

SHAMELESS

Full of Useful Carnal Knowledge

HOMO FOR THE HOLIDAYS

October - December 2004

Solstice Santa 2003



What's Inside...

pg. 1 Holiday Depression

pg. 5 Homophobia and Your Health

pg. 9 New Staff Changes

A PROGRAM OF THE MINNESOTA AIDS PROJECT

PRIDE
alive

NAME AND ADDRESS HERE





A PROGRAM OF THE MINNESOTA AIDS PROJECT

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.

Designers

David Ball, James Weinberg

Editor

Michael Lee, Andy Birkey

Contributors

Scott Bilodeau, Andy Birkey,
Kurt Hippauf, Michael Lee,
and Ty Richardson

The Newsletter 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

MAP RATING LEVEL 5

Intended for a mature, sexually active audience.

©2004 Minnesota AIDS Project

www.pridealive.org
pridealive@mnaidsproject.org

David Ball

Health Education Intern
612-373-2441
dball@mnaidsproject.org

Andy Birkey

Health Education Coordinator
612-373-2450
abirkey@mnaidsproject.org

Michael Lee

Health Education Coordinator
612-373-2464
mlee@mnaidsproject.org

Keith Pederson

Health Education Coordinator
612-373-2475
kpederson@mnaidsproject.org

Cathy Strobel

Health Education Manager
612-373-2452
cstrobel@mnaidsproject.org

Deck the Halls & Pass the Xanax:

By Michael Lee

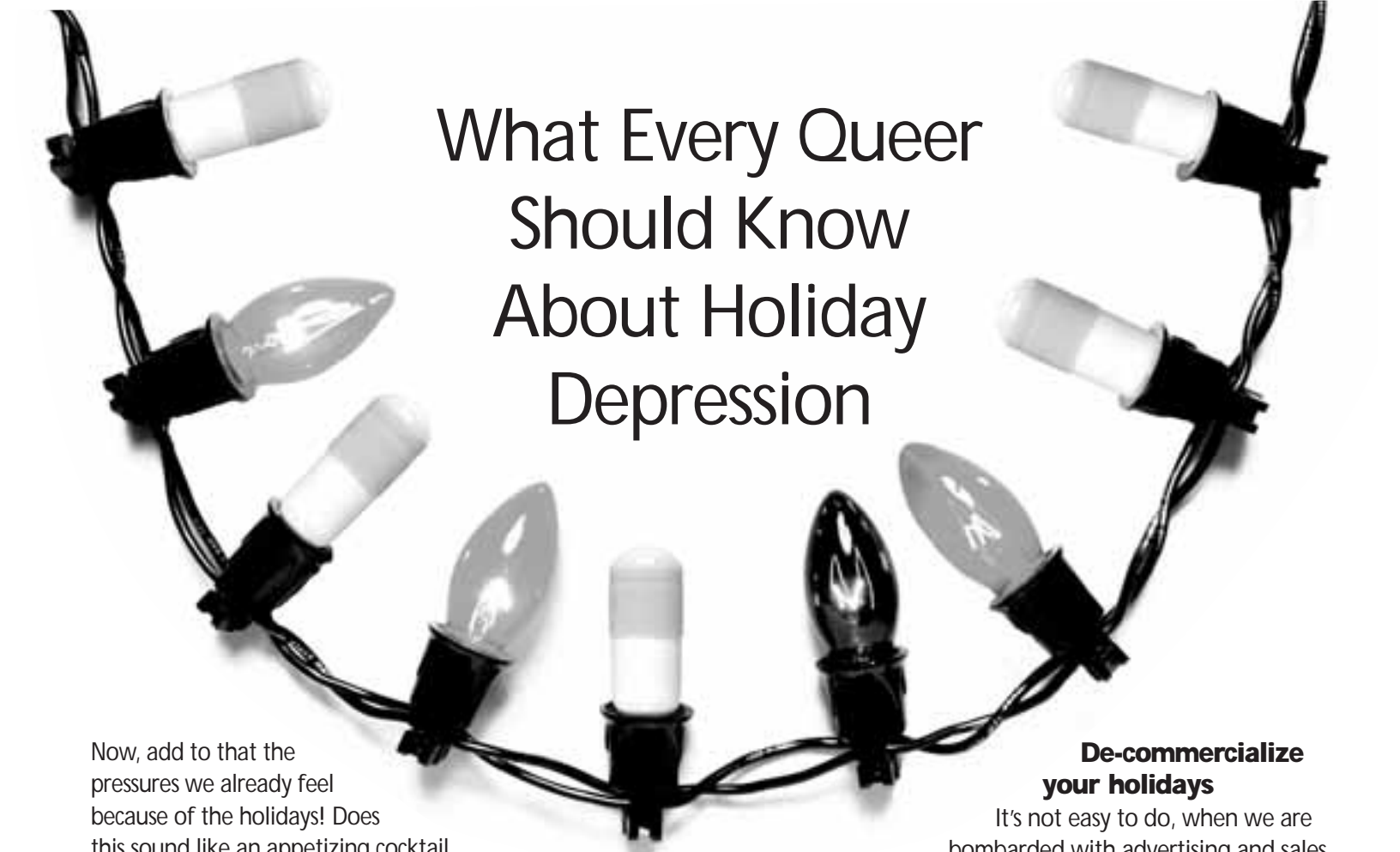
A long time ago, Saturday Night Live ran a spoof commercial of a holiday album for dysfunctional families. With timeless classics such as "Won't you let it drop? It's Christmas," the ad showed a brilliant combination of fake cheerfulness and strained tensions between people struggling to be happy for that special time of year. With rapidly dropping temperatures, cloudier days, and longer nights, isn't it ironic that we choose the dead of winter as a time to come together and put on our happy faces?

