hivprevention.htm>

SAN FRANCISCO CITY CLINIC
“We’re a drop-in clinic providing free and low-cost diagnosis & treatment of sexually transmitted diseases, and information about condom use and other STD prevention methods, for more than 50 years.”

<http://www.dph.sf.ca.us/sfcityclinic/drk/>

MINNESOTA AIDS PROJECT
For basic HIV information, risk and transmission, myths, strategies to stay safe, HIV testing sites, resources, and a “Are You as Risk” quiz.

<http://www.mnaidsproject.org/learn/index.htm>

THE BODY
The Complete HIV/AIDS Resource – a comprehensive resources for HIV prevention, HIV treatment, HIV testing, and expert medical professionals to answer your questions.

<http://www.thebody.com>

Do Something Radical: **Survive**

(cont.) by Michael Lee

So, what happens if PrideAlive is eliminated?

If we've been doing our jobs, then the knowledge, values, and ideals we have shared with you will not disappear. It would mean that the obligation for educating and caring for each other would fall even more squarely onto the larger queer community's shoulders. It would mean that the space we've occupied — as your friendly neighborhood latex distributors, as your in-person or online "experts" on sexual health, as your intermediaries or relationship consultants — would need to be fully absorbed into the everyday things you do. If we've done our jobs, then friends will educate each other with accurate information about sexual risks. People will encourage dialogue as the cornerstone of any relationship — sexual, social, familial, or professional — even and especially when talking about difficult, personal issues. And people will demand that this vision of a healthy, diverse, vibrant queer community emerge and be recognized publicly for the asset that it is to all Minnesotans.

The threat of HIV is always real, ready and waiting to overtake the gains we've made in protecting ourselves and each other. Social and political systems that keep queer people separated, inhibited, and afraid to even talk about the reality of our lives only serve to hold gay and bi men hostage to disease, fear, and the kinds of shame that this publication aims to obliterate. That's why survival is a radical thing for queers to accomplish. It's why speaking about the dark, unsavory issues that make many people squirm — gay, straight, or otherwise — is so necessary to our work. If you are already part of a community that is repeatedly told — through religion, education, legislation, and popular culture — that you, and people who share your identity and desires, are sick, diseased, undesirable, and doomed, then receiving

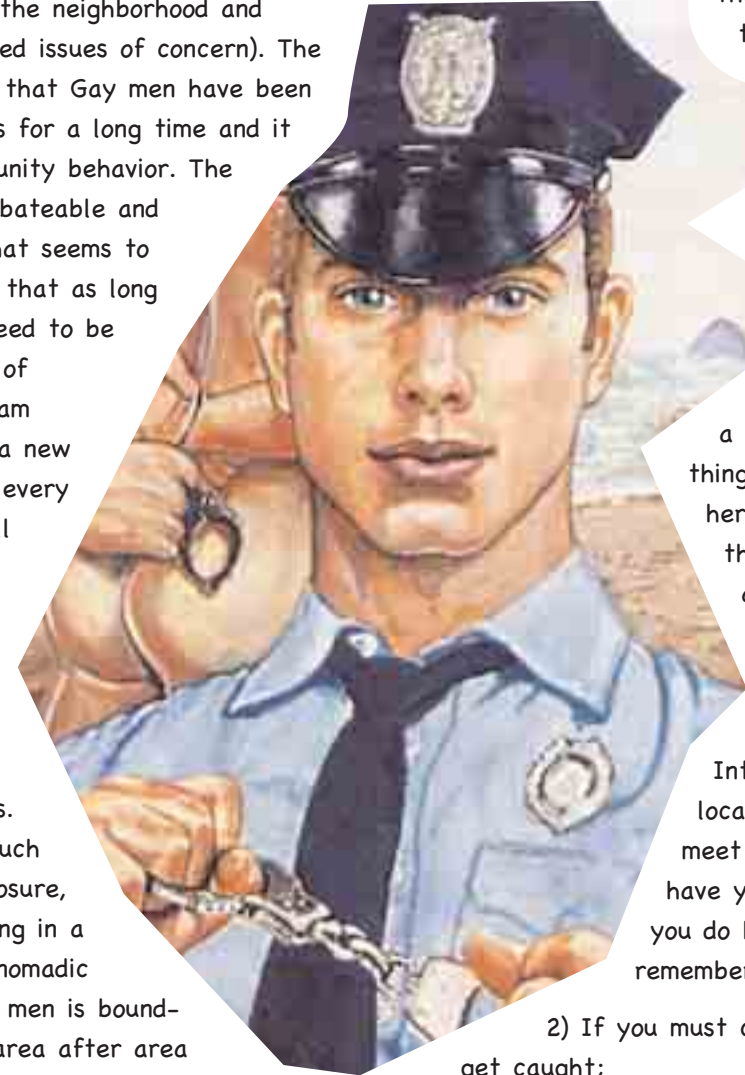
affirmation from one person, one program, or one publication might be the difference between life and death.

