



mens briefs

MEN WHO LOVE MEN— INCLUDING THEMSELVES

SPRING EDITION 2008 ISSUE #7



DAVID MIELKE

When I was growing up in Campbell River in the late 60s and early 70s I never imagined I'd one day be responsible for publishing a magazine for men who have sex with men on Vancouver Island.

Back then, magazines depicting anything to do with men having sex with men were not something I shared publicly. They were hidden under my mattress as inspirational fodder for sessions that had nothing to do with loving because of the sense of secrecy and shame and fear caused by believing that having sex with another man was wrong. Instead of masturbating, I was mastur-berating – getting off on telling myself that what I was doing was bad. Yikes!

Thankfully I've come a long way since then. So far, in fact, that I now find myself in the very public position of gay commu-

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Questions and Answers
FOR MEN ABOUT MEN

CONTACT US. CONFIDENTIAL. TOLL FREE.
FOR MEN ON VANCOUVER ISLAND

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SEXUAL HEALTH INFORMATION KEEPS MEN HEALTHY

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SPRINGING THROUGH THE GOLDEN GATES

CAPTAIN SNOWDON

It's spring and I am springing myself to San Francisco. As some of you know, I have been working on my masters in Human Sexuality for the last year and it's now done. Wow. I was never a very good student, but alas, with this kind of a topic I seem to be on my game.

AVI has given me a one-year leave of absence to work on my PhD which involves collaborating with Joseph Kramer

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ABOUT MEN'S BRIEFS



Men's Briefs is a quarterly magazine for men who have sex with men on Vancouver Island published by AIDS Vancouver Island's Men's Wellness Program with funding received from the AIDS Community Action Program, Public Health Agency of Canada.

TO SUBMIT CONTENT OR PROVIDE COMMENT, PLEASE EMAIL MWP@AVI.ORG OR CALL 250.384.2366



Straight Eye *for the* Queer Guy

COMPORTMENT & ETIQUETTE FROM INTERNATIO

Dear Miss Priss...

I met this guy online who is only into frot. What's that about?

Signed,
Butt-Frustrated

Dear Butt...

Hmm. I guess you could say this is bummer. Guys who are into "frot" – also known as "cock2cock," "sword-fighting," "cockrub" and sometimes "dry humping" – may not be into it simply as a form of foreplay, as many of us may think. "Frot boys" are into it for the politics AND the pleasure.

Frot – from the French word "frottage," meaning "to rub" – is the erotic art of sensual body rubbing between two or more people, with or without clothes. Unfortunately, most folks misunderstand this form of sensual connection as "only foreplay." Such short-sighted perspectives often leave a lot of erotic play and connection out in the cold, and force us to abandon what could be totally fulfilling sexual experiences in the purgatory realm of "not real sex."

For some in the GBT men's community, frot is not only a form of sexual experience, but also a political movement. Championed by Bill Weintraub, men who enjoy frot as their preferred form of sexual expression tend to reject anal sex because they believe that anal penetration has created an unhealthy and inaccurate feminization of GBT men's bodies, psychological roles and sex lives by creating "bottom" (ie. feminine, receptive) and "top" (ie. masculine, penetrative) roles.

Rather than seeing men as playing roles that mimic straight sexual culture, Frot Boys want to view sex between men as an equal exchange of power and sensuality. They also tout the greatly enhanced safety from sexually transmitted infections and avoidance of anal damage (i.e. "an anus is not a vagina," to a quote

from their website) as evidence that their beliefs have biological support.

From a sexual health perspective, frot makes a lot of sense. Yes, frot is extremely low

risk for such things as HIV and some other sexually transmitted infections – even when done naked without a condom – simply because it limits the amount of contact men have with each other's "wet" sexual membranes and semen/pre-cum. (Remember: semen and pre-cum can carry infections and get into the body through the tender "wet" membranes of the anus and rectum, foreskin, urethra and sometimes the mouth, which can absorb viruses and bacteria – or through tears or sores in genital skin.)