Holiday depression is by no means a new or unfamiliar topic. Neither, for that matter, is depression an uncommon problem among gay and bisexual men. According to the National Institute of Mental Health, depression is more than just something you make up in your head: "A depressive disorder is an illness that involves the body, mood, and thoughts. It affects the way a person eats and sleeps, the way one feels about oneself, and the way one thinks about things." Signs and symptoms include persistent sad, anxious, or "empty" mood; feelings of hopelessness or pessimism; feelings of guilt, worthlessness, or helplessness; or loss of interest or pleasure in hobbies and activities that were once enjoyed.

Recent research cited by Gayhealth.com shows that gay men with long-term, low-grade depression are almost twice as likely to have unsafe sex as other men.

Holiday depression can occur due to a number of factors. The National Mental Health Association includes stress, fatigue, unrealistic expectations, over-commercialization, financial constraints, and the inability to be with one's family and friends, to name a few. Throw into that all the pressure that comes with shopping and giving gifts, planning events, and travel, and no wonder we often find ourselves on edge, smiling like Spike from Gremlins, pushing holiday treats down our throats and washing it all away with spiked eggnog.

For GLBT people, depression is already a major threat to our emotional health. Gayhealth.com cites several studies showing that queers are at higher risk for anxiety and depression than heterosexuals. Homophobia and discrimination over one's lifetime are key reasons for this, and the researchers also show how adolescent experiences with teasing and taunting can affect depression in your adult years. So, does any of this sound familiar? Take one ordinary queer American male, who may have been called "faggot" or "sissy" as a kid, who may or may not be out to his family, let alone at work. Throw in the usual anxiety that comes with finding a partner, maintaining a relationship, and keeping up on his sexual health.



What Every Queer Should Know About Holiday Depression

Now, add to that the pressures we already feel because of the holidays! Does this sound like an appetizing cocktail to you?

Here is why understanding holiday depression is important to your sexual health. Recent research cited by Gayhealth.com shows that gay men with long-term, low-grade depression are almost twice as likely to have unsafe sex as other men. When we're depressed, we are more likely to feel hopelessness and despair, more likely to consider suicide, and more likely to believe that our lives are not worth living. That makes us more willing to take risks when it comes to physical satisfaction, and less likely to feel that the results of our activities matter.

Some of the dilemmas, like the holidays themselves, may be hard to avoid. Should you piss off your family by skipping the get-together where you always have to pretend to be looking for the right "wife?" Are you dreading the inevitable hassle of going through stores and malls, with cheer and goodwill plastered on everything

while you secretly wish death to all shoppers? Or, are you afraid that unlike everyone you know, you're going to be left alone to your television and warmed up, leftover hotdish?