Many people in the larger public have been asking of late, what is PrideAlive? Who are these people who stir up controversy? Why do they have to work and behave the way they do? It's not a complicated explanation. PrideAlive is a bunch of people who care, who joke and tease each other, argue, hurt each other's feelings, forgive, learn, and grow up together. It's a group of people who ask questions until they hear answers that make sense, who teach each other about relationships of all kinds, with the expectation that everyone who participates will find acceptance in some way. It's a group that thinks about the future while building on the past's legacy, where people pitch in and help each other out with genuine concern about safety and wellbeing. It's a community program in a community that's still feared, disliked, and dismissed as a failure by large numbers of people. It's a work in progress, like any family I've ever known. PrideAlive may not be the answer for all people, but it offers a solution to queer people hoping to end this long and draining epidemic. Get involved. Build the community you've wanted. Do something radical. Survive.



Some time ago I first became aware of the occurrence of sex in public places. I do not remember exactly when I first became aware of men cruising men but my guess it was at a public rest area somewhere between the Metro area and St. Cloud. In fact, that has been a cruising jackpot for years now. The 94 west strip between Maple Grove and Clear Lake in particular has been a wealth of opportunity for closeted men for at least the past two decades. The rest area in Maple Grove was a hot spot for a while (until the neighborhood and growing community raised issues of concern). The truth of the matter is that Gay men have been cruising in public places for a long time and it is an entrenched community behavior. The reasons for this are debateable and numerous. One thing that seems to resonate some truth is that as long as Gay men feel the need to be closeted due to a lack of acceptance in mainstream culture there will be a new "hot" spot for cruising every season. Communities will often respond with concern - raise funding to renovate public space, eliminating the woody area that so often will attract the erotic-seeking violators. The violations include such crimes as indecent exposure, public nuisance and being in a park after hours. The nomadic energy of this tribe of men is boundless as they seek out area after area to continue the "quest" for companionship. Each new area subsequently receiving the same community response and ultimate demise.

In a county neighboring the North side of the Twin Cities over eight arrests have occurred in a public space in an eight day period recently. That's right boys, this summer - the hits are high. So, with that much activity and arrests, why do people continue. Isn't the fear of public exposure enough to deter the potential crime?



In an article written for the April/June 2004 issue of Shameless, attorney Jerry Burg wrote

"It's a more hostile world for men who like to cruise than it used to be. In the last two years, prosecutors all over the Twin Cities have made it their mission to eliminate cruising in public places" That was a little over a year ago and the it is true today.

What motivates men to cruise is as varied and individual as the numbers who flock to the beach on a full moonlit evening. Some things are worth repeating and here are a few of the pointers that were shared in the same aforementioned article.

1) Stop cruising in public places. It's not worth it. (and with the availability of Internet services as close as your local coffee shop you can probably meet the man of your dreams and have your fave latte to boot(y). If you do hook-up in "cyberspace", remember condoms in "real space"!

2) If you must cruise in a public place and get caught;

Have your ID with you so they can deal with you, Think - don't react, don't run, be polite, answer their questions, don't rely on what the cops tell you will happen, hire a lawyer. Shame is a powerful emotion and can become overwhelming to manage in a situation like the one described above. Remember that there are good times and bad times for divulging our secrets. Save your stories and innermost secrets for coffee with frineds. While the police may be entertained it would be a clear case of TOO MUCH INFORMATION.

Busted

by Keith Pederson