Frot eliminates anal penetration, helping to reduce the likelihood of such difficult conditions as anal fissures and tearing as a result of too-vigorous or too-dry anal sex. And yes, yes, YES, it can be an incredibly fun, fulfilling and hot way to share sex with your lover.

BUT – like anything, it's not foolproof!

If two guys share semen or precum when they frot, then there is still a risk of infection. Semen and precum can get under the foreskin, or get rubbed into the urethra or into a sore because of unprotected mutual masturbation. If one guy comes before the other(s), and semen or precum are used as lube for more masturbation or anal play, this also could be higher risk. Or, if one or more of the guys has a sex infection that is transmittable through skin-to-skin contact (like herpes and HPV/genital warts), then skin-to-skin contact be risky. Finally, don't forget that most sex infections can be transmitted through unprotected oral sex, including, but more rarely, HIV.



SEX ...on wheels in the great outdoors

NALLY ACCLAIMED MISS PRISS



Not all guys are into frot as their preferred form of sex. Lots of guys still want anal penetration, or to be penetrated or both – and lots will still view frot as “foreplay.” For this reason, frot remains an issue of controversy among men who have sex with men – not only as a form of sex, but as a form of identity.

Politics aside, it's safe to say that frot is a great way to share hot, sexual energy. It's not simply a form of foreplay, but a great form of sex all by itself.

Frot offers just as many options...front facing (allows fantastic necking, family jewels access, butt-grabbing and swordplay - ooh!), spooning (great neck nuzzling and wrap-around ball-play potential), thigh love (try it with lube!), armpits (for those who love the combination of ticklish underarms with dicks), with toys (vibrating rings, anyone?) and shower rub-downs (hot water cascading down impassioned bodies and enhancing sensation!). And let's not forget gorgeous groups of undulating, sexy maleness on the dance floor...even in clothes! (That's sex in public, people – and don't we all love a little bit of that now and then, both to play and to watch?)

For more info on the philosophy and politics of frot, try Bill Weintraub's website atheroichomosex.org/alliancnew.html. And for up-to-date info on sexually transmitted infections and being safer, try the Island Sexual Health Society's website page on STIs and testing at islandsexualhealth.org/infections.

Have fun, be safe, and good rub! Miss Priss

STEPHEN DAVIS

“Le Sexe qui Kamping” –

OK! So you're wondering, what does that mean? Basically it translates as, “The Sexy Kamping Way of Life.” In other words: Sex and Kamping. Let the Straights keep ‘camping’ and we'll keep ours – ‘Kamping.’ As noted by Vancouver Islands' Rick M. and Owen K. of R&O's Kampground, “A way of life” is simply what it's all about.



I want to share with you my way of life. Today, my way of life is a bit low . . . I'm in the midst of grieving. I just lost my dog Tika to Cushing's disease. While I know she is in a better place, my heart just wasn't ready to give her up to play with the other pets in that Petland in the sky. But you know, we had 13 wonderful years together and she enjoyed Kamping just as much as I did.

We traveled Canada and the USA together. Our first Kamping Trip was a place called La Connor in Washington, USA, on a First Nations Reserve. It was a beautiful weekend. My partner Jerry and I had just bought a Boler Trailer. I called it a toaster on wheels. It was small and cute and very warm inside.

Jerry and I had the most incredibly intense sex. We found something new. Sex outside! Yes, it was in a small trailer, but you find yourself being creative and trying new positions. There's something about waking up in the morning and just f ---ing your brains out before breakfast. Man that breakfast was sooooo good! You kinda look forward to going to bed later on. Oh yes, there was lunch and a mid day snack, too.

And before I forget, if you ever buy a Boler, remember to do one thing I forgot: stabilize the outside jacks. There's nothing worse than the tongue of a Boler in mid air, with you lying upside down because you forgot to set the jacks. Can you say thrust? It was here that I got my taste for gay Kamping.