All these factors combined can leave you feeling fried, backed into a corner, and unable to do anything to change that sinking feeling that you, by yourself, are going up against the world. That's when we find it most tempting to reach for our favorite form of gratification: alcohol, pot, narcotics, food, television, sex, or anything that allows us to escape for a while and feel at least temporarily good.

The ToDo Institute, a center that offers resources for alternative mental health, makes some suggestions for handling holiday depression. Some of these include:

De-commercialize your holidays

It's not easy to do, when we are bombarded with advertising and sales from August through December. The hype is intended to pressure you, to make you feel like you need to buy more, regardless of whether it's for yourself or others. Talk with those with whom you share your holidays, and work out a plan for keeping it simple. Save that time, energy, and money for doing things that you love, with people that you love.

Keep your sugar intake low
"Don't underestimate the role of two essential holiday villains when it comes to depression, fatigue and irritability – alcohol and sugar. You might get a quick 'lift' from some [holiday] cookies with green icing. But it may not be long before you find yourself craving a cup of coffee or a piece of pie just to help you feel a bit more alert. Whatever goes up must come down – and that's particularly true of your blood sugar. And as your blood sugar levels crash so does your energy level and your spirits."

continued on next page

continued from previous page

Get outside and exercise

You live in Minnesota, so you should be doing this anyway! Take a break from the crowds and find a park to hike, a lake to skate, or a hill to ski. "Exercise can play an important role in lifting your spirits and fighting off depression; in fact, it can be as effective as medication with less side effects. As an extra bonus, you can get some natural sunlight while you're outside (which also helps to fight depression during winter months)."

Stop trying to control your family members

"Bullshit," you're probably saying. "My family tries to control me!" Believe it or not, it cuts both ways, and this is true regardless of whether it's your biological family or your self-selected collection of queer kin. Old wounds leave scabs and scars, and for every not-so kind hint a person drops on you, you probably have an equally unflattering bombshell to drop on them. Close your eyes, breathe deeply, and practice the fine art of walking away from old fights with dignity. You have too many other things to manage, anyway.

In addition, here are some other useful items to remember as you march gaily through the holidays:

Viruses and bacteria don't take the season off. If you're looking to trick as a holiday pick-me-up, keep in mind that all the same principles for safer sex apply. No smartass puns about "gift-giving" here; you're all smart enough to figure those out, anyway. But keep this in mind. If sex is one of your common tactics for lifting your spirits when you're depressed, imagine compounding that depression with the fear and anxiety that come with coping during the morning after, the window period, or those nearly-impossible moments when you have to disclose an STD infection to a recent partner. Depression tries to hold you in the here and now, to focus only on how bad you feel and how much better you'd feel, if you were only allowed that one fabulous sensation. Try to think beyond this picture, to the next one that encompasses the impact of your decisions. Then—hard as it is when you feel the holiday blues—try to think what steps you can take to navigate yourself toward a morning after that doesn't feel quite so scary.



Volunteer

This isn't just the obligatory, end-of-article prompt to get you to join PrideAlive. But volunteering, especially doing something that you believe makes a positive difference, gives you an opportunity to do some good in the community, and to score some easy "feel-good" points for yourself. One of those few universal truths I actually believe is that, no matter how bad my life may seem at times, someone out there has it worse. Not that you need to conduct some massive search to find the perfect hardship case, but think about who out there would you like to help. You might even meet some like-minded people who appreciate the good you are doing for other people.

Now: the obligatory prompt to join PrideAlive! If you want a volunteer experience that gives you all the qualities described above, plus a chance to meet and join a vibrant, fun, caring, and growing network of queers and allies who take a message they believe to the streets of the Twin Cities, then check us out! In 2004, PrideAlive volunteers have made thousands of safer sex kits on Tuesday nights, and our outreach volunteers have delivered these to thousands of queers around Minneapolis and St. Paul. If you are looking for low drama, work you can feel good about, open acceptance of new and different people, and engaging, intelligent people to get to know and work with, we are the place for you. Sign up today on PrideAlive's web site to be a fabulous volunteer: <http://www.pridealive.org/about/volunteers/index.php>

