

I Love Me, I Love Me Not

BY ELLIOTT MATOS

As I wrote these thoughts down for the February issue, I found myself spending hours a week working on different paragraphs and different thoughts, not truly happy with what I would be saying. I went back and forth, erasing and rewriting sentences, and replacing old ideas with new ones. You see, I hadn't really experience singlehood before, and when I had decided to write about my experiences as a new single man, I didn't realize the actual processing I would be doing. I processed every moment, every new

couples that would honor and respect each other, till death do they part. Yet, my relationship was crumbling. We were left with high walls that made us feel trapped, unable to communicate without words of disservice. We broke apart as people in our community fought for commitment and the celebration of couplehood.

I wish for this story to occur for you in a different way, though. I want to talk about how great it was to have had the experience of that relationship, how meaningful it is to me now, how great it is to utilize everything I'd learned from it in my current life, how

sense of new old knowledge. It was the kind of knowledge that seemed familiar to me from a long time ago, maybe as child, the kind that fit into my being with who I was that day.

I had started to appreciate all my past and present relationships I had had with friends and lovers, acknowledging what each person had brought into my life.

I began feeling comfortable with the thought of them; I was happier in fact that I shared what I did with them, and thankful to the energy of the Earth for bringing us together. And grateful that our roads in life connected for the times they did, looking forward to the future to see if our roads would pass again so that I may thank them for being who they were when our paths had travelled along side each other.

When I arrived back from NY to celebrate New Year's as a single man, I found myself fighting the urge to look for a new relationship, wondering why I yearned to be back in one. Yet I found myself looking, perhaps for a person to share time with, a person to know intimately, maybe even a person I could potentially partner with. I would remind myself in those moments that there was so much beauty that I had found in being single, in learning about myself, in continuing my education, in cultivating my spirituality and political beliefs, in recreating the strong bonds with my family that I had had as a child.

Experiencing myself has been the best part of this journey that will one day share its road with others, but, for now, it continues in the now as I spend time with myself and with meeting new people, everyday with something new to learn, and every moment a growing one.

I still find myself going through the memories of the past, but with every bit of courage I muster up inside, I can finally say I accept myself, excited in my rediscovery, happier and safe.

A purist at heart, Elliott works at the Onion River Co-op. On most days, he can be spotted in downtown Burlington trying rugs on as skirts.

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occurrence, and then wrote it down to share with people I didn't know. I started asking myself if I should share with strangers that it was hard to separate myself from the longing of waking up to the brilliant warmth of somebody's skin touching mine. Should I share how I missed the companionship that occurred when people who were in love checked-in with each other and discussed matters with each other, whether it be serious or silly? Well here it is folks, the real me.

Writing about my experiences being single here in Vermont in the last six months was not only a form of therapy for myself, but was a way to share my own experiences with you.

It began in mid 2000. The summer was great; probably the best Queer Pride in the country took place here in our queen city as we celebrated the passing of the civil union bill. Vermont gays and lesbians were in the public eye across the world for the landmark law on gay marriage. What a time to be living life and to be reveling in our green mountains. But this is not about that historical event; it's about the historical event that transpired in my life, that was written about in my history book. It is a plain covered book that sits separately from the other books on my dark wood nightstand with a pen accompanying its side. The event is about the journey that started with growing separately from a partner I loved, as three gay couples publicly announced their love for each other worldwide. They were

the separation from my lover has taught me to find love inside first — not the kind of love that a person says they have for themselves behind a bottle of alcohol or a hit of E, but the kind of love that one has for themselves even when they're alone, with or without another in their life to make them feel valid in their existence. It's also the kind of love that a person shares with others despite titles for their relationships.

While traveling back home to Long Island for the first time in six years as a single man, I ran into a few people from my New York gay ghetto-living days. They were now acquaintances that were at one time friends. These people had passed through my life the way that I had passed through many of their lives, leaving memories and influences as well. When I ran into those old friends, I looked into their eyes and saw myself. I conversed with them as the man I had grown into. As I spoke with them I recognized the learnt behaviors I now have and the patience I have taught myself to apply in my daily life, the compassion I demonstrate, the breaking of old habits I wish I had been rid of before my past romantic relationships: all humane manners that in a largely populated city one could forget or never recognize. I was experiencing every moment like I never had before, watching instead of speaking, taking in every second as if I had just been born. Everything that passed by my eyes and ears was new and intriguing. I felt alive with a

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february events

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DIRECTIONS TO HQ:

In Burlington, head south down Battery St., turn right on King St., make a hard right onto Steele St. Park in Main St. Landing Garage. HQ is in Suite 113 of the Wing Building located on Steele St. Main Street Landing is located at the Waterfront end of the free College Street Shuttle and serves as the commuter train station for the Champlain Flyer.

SAVE THE DATE!

R.U.1.2? Annual Dinner & Silent Auction Sat. April 28!

R.U.1.2? Headquarters Open-House Potluck

Friday, Feb. 16, 5:30-7:30pm. Bring a dish to pass and your vision for the future. See the new space and meet some new friends!

Bending Biology, Bending Gender: A Transgender Filmfest and Discussion

Saturday, Feb. 17, 2-10pm. Three movies at 2pm, 5pm, 8pm with discussion and refreshments at R.U.1.2? HQ. Call for film titles.

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