I had heard thru the grapevine of a ‘gay kampsite’ in the Seattle area. It was called Index, or also known as

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ROMPING NAKED

“Tra-la, it’s May, the lusty month of May; that lovely month when everyone goes blissfully astray. Tra-la, it’s here, that joyful time of year, when tons of wicked little thoughts merrily appear!” -- from ‘Camelot’ by Lerner & Loewe

What’s a strapping, young – or at least young at heart – Vancouver Island buck to do when the winter blaws thaw and the spring juices start to flow and his studly little horns begin to bud? Where is he going to go to playfully butt heads with other horny stags and find a masculine outlet for all that pent-up, frisky-frolicky energy? What could satisfy his primal need to express the joy of being rejuvenated once again by all that newborn Pacific Northwest greenery?

Well, he could prance on his hot-to-trot hooves down to Seattle and Romp Naked to a tribal beat with a herd of other sap-besotted, spring-infused dudes of all ages, colours, shapes and sizes.

Romp Naked is an alternative nude gathering for men to communally honour male erotic energy through art, music and dance. It’s an immersive experience, providing a space that generates, builds and holds erotic energy; venturing beyond physicality to explore new depths and definitions of manly beauty and spirit.

Romp Naked is not a sex party, but definitely a sexy party. It’s for all men, not just those who are gay or

queer-identified; so, out of respect to the boundaries of some of our brothers, penetrative sexual activity is prohibited. But don’t worry, there’s plenty of ‘sword fighting’ and full contact body frottage to make up for it!

Romp Naked offers a smoke and alcohol free environment, and plenty of healthy snacks and drinks to keep the erotic energy ebbing and flowing for hours. Attendees are encouraged to come in a sober, clear-headed state of mind to allow their consciousness to be transformed by the experience itself, the profundity of which is difficult to imagine until nakedly romped first hand.

Men have the capacity to generate a tremendous amount of healing power for themselves and others when romping naked together to a pounding beat in an open-hearted, open-spirited way. What better ritual could there be to celebrate the manly exuberance and sexual promise of spring?

Since 1994 Romp Naked has thrived as a much loved, thrice yearly Sacred Rite. The location may vary, the men who attend may vary, the organizers of the event may vary; and yet, the healing magic of transformation continues. Each man who attends has his own unique experience. What might yours be? I dare you to Romp Naked and find out! Visit www.rompnaked.org to learn more.



GOLDEN GATES

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

(of Body Electric fame), and helping out with the development of an Erotic Heritage Museum. Ok, and maybe there is some romance involved in SF, too.

It is my pleasure to introduce David to you – he is a rock star. Well, maybe not a rock star, but he is actually a very good singer. In order to respect people's different ways of communicating and their creativity, during the interview process we asked the candidates to come prepared to do a 5-minute presentation on what they



believe gay men's wellness to be. David presented in song, wrapped in a pride flag. He rocks.

David has all the intuition and skills necessary to do a great job with the Men's Wellness Program. It was a pleasure to spend time with him during his training. He is a compassionate, positive and solution-focused person. I will miss the job and many of you who have been so welcoming and supportive over the years. See you in 2009!

SOX ...on wheels in the great outdoors

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

TRC (Triangle Recreation Camp). This was an exciting time for TRC and their members as it was their 20th anniversary. Although I was no longer with Jerry, I got the Boler in the divorce. So off I went. It was great! Fun, new friends, dances, hot tubs, swimming, naked romping, etc. Wow, who would've ever thought? I found my retreat. Kamping + outdoor sex = my way of life. What an equation!

Index is no longer the home for TRC, but since then, TRC has purchased their own land in the heart of the Cascade Mountains – check out their website to find them www.camptrc.org. The town is approximately a 3 hour drive from Vancouver, just east of a town called Granite Falls. It is a membership operation and is the kind of place where you pack it in and out. It is somewhat wilderness, but can host limited RVer's and has lots of room for tents. Although there are no public hot showers, there is the clothing optional river and the National Forest Services is only a short drive down the road.

There is always plenty to do at TRC. You can relax with other kampers, pitch in and help with an ongoing project, take a drive to the old town Brothel, or head into Seattle for the day. There are fantastic hiking trails, cycling trails, ice caves and much more.