Holiday depression may only be temporary, or seasonal. But depression affects people year-round, and the risks it poses to queer men's health have been well documented. Sometimes we don't even recognize the signs. We just feel down, or pissed off, or pessimistic. Often there are circumstances that justify these feelings. But, it can help to talk about it, get feedback, and hear from others who know what you're experiencing. Check out these local resources to help you maintain good emotional health:

Alternatives, Inc.
1-800-DIAL-GAY

Pride Institute at Minneapolis
(952) 934-7554 or
1-800-54-PRIDE

Twin Cities Men's Center
<http://www.tcmc.org/>



The 7th Annual Hand Hold In

Queers holding hands in public shouldn't take courage, but it still does. One effective way to fight homophobia and heterosexism is visibility. Many times, people don't understand same-sex relationships because they've never seen one. The media may be the only way for people to get their view of what queer people are like. *Will & Grace*, *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*, and others only show depictions of one-dimensional queers and mainly white gay men for that matter. We aren't all white gay men living with our best girlfriends or style gurus, and we definitely have romantic relationships, unlike the characters we see on the TV.

How do we show Minnesotans who we are? By being visible. There shouldn't be anything threatening about two men or two women holding hands, and when most people see it face to face, they will likely agree. That's why we organize the Hand Hold In each year at the Mall of America.

We are working extra hard this year to make the 7th Annual Hand Hold In even better than previous years. We'll be inviting all of the GLBT groups around the state to participate, so we anticipate a great event! We've also expanded the route from last year, and moved it back to December, just in time for the shopping crowd!

Join us on Saturday, December 11 at the Mall of America in front of Hooter's restaurant on the 4th level. We are meeting at 11:30 am and kicking off the event at noon! Then, join your new friends for dining, shopping, and Camp Snoopy! For any questions about the 7th Annual Hand Hold In, contact Andy Birkey.

Homophobia & Your

By Andy Birkey

Have you ever been physically or verbally attacked for being gay? Do you feel you have to lie to your doctor? Do you go to GLBT bars because it's the only place you really feel safe, even though you'd rather not smell like an ashtray? Are you out at work? If not, how does that add to the stress of your day?

If you've been called a fag coming out of the Saloon, or your doctor thinks your special someone needs birth control, or your lungs are cured like smoked ham, or you're putting pictures of you and your best girlfriend up in your cubicle to keep your co-workers from discovering your nelly side, then you've been a victim of homophobia, and it's ruining your health!

Homophobia? Are people really afraid of me? At first glance, the word seems to mean 'irrational fear of homosexuals' in fact, homophobia means much more than that. Homophobia encompasses an entire range of negative attitudes about people whose gender and sexuality are different from what Edina housewives (and other conformists) consider normal. The trouble with normal, especially with sexuality and gender, is that there is no normal. In fact with sexuality and gender, much like people's fingerprints or collections of shoes, no two people are the same.

According to the Gay and Lesbian Medical Association, real or perceived homophobia can cause queers to delay or avoid seeking health care, especially when health issues deal with sexuality. This means many queers will not seek medical care on issues such as sexual assault, sexually transmitted infections, and mental health issues.

Most adults, if they are lucky, received education on sexuality and STDs in public school. Some folks even got this education twice, luckily. The fact that most adults do not get adequate sexual education, when most adults are sexually active over much of their life is disturbing. But GLBT people don't get any effective sexual education in schools, because almost all public schools do not talk about sex between men or sex between women. Homophobia in school curriculum prevents queer youths from knowing the facts about safer sex, particularly in terms of same-sex relationships. Queers rarely, if ever, get adequate sexual education.

Homophobia encompasses an entire range of negative attitudes about people whose gender and sexuality are different from what Edina housewives (and other conformists) consider normal.

In some cases, the government sponsors homophobia that affects your health. Some states have been passing laws that could directly prevent you from seeing the doctor of your choice. In April, the Michigan House of Representatives passed a bill called "The Conscientious Objector Policy Act." The bill allows health care workers to refuse service to anyone for moral, ethical, or religious reasons. If this bill passes the Michigan Senate, it would allow for homophobic health care workers to practice homophobia to the detriment of GLBT patients. It turns the Hippocratic oath into hypocrisy.

