

# Naked Curiosity: All Hail the Power

**S**ometimes the grass really is greener on the other side.

That's especially true if you don't have any grass of your own.

A few years ago, Martin and I took a trip to Egypt and Israel. Our time in Egypt was filled with fascinating sight-seeing and even more wonderful interactions with the denizens of Cairo, Giza, Aswan and elsewhere. There were cheerful greetings and marvelous hospitality around every corner.

Martin and I dined at a restaurant near our hotel several times, during our stay there. We made friends with two restaurant employees who appreciated our patronage and kindness so much that they insisted on paying for our meal one night. The cost of that dinner would have been equivalent to a fast-food entree for us but, for Ragab and Wageh, it was easily more than they would make in a whole day.

After such an amazing adventure in Egypt, we were sad to leave but looked forward to

**d.  
scott-bush**

Having watched CNN and read our American newspapers, we knew that the Israelis had to protect themselves from the rebellious, terror-mongering Palestinians.

We knew the Israelis were the good guys and the Palestinians were bad because that's what we'd always been told. Yet, it was the Israelis who were so rude and the Palestinians who treated us like old friends. As we wandered the crooked streets of a Jerusalem market, where both Israeli and Palestinian merchants sold their wares, it was always the Palestinians who greeted us and asked about our

**Our enemies use their arsenal of perception weapons to defecate on us every chance they get. It's time we go on the offensive and turn their crap into an effective fertilizer.**

our time in Israel that was to come next. We were curious about life in a country so rich in history and rife with social and political turmoil. We anticipated a warm welcome from the Israelis. After all, their government received billions of dollars in aid from our politicians. We figured we would get a hearty, Hebrew how-do-you-do from the folks in Israel.

Oy, we were so wrong.

As we arrived in Tel Aviv, we were truly surprised by the overwhelming military presence. Everywhere we went, young men and women were armed with an array of weapons.

day – and not just in an effort to get us in their store – and the Israelis who were harsh and charmless.

We saw sections of the country developed by the Israelis. They were irrigated, landscaped oases in the desert. The Palestinian settlements were stark and bleak. Still, it was Palestinians who invited us into their homes and the Israelis who ignored the simple questions of confused tourists.

All hail the power of P.R. Getting to know actual Palestinians, rather than merely accepting the frightening images we'd seen on TV as fact, changed

the way we view the increasingly terrifying situation in the Middle East.

It's like when straight folks who have only heard pulpit tirades from religious radicals get to know gay people on a personal basis. It's no wonder why some people have negative images of the "homosexual lifestyle" when most of what they see are photos and video clips of us frolicking at Gay Pride events. Gay characters are on their TV sets, yes, but the coverage is far from balanced. Well-rounded gay men and lesbians are mercilessly outnumbered in newspaper and electronic media footage by drag queens and strutting leather daddies.

Certainly, the so-called liberal media has a role in our sex-crazed image but we need to be more in control of our own public relations. Our good deeds go largely unreported and unnoticed. There are gay groups all over the country that head up turkey drives for needy families, but do we push for coverage of that? We know the news will give headline status to every guy who chokes his chicken in a public men's room so why can't we demand coverage of stories in which gay men are handling other birds?

Image can be everything. Perception is potent. If you're part of a gay organization that does good work, publicize it. Make sure the media knows it. This isn't a question of bragging rights, it's a question of civil rights. Bragging about our good works may help ensure that we keep those rights and get the others we deserve.

Our enemies use their arsenal of perception weapons to defecate on us every chance they get. It's time we go on the offensive and turn their crap into an effective fertilizer.

With some proactive effort, our community can grow a great, green lawn on our side of the fence. ▼

*D. Scott-Bush's work appears in publications throughout the country. E-mail may be directed to NakedCuriosity@aol.com. ©2002*

something we want to bring to light it has to be something we are willing to witness, touch, and know. Anyone thinking that an important change can happen easily because it's a good idea needs some more time in a trench that nobody likes such as the AIDS pandemic, or the crisis of rape or hunger and homelessness or the common uses of violence to dominate in conflict. We will learn more – more than we want to learn, more than is comfortable – if we chose to seek deeply and honestly no matter what trouble we witness. And, of course, that witness will change us forever.

What we see and know stays with us. In the end, any monster, inward or outward, needs us to stop trying to kill it or being terrified of it, to gather up all possible grace and sit next to the monster for a nice cup of tea. ▼

*John Calvi lives in Putney and is a teacher specializing in healing from trauma. His book, The Dance Between Hope and Fear: The Soft Touch Journals is due out next year. This essay was originally published by Friends for Lesbian & Gay Concerns Fall 2002. He can be reached at calvij@sover.net.*

Does history hide in your bureau drawer? If you have a collection of interesting stuff from days gone by, don't hide it, **Frame it!**

Our certified framers will preserve your valuable ephemera in archival frames for permanent enjoyment.

**Ben Franklin**  
Creative Crafts & Framing

visit us on the web at [www.craftvt.com](http://www.craftvt.com)

862-0646 • 518 SHELburne ROAD • MON-SAT 9-9, SUN 10-6.

We are committed to promoting the sustainable development of Burlington & the earth by selling affordable recycled clothing.

**BUY HIP PANTS OR A FUNKY LAMP?**

WHY CHOOSE?!

NEW, GENTLY WORN & VINTAGE CLOTHING AT WALLET-FRIENDLY PRICES

**greener pastures**  
clothing company

274 N. WINOOSKI AVENUE  
(in the old Onion River Coop building)  
802-865-9599 • FREE PARKING  
Hours: Mon, Tues, Wed, Fri, Sat: 10-6  
Thurs: 10-7, Sun: 11-5

**Conley Country**

FROM THE CONNECTICUT RIVER TO THE CANADIAN BORDER  
REAL ESTATE AND INSURANCE

179 Main Street \* Derby Vermont 05829  
phone (802) 766-2401 \* 800-243-2401  
fax 766-4731 \* e-mail-mick@realestatevermont.com

Log onto  
[www.realestatevermont.com](http://www.realestatevermont.com)  
to view our current listings.

## Shoveling

cont'd from previous page

can see where it lands. Most often, our task is to fashion our best love, give it our best delivery, bless it, and let it go. How it's received, where it goes, how it's used is beyond us and often beyond where we can see. Let us trust our best efforts and surrender our self-doubt and uneasiness and desires for control, knowing our parts are smaller given the long view.

**Tenth Reminder: We Cannot Heal What We Fear.** If there is