At night there are plenty of fires to sit around, music, and great conversation. On certain weekends you may find a Sauna party, Foam Party, Mardi gras and maybe

a drag show or two. Drag in the woods – must be murder wearing stilettos. Remember if you head down to the States, carry proper ID for both you and your pets. Also remember the legal age is 21 and that the strength of the Canadian dollar is worth the trip.

After camping many years at TRC, my new partner/husband, Moe, and I decided to camp more in BC. September 11th changed the way we travel. It is okay now, but then it took hours to get across the border. We needed an alternative, and

Shadow Falls was what we found (info@shadowfalls.com).

This gay Kampsite was just getting ready to open. The owner Bryan was and still is a delight. Bryan was creating his retreat, his way of life. Shadow Falls is located between Abbotsford and Mission, BC, about a 1.5 hour drive from Vancouver.

At Shadow Falls, you can relax on the grounds, swim in the falls, play volleyball, or just enjoy the view. Bryan has created a warm, safe environment for all to enjoy. Shadow Falls is pet friendly, and the coin operated hot showers are a plus. In the past, I met new, like-minded friends who came from Vancouver, BC's interior and even England. Bryan is well set up for RVs and tents. Most sites have 15 or 30 amp service.

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SOX ...on wheels in the great outdoors

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

As with most Kampgrounds, Bryan also hosts themed weekends. In the past, he has hosted Mardi Gras, underwear parties, nude PCAN weekends and Hawaiian nights. One of my favourite activities is to take a drive into Harrison Hot Springs. On the way back to Kamp, stop and pick up some fresh cherries or peaches 'n crème corn for that perfect BBQ. There are lots of special stops on the way back to paradise. info@shadowfalls.com

Before I head back to Vancouver Island, I want to mention a small, cute place called Anthony's Court and Campground, home to Dan and Wayne (djh@anthonyshomecourt.com). Located near the border of Washington and Oregon, in the heart of the lovely Long Beach coast, it's a peaceful getaway for both RV-ers and cabin dwellers.

The Court is 'Straight Friendly' and within walking distance to all amenities. There are miles of fabulous beaches, restaurants, specialty shopping, liquor stores and go-cart racing. Their cabins are clean and tastefully decorated and a great option. What better way to say ahhh with a bottle of Champagne before you and that special one . . . well, you know!

Okay, now let's bring it back home. So where were we? Ah yes, Vancouver Island. Drum roll please... May I present Rick and Owen of Kamprnos (www.kamprnos.com) – a retreat, a way of life! Rick and Owen live and breathe Camping on 5 wonderful acres 100km north of Victoria. Their property backs on to the Nanaimo River, close to the World Famous Bungee Jumping.

Here at the Kamp, you'll find two wonderful hosts and many wonderful friends. The property has excellent amenities: hot showers, flush toilets, horses, pet friendly, club house, dance floor, karaoke, volleyball, hiking, swimming in the Nanaimo River, pond, livestock animals, kampkitchin', mini store; and, trailers, campers and tents to rent.

There are activities every weekend. It may be as small or quiet as a bunch of guys singing "cum-bi-all" around the campfire, or as BIG as the 4th Annual Fruit

Float down the Nanaimo River. This year we're going to see an Easter Egg/Beer Hunt, Underwear Party, Gay Pride Weekend, Fruit Float, Christmas in July, Country HO-Down, Thanksgiving Dinner, Halloween Party and much, much more.

Rick and Owen will never let you have a dull moment, and don't worry if you rip your bathing suit, or rather if someone rips your bathing suit off. The way of life around here is optional – clothing optional!

Want to go camping but not really a kamper in a tent or trailer? Don't worry! The boys can arrange a stay at a gay friendly Bed and Breakfast (Amberwood Bed and Breakfast with Dana and Ron, (www.amberwood.com), just down the block. Want to drink but not drive when Nanaimo hosts their monthly gay dances in town? Again, don't worry; Rick and Owen have a van and a designated driver to get us all back and forth safely.