On the flipside, one agency in the federal government recognizes that homophobia is dangerous to our health. The CDC recently wrote that homophobia is a risk factor for HIV infection among minority gay and bisexual men:

"Homophobia continues to hamper prevention efforts at all levels: from the individual at risk or infected, who may deny his risk because of internal conflicts, to the broader culture, which delivers anti-gay messages, institutionalizes homophobia through structural mechanisms, such as laws that regulate intimate sexual behavior, and lags in its support of sensitive and honest prevention for gay and bisexual youth, young adults and older men." CDC's HIV Prevention Strategic Plan Through 2005.

Though the CDC made this statement, their actions haven't resulted in decreasing homophobia. In fact, the CDC has recently been moving towards abstinence-until-marriage. With the exception of Massachusetts, same-sex marriage is illegal in the United States. What good does abstinence-only-until-marriage do for queer people?

There is a solution to defeating homophobia and helping our community become as healthy as it can be. Visibility makes the difference. Here are a few steps to take in curbing homophobia:

Health

Be honest with your health care provider. They won't become confident in working with queers unless they have experience working with queers. Let her/him know what your health issues are as a queer.

Create places for the community to socialize that don't involve tobacco or alcohol. Bars are fun, yes, but everything should be done in moderation. The more venues that are available to the community, the healthier it becomes. Also, join in on some PrideAlive events. We provide tons of fun without the hassles of alcohol or drugs.

Keep yourself educated. Check out www.mnaidproject.org/publicpolicy for more information on the CDC and science versus ideology.

Join movements for greater visibility. These include lobby days at the capitol and peaceful protests. PrideAlive hosts the annual Hand Hold In at the Mall of America, which is a great time to be visible and show the Twin Cities who we are. Check out the article in this issue for more information on the Hand Hold In.



Best Wishes to the Old, & Welcome to the New!

Since the last issue of Shameless, PrideAlive has seen the departure of two staff members, and the arrival of two new ones. We are very grateful to Joe Dobbert and Jeff Moores for their contributions to the PrideAlive team, and everyone in the

PrideAlive program wishes them well.

We are very excited to announce the addition of Keith Pederson as PrideAlive's newest Health Education Coordinator! Keith has been a longtime PrideAlive participant,

most recently serving as facilitator for our Café Chats. Keith's professional background includes direct client services in community-based settings, and he has worked and volunteered in a number of capacities including program coordination, program management, organizing a parent support network, participating on local and state mental health advisory groups, grass roots community organizing, and public education.



Keith is currently a student at Metropolitan State University majoring in social work, and he owns a design and consulting business.

We are also pleased to welcome David Ball as our new part-time intern. David founded and developed QueerKit.org, a web site "dedicated to mobilizing and showcasing queer

brilliance." He is a member of the Toolshed Collective, a group of local artists inclusive of all genders and sexualities whose latest endeavor is a benefit with 7th Street Entry to raise money for local non-profits specifically dealing with health. David will be working with PrideAlive to develop



program and marketing materials and integrating events and marketing across the range of PrideAlive activities.

Be sure to stop by QueerSpace and say hello to our newest team members!



Coming To Terms With Sexual Addiction

one man's journey

part III of III

by Scott Bilodeau

Introduction: In Parts One and Two, the author explored the origins of his sexually addictive behavior and described the many ways in which he would seek out sexual partners. These included cruising in public parks and adult movie theaters, and later progressed to the Internet and bath houses. In Part Three, he describes his move to the Twin Cities, a moment where he “hit bottom,” and his subsequent efforts to build a health-promoting, “Shameless” life for himself.

At that point a job opportunity opened up in the Twin Cities. I wasn't sure if I was all that crazy about the job but I liked the area, and part of me knew I had to get out of the situation I was in. So I moved and for a few months, seemed to have kicked the cruising habit. I was eating well, getting enough sleep, walking around the lakes, meeting people outside the bars, etc. It was great. But, after a few months, the novelty began wearing off and I started cruising online again – big time.

