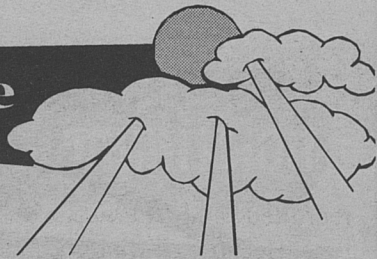


The Spiritual Essence



By The Rev. Jane Dwinell

Recently, my partner and I, along with our children (ages 10 and 14), watched the History Channel's series on Sex in the 20th Century. It was a well-done, several-hour program chronicling American's attitudes about sex from the Victorian and the Flapper Ages, to Margaret Sanger's 60 year fight for birth control for all women, to the World War II backlash where women were put in their place in the suburbs.

Next came the Free Love era of the 60s and 70s, followed by the AIDS epidemic of the 80s, and now on to a supposed "settling down" of everyone.

It was interesting to watch this as a family. Our children commented as the show went on, asking questions and finally understanding how current events affect a wide range of things in our society. I was fascinated, though, when I realized that the question they kept asking until the excerpt on the Stonewall Riots was, "What about the gay people?"

They recognized early on that something was missing. I certainly felt it, along with the show's emphasis on sex being defined as heterosexual vaginal intercourse. The wide range of sexual expression, available to everyone, was not being discussed in a, generally, very frank program.

What's sex got to do with spirituality, you may be asking? Everything. To connect intimately with another person, or even yourself, in honesty, openness, and trust is one of the deepest spiritual experiences that there is. To be vulnerable and present in the moment. To breathe and experience the joy and wholeness of

To connect intimately with another person, or even yourself, in honesty, openness, and trust is one of the deepest spiritual experiences that there is.

the universe. That is sexuality. That is spirituality.

Religious people of all faiths over the centuries have described their relationship with the Divine as a sexual one. Hildegard of Bingen, 12th century abbess, poet and healer wrote this: "Thru animate eyes I divide the seasons of time. I am aware of what they are. I am aware of their potential. With my mouth I kiss my own chosen creation. I uniquely, lovingly, embrace every image I have made out of the earth's clay. With a fiery spirit I transform it into a body to serve all the world."

Jalal al-din Rumi, 13th century Sufi mystic, wrote these words to his Beloved: "With your lips not here I kiss rubies to remember. When I can't sip from you, I put my lip on the cup's lip. Instead of reaching into your sky, I kneel and take handfuls of earth."

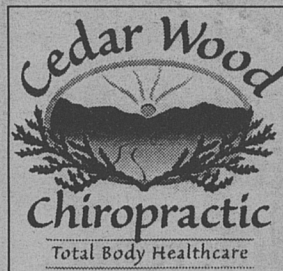
I find it refreshing to dip into the poems of these two spiritual beings when the Nancy Sheltras of the world equate loving relationships with "health hazards."

Sexual love is a grace, a gift to us all. Dody Donnelly, Roman Catholic nun, said this in her book *Radical Love: An Approach to Sexual*

Spirituality: "God not only loves us in and through our sexuality but, of course, delights in our human love-making. That love of beauty, union, and creativity is the sexual drive itself, and God's gift. Sexuality is an aspect of our deeply human yearning for fulfillment and meaning, for God."

As we head in Pride month, let us BE proud — of our bodies, their gifts, and our capacity to share them with one another. Let us celebrate fully, with body and soul. Our presence matters, even though it may be hard to bear the pain of misunderstandings and false accusations. As Sister Donnelly says, "God's gift is not a divided sex and spirit, but a sexual spirituality that can heal our hearts and, in the process, heal our world as well."

The Rev. Jane Dwinell serves the First Universalist Parish, a Unitarian Universalist congregation, in Derby Line, VT. She lives with her partner, Sky, and their two children, Dana and Sayer, on the shores of beautiful Lake Memphremagog.



Dr. Suzanne M. Harris

Helping people with difficult to treat conditions:



- Back and Neck Pain
- Knee, Shoulder and Hip pain

- Headaches/Fatigue
- TMJ Dysfunction
- Numbness/Tingling
- Repetitive Strain Injuries

Chiropractic adjustive techniques coupled with therapeutic massage, exercise and nutrition for a holistic approach to your health.

80 Colchester Avenue, Burlington
Across from Fletcher Allen Hospital & UVM
Call (802) 863-5828



Feminist Therapy

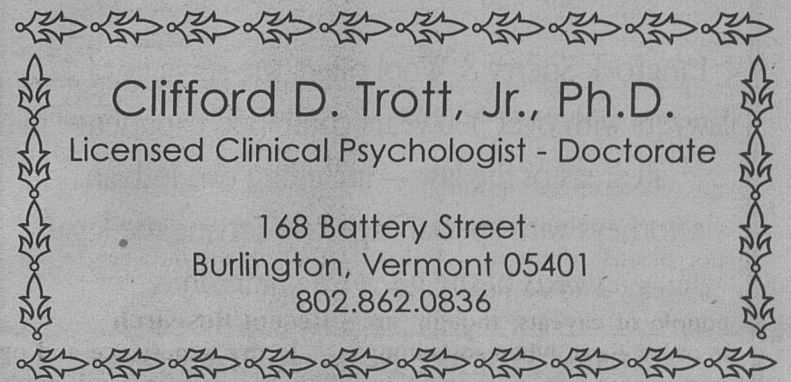
Leah Wittenberg

Licensed Mental Health Counselor

Psychotherapy for individuals and couples

82 Church St., Burlington
sliding fee scale

(802)658-9590 ext.4



Clifford D. Trott, Jr., Ph.D.

Licensed Clinical Psychologist - Doctorate

168 Battery Street
Burlington, Vermont 05401
802.862.0836

Montpelier
229-5220

Burlington
860-6360

LYNN GOYETTE, MS, MA

Lic. Clinical Mental Health Counselor

BILL McBROOM, MSW

Lic. Clinical Social Worker

insurance accepted

sliding fee scale

COUNSELING CENTER OF NORTHERN VERMONT

Susan McKenzie MS.

Jungian Psychoanalyst
Licensed Psychologist - Master

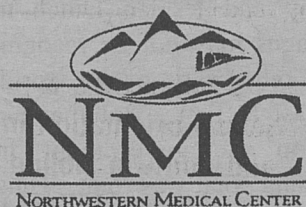
Specializing in issues of Gay, Lesbian,
Bi-sexual and Transgendered individuals and couples

Quechee - White River Junction (802) 295-5533
Insurance Accepted

James R. Nelson

Licensed Clinical
Mental Health Counselor

(802) 651-7764 Burlington, VT 05401



Dr. Mara Vijups
Dr. Erin Rhoades

NMC RURAL HEALTH SERVICES
Specializing in Family Practice
Caring for patients of all ages

SWANTON
868-2454

ALBURG
797-4414

ENOSBURG
933-5831

Michael Gigante, Ph.D.
Psychosynthesis
Counseling, Psychotherapy, & Consultation

(802) 254-8032

53 Myrtle St., Brattleboro, VT 05301
e-mail mgigante@together.net

BOB GREEN M.A.

LICENSED CLINICAL MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELOR

South Burlington

(802) 658-2390

(800) 830-5025

Individuals and Couples