They also support groups such as the Pacific Canadian Association for Nudists, gay yoga classes, and belong to the BC Bears Association, Prime Timers, Nanaimo Gay Pride Society, Vancouver Island Rainbow Society and Fallzguys. So why not come out and spend some time at the Retreat! Remember: it's a Way of Life.

These Kampsites are fun, safe placeS for men to meet men, to be themselves, open their minds, relax, play, grow and experience something new.

These are places where men can love men for their minds, bodies, and souls. Places where a man can find a friend for a night, a weekend or forever. Places where the old wistfully admire the young and give elderly advice. Places where the young respect elders and learn from the experiences of those who have lived longer. Places where men can cry as I have. And finally, places where you know who your strength-giving friends are, and where everybody knows your name.

Be good, be safe, and have fun. Remember "Le Sexe qui Camping," and if you don't like Camping, well . . . then go camping!

MEN WHO LOVE MEN

(CONT'D. FROM COVER)

nity development coordinator for the Men's Wellness program, which has me thinking a lot about the aforementioned men who have sex with men on Vancouver Island and how to best serve their community and wellness needs.

True community must be inclusive of everyone, embracing both collective we-are-ness and individual I-ness. And true wellness must encompass the three aspects of the 'wholly' trinity of health: body, mind and soul. I would also say my understanding of community and wellness is directly related to the Greek term eros or life force. As such, I'm interested in the erotic as it moves us beyond the pleasurable, beyond personal

healing to the deeper mystery of experience – expanding one's ability to be whole, generous and loving; and enriching and grounding one's relationship with self, others and the environment. Any and all subjects, therefore, can fall within the purview of community and wellness.

So, with that in mind, I see Men's Briefs as a magazine not only for men who have sex with men, but also for men who care about the inclusion and well-being of men on Vancouver Island, men who respect and honour men, and maybe even men who love men on Vancouver Island – including, and especially, themselves. My intention in the position of gay community development coordinator for the Men's Wellness program is to facilitate and nurture that as best I can. Please contact me at david.mielke@avi.org. ■■

It must have been syphilis

My best friend and I used to have a running joke whenever we talked about some historical figure who died prematurely of indeterminate causes. "It must have been syphilis," we'd declare.

It seemed funny to joke about because the dark aged horrors of syphilis seemed so far-removed from our modern day reality. Syphilis is a thing of the past, right? Unfortunately that's not true, and there's nothing funny about it. Recent statistics show that rates of infection in men who have sex with men are going up on Vancouver Island.

The spooky thing about syphilis is that people may not have any visible symptoms, yet can still pass it on to you. A sore can develop three to four weeks after you have sex with someone who is infected with syphilis. The sore may appear on any part of your body that has been in contact with the sexual fluids of an infected person. Sometimes, the sore will not be noticed. In both men and women, the sore will go away within a month but the disease will continue to spread. About six weeks after being infected, a rash may develop, which may look like other rashes, such as measles. It can appear anywhere on the body, but is most often found on the belly, the genitals, palms of the hands and soles of the feet. Again, you may not notice the rash, but the disease will continue to spread.

If you have different sexual partners, or if your partner has different partners, you should also be tested for gonorrhoea, Chlamydia and HIV (the virus linked to AIDS), and you should consider getting shots to prevent hepatitis A and B.

Syphilis is transmitted through unprotected oral or anal sex for both tops (insertive) and bottoms (receptive). Fingering, rimming, mutual masturbation, fisting and kissing can also spread syphilis if these activities involve

direct contact with sores, lesions, semen or blood. Body fluids can be highly contagious for up to two years in an untreated person. Syphilis bacteria can also be passed by sharing drug use equipment like needles, crack pipes and other paraphernalia.

The best protection for you and your partner(s) is using a condom every time you have oral or anal sex and never sharing drug use equipment. But be aware that the syphilis bacteria can still come into contact with the genital area that is not covered by a condom, such as the skin around the base of your penis, or your balls.