I would often go to work after only getting two or three hours of sleep and sometimes I would set the alarm for when work began and call and tell them I must have turned my alarm clock off. It was worth it to me to get that extra hour of sleep. I was also starting to get bored with the cruising so, like with any drug addict, I had to do riskier things in order to get the same high. Sometimes I would be so wrapped up in the fantasies I had concocted that I would almost not even be able to type on the keyboard. My hands would be shaking so violently! I started putting myself in very compromising positions and one time, could have easily been raped or killed but to me it was hot. I was “uninhibited” and “liberated.”

They always say that an addict usually has to hit bottom before they realize they have a problem and seek out help. Everyone's low point is different. For some it is the loss of control. For others it is the loss of a partner, job or trouble with the law. Mine came one day when I went to get the results of my latest HIV test. I had normally gone in every six months to get tested but had avoided it for a year and a half during the time I was on the East Coast and then in the Twin Cities. Part of me had been putting it off because I knew I had taken so many more risks and I had a suspicion that I had gotten HIV. Still, I went to the testing site expecting to get my negative result, like I had so many times before, and be merrily on my way, with the intention of probably cruising that night to “celebrate”.

I sat in the lobby for what seemed like forever. I noticed people who had come in before me had already left with much relieved looks on their faces. That started to make me a little nervous. I went in and sat down and the first thing the lady said was, “Well, I have some bad news for you,” as she slid a paper in front of me that had a column of nothing but “+” signs. I didn't hear another word she said after that. I was so completely shocked. I mean, I knew I had put myself at risk but you just never think that something like this is going to happen to you.



That stopped my cruising altogether. After being numb for a week, I became very, very depressed – not only because I was now HIV-positive, but also because I realized what a complete mess my life had become. I was working in this job that I hated, single, with HIV. I had very few friends and was very lonely and shut off from the world. This was not how I had envisioned my life when I was younger. I went back home for the holidays and hung out with friends and realized that I still had many good times to be had, so I decided to work on fixing this life.

I started seeing a therapist who told me something that sticks with me to this day. He said, “Perfect people don’t get loved. It’s the Velveteen Rabbit, with all of its flaws exposed, that really gets loved.” He pointed out to me that now, not only was I living a double life, but I was living a triple life because of HIV. He encouraged me to work on merging those three lives into one. All this was great, but I still felt the



religious affiliations and even some, like myself, who were not at all religious. There are also people of all ages and sexual orientations. Some groups are all men, whereas others are all women and there are a few mixed groups. What I found most useful about the groups is that it is a place where you can go tell your story without feeling any shame from other people. They will still accept and support you afterwards.

That was really my “first step” toward dealing with sex addiction. I also personally felt enriched, listening to other people’s stories and realizing that I was not alone. I always found that I got the most pertinent messages from the strangest places: a reading, a discussion, one of the steps, someone else’s story, someone’s feedback, the phone call that I would place to someone else from the group when I was feeling addictive or had acted out and spent a night on the Internet. I really credit this organization along with my therapy for putting me on the right path.

I’ve now been in a relationship for sixteen months and have remained faithful. I’m no longer working in a job that I hate and I have so much more free time. I can really tell that my relationships with other people are so much richer than they had been. Everyone in the groups defines “sobriety”

completely differently because sex is different than alcohol or drugs, in that it is most often necessary in an intimate relationship. There are mentors and others in the group who can help you define what that should mean for you.

continued on next page

I was also starting to get bored with the cruising so, like with any drug addict, I had to do riskier things in order to get the same high.

urge to go cruising again. It was almost as if all the changes I needed to make were too much. So I found myself in the chat rooms once again for hours and hours. After a couple months of that, I decided I needed help. So I got the schedule and address of a Sex Addicts Anonymous group from my therapist. The first time I went I took a look around the room and was like, “Oh, I’m not like these people.” Their stories were often very different from mine but after listening to enough stories, I realized that the details may have been different, but we were really struggling with the same thing.

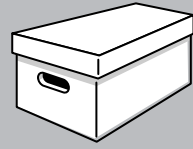
Sex Addicts Anonymous is a twelve-step, Christian-based recovery group. But you don’t have to be Christian to reap the benefits of the organization. There were many people there from many different

continued from previous page

After about a year of struggling on and off, I have been "sober" for about 17 months. I still have moments where I feel addictive but I handle them in different ways now than going to the computer and throwing myself into a chat room. I journal, I talk to people, or sometimes I'll even do something as simple as treating myself to ice cream or a lunch with friends instead.

