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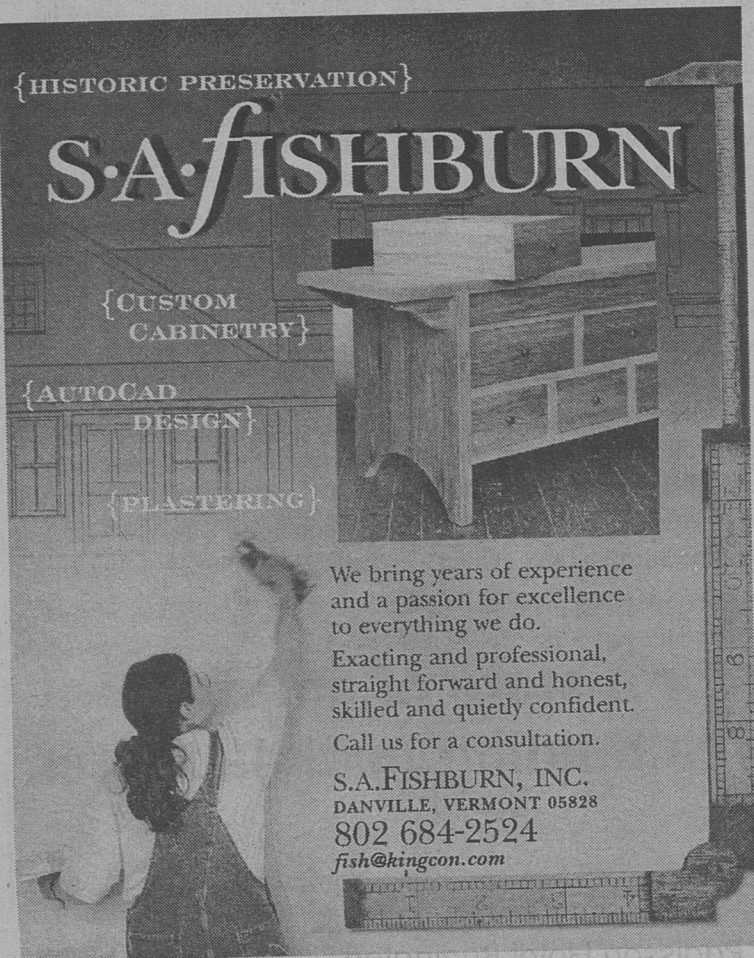
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views: “Family” Lessons

Fagdom has made my life difficult, especially when it came to family and how I related to them. Not to assume of course that the relating is over because I am constantly surprised how complex my family really is. The intonation of a hello or good-bye has always revealed another dimension to our simple salutations.

I blamed most of my family for the stress and fear I had that was a result of sensing a difference in me. There are countless stories I can recall of trying to adjust my walk, or adjust the way I spoke, wanting to desperately hide any trace of my more mixed gender. All of this self-loathing created such a vicious cycle.

Teenage angst has paid off well. It was a well-spring of beautifully constructed poetry about death and dear old friends like

jason whipple

of the string finally comes to rest, it is no longer trapped in its endless side-to-side motion.

In this balanced state now, interactions with my family have become less stressful and are not weighed down by look-what-you-did-to-me idiocy. My mother has taken the brunt of this behavior the most, but I no longer blame her for my current state of affairs and potpourri of bad habits. I hope to give her a smidgen of peace with my new self; she deserves it.

I just discovered a

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razor blades, shotguns, and blood. Guilt was there. Death was almost there. And when I could not explain the despair, my makers were the victims to my projectory.

The recognition of an internal balance was the sign that the angst had dissipated. I visualized this process functioning as a pendulum does when it is pulled back and set free with the object returning to the other side just as high. When the object at the end

new knowledge in a place that I least expected. With my decision to leave *Out in the Mountains*, I have decided to continue to pursue my interest in writing, which will lead to a number of sacrifices that I am now ready to make. With this in mind, I have found a dimension to myself that relates with the experience my mother similarly had when she made the decision to sacrifice any career path that she may have had to join my father in a military

family lifestyle around the United States. I am sure they made this decision being aware of the dead ends that they faced in the Northeast Kingdom here in Vermont. Did they want their children to have the same unexciting childhood that they had had? Did they want to give their children a chance at finding a way to survive with their own creative passion?

I feel a sense of resolution with this new knowledge, a sense of familiarity. I knew that my experience here as editor would be very uncomfortable and awkward at times, but I also knew that there would be an incredible gift waiting for me on the other side of my last issue. This experience has allowed me to step out of my angst and adolescence, and to understand within myself that I am finally a man.

In my pursuit for a family and a sense of belonging, I have considered the A-Z community, but blood makes a louder noise now, as do my friends up ahead.

Thank you to my family for giving me the opportunity to unfold in this way. Thank you to everyone who raised an eyebrow or two in bewilderment to my manner of expression.

Thank you to the secret language I share with only my friends. Thank you to my mother who has repeatedly surprised me with her depth of care and concern. Thank you to condescending assholes. Thank you to Brad for irritating the hell out of me and showing me that I can be loved. Thank you to Ghita and Alan, my writing parents. Thank you to Sky, my phantom limb.

Thank you. You were the necessary elements to this new freedom. ▼