The bottom line is you or a sexual partner can have syphilis and not know it. Not everyone will get symptoms, but some will – like abnormal discharge from the penis and genital or anal sores. So, the only way to know for sure is to have a medical exam, including swabs taken of any sores and – the most reliable of all – a blood test.

If syphilis progresses, it can cause serious blood vessel and heart problems, mental disorders, blindness, nerve system problems and possibly even death. But not to worry; syphilis is totally curable through simple antibiotic injections, usually in a long-acting form of penicillin, at any time after infection. The only irreversible thing would be central nervous system damage that can happen when it's not treated and cured early on. Afterwards you must have blood tests to make sure the treatment has worked, and not have sex until two weeks after you and your partner(s) have finished the treatment.

So why risk it? Get tested and avoid having smart ass historians in the future joke one day about your untimely demise with the smirking retort, "It must have been syphilis."

LOVE! VALOUR! COMPASSION!



LOVE! VALOUR! COMPASSION! NUDITY! ...LADYSMITH?

DAVID MIELKE

The Greeks created live theatre as a place to go and wrestle with the challenges of being human. It was not meant to be a diversion or escape from the complexities of life; it was meant, rather, to plunge people directly into them through the characters – encouraging audiences to think and feel and face those challenges head on.

As gay men in a world that's still struggling with our right to be, we have some extra challenges thrown into the mix. So when a play comes along that helps us examine those challenges in a heartfelt, witty and profound way, it's important to get to the theatre and raise our "wellness quotient." One such show is the Vancouver Island Players Society production of Terrence McNally's award-winning 'Love! Valour! Compassion!', strongly and sensitively directed by John Fox and playing at Lady Smith Little Theatre in Ladysmith May 14th to 24th.

In 'Love! Valour! Compassion!' eight gay friends get together for three long weekends at a house in the country. The story of what happens over the summer is told by the cast – bit by bit they

reveal not only the events of each weekend, but also their worries, hopes and loves.

Gregory (Earle Gibson) is a brilliant choreographer in his early forties struggling with an aging body. Bobby (Scott Mercer) is Gregory's blind lover, who is adamant about not being treated like someone with a disability. Arthur (Vincent Wells) and Perry (Stewart Seaward) are an accountant and lawyer who have been a couple for more than a decade. "We're role models," Perry proclaims. "It's very stressful."

John (Bruce Mason) is an angry, bitter, British music composer whose arrival almost everyone is dreading; and James (also played by Bruce Mason) is John's identical twin who is his exact image physically but his complete opposite in every other way. Ramon (David Jowsey) is a hot, young dancer with a perfect body he flaunts in trouble-making ways. Buzz (Rick Myers) lives for show biz trivia and old Broadway showtunes and uses campy humour to mask his deep vulnerability.

Over three acts, we see these eight friends fall in love and fall from grace, hurt and forgive one another, form couples and break apart, celebrate strengths and give in to weaknesses, play jokes on each other and give a shoulder for each other to cry on. None of them emerge from their weekends at the house the same. They each learn that to love others, they must first learn to love themselves. Ultimately they bond together, like a family, to create a theatrical event to perform at Carnegie Hall as an AIDS fundraiser.

These are courageous men donating their free time, stepping out of their comfort zones and challenging themselves on many levels so that we as the audience can be challenged on many levels. They are giving us all a great gift. They are doing it as a benefit for AIDS Vancouver Island. They are doing it to build a sense of gay community. They are doing it with love, valour and compassion!

And did I mention there's nudity to boot? What more could you ask for? Make a pilgrimage to Lady-smith and do your heart, mind and spirit some good.

Love! Valour! Compassion!

May 14th to 24th, 2008

Lady Smith Little Theatre

4985 Christie Road, Ladysmith, BC

www.ladysmithlittletheatre.com

For tickets and info call 250-618-5543

WALK AWAY FROM HOMOPHOBIA IN CAMPBELL RIVER

CR PRIDE

In recognition of International Day Against Homophobia, the 2nd Annual Campbell River Walk Away From Homophobia takes place on Thursday, May 15, 2008, starting promptly at 5:30 PM in Campbell River at the Heritage Pavillion at Bob Ostler Park (formerly the Foreshore Park). There will be an official opening by Campbell River's Mayor, an invocation of intention, the walk, then speakers and entertainers to round out the event. Dress up or dress down, or come as you are!