In keeping with the idea of Shameless, which is "shameless

as a way of life... no more hiding who we are or what we do," I decided to reveal myself as the author. After all, it was largely shame that led me to keep this part of my life a secret, which in turn ended up fueling the addiction itself. Sexual addiction is a topic that is almost never discussed but that didn't make it any less real for me. My hope is that rather than continuing to feel ashamed, anyone who may be struggling with similar issues will realize through my example that he or she is not alone.



Would you like to see back issues of Shameless?

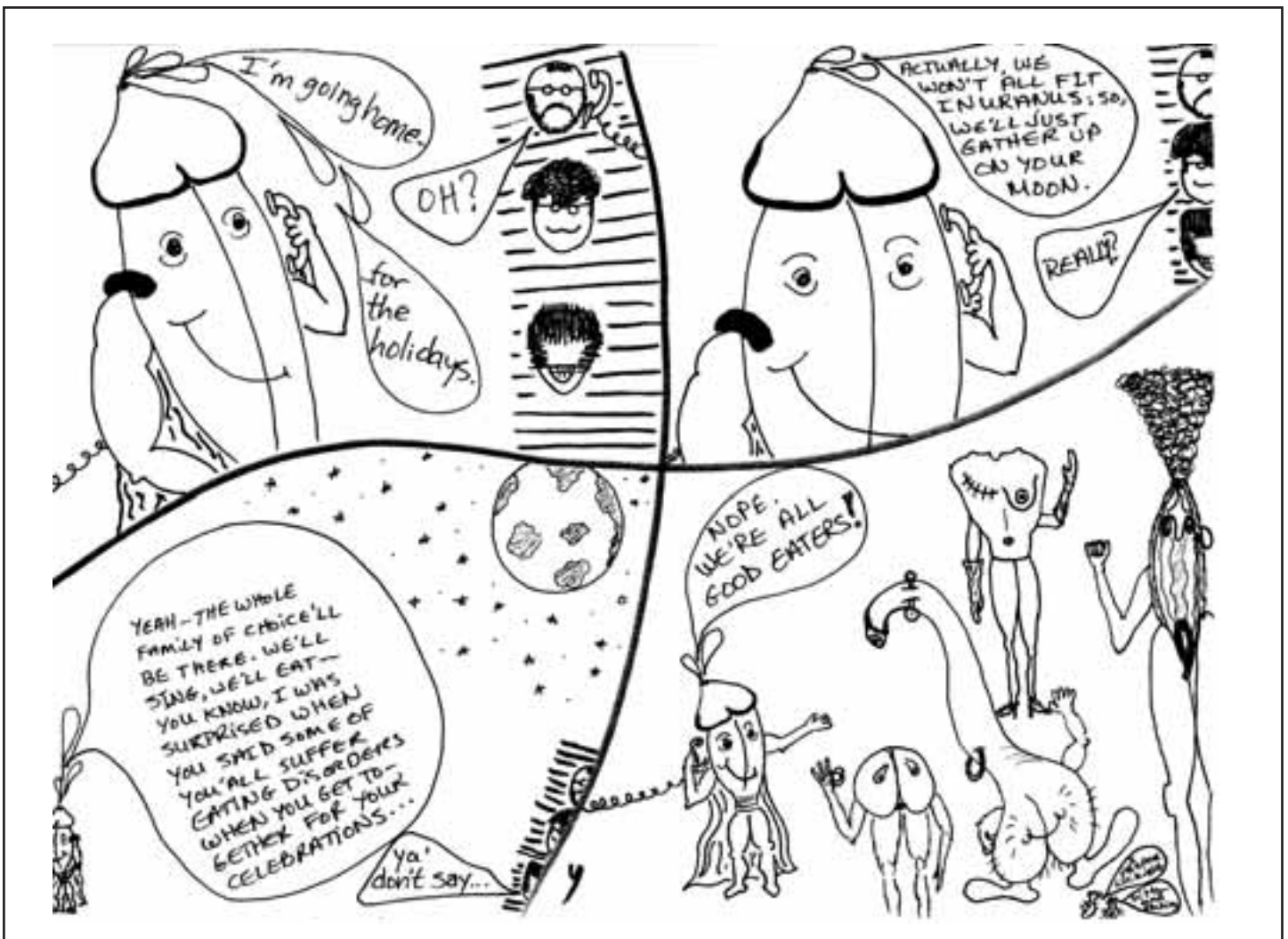
Visit our website:

