



## Legend

Jade Wolfe  
Bill Storandt

His skilled layering of themes provides a warm perspective of how personal self-discovery can mesh with outer influences in following your own inner timing.

Whether you are dealing with the process of 'coming out' to people or girding yourself for an adventure of any sort, *Outbound* contains solid insights. Illuminating moments occur as the *Clarity*, a thirty-three foot sailing vessel, carries Bill, Brian, and Bob across the Atlantic. The telling of this voyage presents a very real picture of life at sea. Woven in between times of 'all hands on deck' are Bill's reflections on the incremental challenges he has faced 'coming out'. He shares this inward journey with a comfort level befitting someone who has lived on a small boat for six weeks on the open water.

*"It was an interesting puzzle to figure out ... that of 'coming out' ... being gay ... and the sailing trip. My hope is that this book can be tremendously encouraging for gay parents, closeted gay people, a remembering for people with a similar life story and younger gays to understand (a different time from theirs). In fact, I've started to receive a nice trickle of messages from readers, thanking me for putting such a positive story out there.*

*So many kids today come out so early. For kids at Yale it's a non-issue. It was a very different time when I was struggling with my homosexuality. I was (supposedly) in the most comfortable of positions, living in Manhattan, a student just out of Julliard, around gorgeous dancers. Nonetheless, I had fellow students who clearly had crushes, but I just was not ready yet. It was not the timing inside me. It took until age 25 to move an inch toward coming out. It was amazing good luck, the very first night when I was finally prepared ... I met Brian. This Saturday will be 23 years together."*

The idea of living a musician's life in Manhattan seems the ideal climate for 'coming out,' first to yourself and then those around you. Yet, for Bill, as he says: *"I leave Manhattan married, move up to the woods of Vermont, and then start dealing with coming out. In a way, it is a very good place to do it, because the Vermont (community atmosphere) was a very gentle sort of coddling climate...just as I was kicking clear of my life track. Although my straight friends at the time were ok with it, I didn't have a gay crowd to 'catch up with.' In a way, it was a very encouraging setting except for the limited selection. I will always have a tremendous fondness for it as a place to come out, although (as you will read) it had its moments. Living in Vermont provided a 'well spring of life'. My closest friends are up there."*

As Bill's story of moving to Vermont unfolds, a picture of local character emerges. *"Local community members are liberal enough to handle gay people. What they don't like is a newcomer attitude of 'take no prisoners, muscling in and over' in business dealings."* The recounting of Bill's new housemate's interview with the town aldermen reminded me of my own initial impressions of Vermont attitudes and values.

As Bill moved through the stages of writing *Outbound* he realized his 'coming out' process was still happening. And over the eleven years of countless rejection slips (*"enough to wallpaper a bathroom"*), he has noted some societal growth coinciding with his own. *"Of all the milestones on the path of coming out ... seeing the publishing community getting more*

*evolved to see the virtue in quirky combinations of themes and subject matter [was the most fulfilling].*

*An agent said not to seek the gay market aggressively. There are many more straight people who would like to understand the mind of a married man as he comes to understand his homosexuality. The reconciling of these diverse qualities and needs are difficulties many people confront. Clearly this book provides a rich tapestry for a diverse audience. As we read the story of Bill's personal evolution the less obvious connections flowing between diverse pockets of society gently become visible. The story invites its reader to become a ghost passenger privy to Bill's genuine reactions while sailing a small craft across a huge body of water. His skilled layering of themes provides a warm perspective of how personal self-discovery can mesh with outer influences in following your own inner timing. We merge with his past reflections, as their lessons provide potentially present application. While 'observing' these three guys braving the second in a series of gales, a practical mental post-it note formed in the back of my mind: "no matter which sailing course I complete during the next summer or so...if I begin having grand designs to pre-maturely attempt a serious sailing adventure...first...re-read *Outbound*."*

We begin to get a sense of the claustrophobic isolation of living in close quarters on a boat. And I couldn't help but grasp the significance of similarities between this physical-emotional state and the term 'in the closet'. The relationship between feeling 'closeted' personally and our surrounding world can be very hard to reconcile. It is up to each of us to decide how we proceed through our individual evolutions. Bill Storandt shared his intimate thoughts and feelings as a gift of hope for any of us who have or do find ourselves 'closeted' in our lives. He realized how much his book (the writing of it and the arduous pursuit of publication) was a part of his 'coming out.'

*"The notion that I am sharing those intimate things with strangers is what this book is all about. It is a threshold in my life. One of the big steps was when my parents read the first version. They showed it to aunts and uncles." Eleven years later Bill found himself coming to terms as he again would approach his family with this final version. He had been encouraged by an agent to share more specifics. The story of being gay was fully told.*

Equally, Bill realized that Brian would be introduced to the world.

*What could I be thinking of? It was one of the most self-revealing steps of*