Campbell River's GLBTQ group, CR PRIDE, is hosting the event to reach out to the broader community about the hardships and dangers of homophobia.

We are currently looking for volunteers to act as parade marshalls. Call Leanne at (250) 204-2821; or visit the CR PRIDE website at www.crpriide.com

Please come to Campbell River and walk away from homophobia with us in this amazingly soulful event. The walk last year was a big success and we expect this year's to be even bigger and better -- which it is sure to be if you are a part of it!



THE POSITIVE WELLNESS PROGRAM

KRISTEN KVAKIC

The Positive Wellness program offers a range of support services to members living with HIV and their families on Vancouver Island. The drop-in and hot meal program operates in Victoria over the noon hour during the week, serving up a nutritious, hot lunch to members. Our newly formed support group meets bi-weekly and already has some fun activities planned for the summer. Over the course of the year, other events such as a summer picnic and holiday parties are well attended.

Professional social workers can offer client-specific services such as counselling and advocacy, including help with

Persons with Disabilities assessments and Canada Pension Plan Disability benefits applications.

Counselling services include supportive listening, motivational interviewing, assistance with developing personal harm reduction plans and/or treatment plans for problematic substance use.

We can also work with members to meet specific needs – ask us and we can help connect you with what you need.

If you or someone you know could benefit from accessing this program, call one of the AVI offices to find out more about what is offered in your area. Visit www.avi.org for the numbers in your area.

ABOUT A BOY — AND THE CHILD IN ALL OF US

Recently I heard a story about a four-year old boy, named Felix, that I'd like to share with you. It seems that Felix was out shopping with his mother one day, when he spotted a pair of sparkly red sandals for sale. His mother bought them for him, and he proudly started wearing them wherever he went. One day he went to visit his grandfather, who took one look at Felix's dazzling footwear and pronounced from on high, "Felix, those sandals are for girls!" Without a moment of shame-based hesitation, Felix looked up at his grandfather and said, "No, Grandpa, they're for humans."

This story made me laugh and feel a twinge of sadness and hope. Sadness because it reminded me of the pinkish parts of myself I allowed people to shame out of me as a child, and hope because I believe Felix represents the beginning of a new era in human consciousness — a time when we can transcend the pink and blue rules of gender conformity and just be the unique individuals we were born to be. You go, Felix — they're for humans indeed!

Here's a poem by Christopher Morley (1880-1957) that reminds me of the found parts of Felix's generation, and the lost parts of ours:

WHEN WE WERE POETRY ITSELF

The greatest poem ever known
Is one all poets have outgrown:
The poetry, innate, untold,
Of being only four years old.

Still young enough to be a part
Of Nature's great impulsive heart,
Born comrade of bird, beast, and tree
And unselfconscious as the bee —

And yet with lovely reason skilled
Each day new paradise to build;
Elate explorer of each sense,
Without dismay, without pretense!

In your unstained transparent eyes
There is no conscience, no surprise:
Life's queer conundrums you accept,
Your strange divinity still kept.

Being, that now absorbs you, all
Harmonious, unit, integral,
Will shred into perplexing bits —
Oh, contradictions of the wits!

And Life, that sets all things in rhyme,
may make you poet, too, in time —
But there were days, O tender elf,
When you were Poetry itself!

SALAD ~ FRESH & FRUITY

BY BILL

BABY SPINACH WITH STRAWBERRIES AND TOASTED ALMONDS!

Prep Time: 10 minutes | Cooking Time: 10 minutes | Makes: 4 servings

INGREDIENTS:

2 Tbsp. balsamic vinegar

3 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil

1 tsp. Dijon mustard

2 tsp. honey

Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

1 (5 oz.) container baby spinach, washed and dried

1/2 lb. fresh strawberries, hulled and sliced

1/3 cup sliced or slivered almonds, lightly toasted



METHOD:

Combine the first 5 ingredients in a salad bowl. Add the spinach, strawberries and almonds and toss to coat. Divide the salad among four plates and serve.