<http://www.pridealive.org/life/newsletterarchive.php>

Need bulk copies of this newsletter for your group or business? Contact Keith and he'll hook you up with as many copies of "Shameless" as you need! 612-373-2475

CAPTAIN THRUST

written and illustrated by Ty Richardson





The staff, volunteers, and participants of PrideAlive, together with the management of the Minnesota AIDS Project, would like to thank the following Twin Cities establishments for playing host to our events—Outreach, HIV testing, Café Chats, and Special Events—throughout 2004. Without your support, we wouldn't reach the thousands of people we met this year! Thanks for all you do to support a healthy queer community, and we can't wait to work with you again in 2005!

YOU KEEP The Pride Alive!

19 Bar
19 W. 15th St., Minneapolis
(612) 871-5553

The Bolt
513 Washington Ave. S., Minneapolis
(612) 338-0896

Bolt Underground
501 Washington Ave. S., Minneapolis
(612) 338-0896

Boom!
401 E. Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis
(612) 378-3188

The Brass Rail
422 Hennepin Ave. Minneapolis
(612) 333-3016

Dunn Brothers in Loring Park (We miss you!)

The Eagle
515 Washington Ave. S., Minneapolis
(612) 338-4214

The Gay 90s
408 Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis
(612) 333-7755

Hotel Amsterdam
828 Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis
(612) 288-0459

JetSet
115 N 1st St., Minneapolis
(612) 339-3933

Lucy's (We miss you!)

Over the Rainbow
719 N. Dale St., St. Paul
(651) 487-5070

Query Booksellers
520 East Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis
612-331-7701

The Saloon
830 Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis
(612) 332-0835

The Townhouse
1415 University Ave. W., St. Paul
(651) 646-7087

The Transit Station
4806 Chicago Ave S, Minneapolis
(612) 821-9444

Trikkx
490 N. Robert St., St. Paul
(651) 224-0703

Vera's Café
2901 Lyndale Ave S., Minneapolis
(612) 822-3871

Wilde Roast Café
518 E. Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis
(612) 331-4544



Ask Snookie about Nookie

Do you have a question about sex, drugs, relationships, or queer-ness that no one else can answer? Are you excited by the chance to ask a dog for answers to your personal problems?

Then Ask Snookie about Nookie! Snookie has the poop scoop on the stuff you want to know. Snookie will appear in our newsletters and on our web site. So send those questions to asksnookie@mnaidproject.org!

Dear Snookie:

When can my boyfriend and I stop using condoms? We've both been tested and we are monogamous.

Playin' It Safe and Sound

Dear PISS,

That's a great question, but is also a complicated one. Theoretically, two STD free partners are unable to give each other an infection. The reality is that until you have trust in you and your partner's monogamy, condoms should be a part of your sex life. A healthy sexual relationship is built on trust and mutual respect, both of which take a significant amount of time to create.

Establishing that neither partner has an STD is the first step. Both partners should be tested for all STDs (including syphilis, gonorrhea, chlamydia, and HIV) several times over the course of six months after having sex with any other partners. Because some of these infections have a 'window period,' they may

not be detectable within the first 3-6 months after exposure.

The next step is to establish trust and monogamy. If you have any doubts that your partner may not be faithful, then continue to use condoms. If you have doubts about your own fidelity, then continue to use condoms.

Deciding to stop using condoms in a committed relationship is a very serious step, and one that needs to be thought out carefully. Remember, your health is important. Don't put yourself at risk. Sometimes our partners aren't honest, and that lack of honesty could cost you your health in the long run.

Dear Snookie:

Santa never brings me the kind of toys I really want. What's a guy to do?

Bring Us Toys This Year

Dear BUTTY,

PrideAlive's Solstice Santa has all the toys you need for a safer, warmer, and sexier holiday season! From condoms to lube to dental dams to gloves, look for Solstice Santa at the Saloon and Minneapolis Eagle in December.