I AM NOT I

I am not I.

I am this one

Waiting beside me whom I do not see.

Whom at times I manage to visit,

And at other times I forget.

The one who remains silent when I talk,

The one who forgives, sweet, when I hate,

The one who takes a walk when I am indoors,

The one who delights in the music of rivers,

The one who will remain sitting on rocks when I die.

Juan Ramón Gimenez (1881-1958)

calendar

events on vancouver island

calendar

PORT HARDY

PORT HARDY POSITIVE WELLNESS KITCHEN meets Wednesdays at The Lighthouse (Salvation Army) in Port Hardy. Lunch Program from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm. Every-one welcome! For info call Tom at AVI for details at: (250) 949-0432

CAMPBELL RIVER

ARE YOU GAY, BI, LESBIAN, TRANS, OR QUESTIONING? CR Pride Group meets weekly in Campbell River for lively discussions, spirited socializing, guest speakers, and movie nights. Please come out and join us! For more information call Leanne at: (250) 204-2821, or visit the website at: www.crpride.com

COURTENAY

CHAT & CHEW – enjoy a casual meal and great conversation with other gay/queer men every third Thursday at Union Street Grill's The Grotto in Courtenay from 7 to 9 PM. Contact david.mielke@avi.org for more information. Or call 1-866-277-9055

NANAIMO

POSITIVE MEN'S SUPPORT GROUP
Contact Anita for more information at (250) 753-2437.

KAMP R'N O'S – Ongoing events for gay men.
For information contact Kamprnos@telus.net

VANCOUVER ISLAND RAINBOW ASSOCIATION holds a dance the last Saturday of every month at the Value Lodge Motel in Nanaimo – 736 Nicol Street (Alice's Restaurant, Mad Hatter Room). It's a laid back evening with lots of dancing, entertainment, prizes, snacks, and a "No Host Bar." The motel offers a special rate for those attending the social.
Cost: \$10.00 Email info@nanaimopride.org

LADYSMITH

CHAT & CHEW on the second Wednesday of each month in Ladysmith at APPETIT Food For Thought, 634 First Avenue, Ladysmith. Phone: (250) 245-1321. Everyone usually gathers between 5:30 and 6:00 PM. To reserve your spot email: johnfox@shaw.ca

VICTORIA

GBT MEN'S COFFEE SOCIAL every Tuesday from 6:00pm to 8:00pm at Serious Coffee – Blanshard and Figard. Contact david.mielke@avi.org for more information. Or phone: 1-866-277-9055

PRIME TIMERS VICTORIA (BC Canada) is an organization that exists to meet the social, educational and recreational needs of mature gay and bi-sexual men, 40 years and older. Telephone: PLEASE, only call for information regarding Prime Timer activities: Galen L. – Phone (250) 381-4686
Postal address: PO Box 5188 STN B
Victoria BC Canada V8R 6N4

POT LUCK DINNERS: Mac Elrod hosts the Gay Men's Pot-Luck. Men bring one dish of something they enjoy cooking (or find at a delicatessen), a bottle of wine if they wish, and share. Attendance has ranged from 6 to 60 and ages from 18 to 80. The Pot-Lucks are held in the log house at 4493 Lindholm Road, upper house, in Metchosin. No reservation is required. Contact Mac at (250) 474-3361 or mac@slc.bc.ca for dates and driving directions. Gay men of all ages are welcome.

HELLO SPORTSMEN! Gay runner, bicyclist, kayaker and hiker interested in forming outdoor recreation group/groups. If interested, please contact Andrew at adbeck@shaw.ca

questions and answers

FOR MEN ABOUT MEN

CONTACT US. CONFIDENTIAL. TOLL FREE.

FOR MEN ON VANCOUVER ISLAND

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