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Individuals & Couples

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Jungian orientation

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River Road,
Putney VT
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Janet Langdon, Mdiv, NCPsyA

jliels@sover.net



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Leah Wittenberg

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Celebrate Pride!

candles

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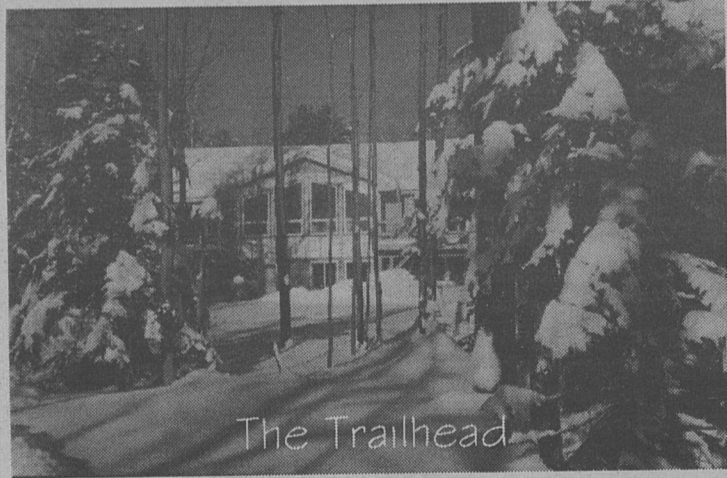
hammocks

books

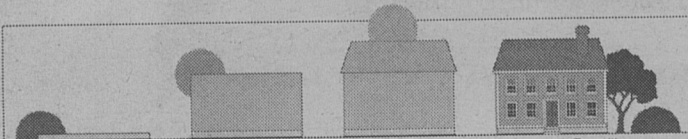
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Building Vermont Dreams

arts

By SCOTT SHERMAN

Joel Perry is a funny guy. In his frequent contributions to *Instinct* magazine, Perry is sensible, acerbic, and sometimes, a little mean. You've probably seen or heard him somewhere; he writes for *The Advocate*, *Frontiers* and, according to his publisher, two nationally syndicated radio comedy services. Maybe you've even read *Going Down: The Instinct Guide to Oral Sex*. If so, *gulp*.

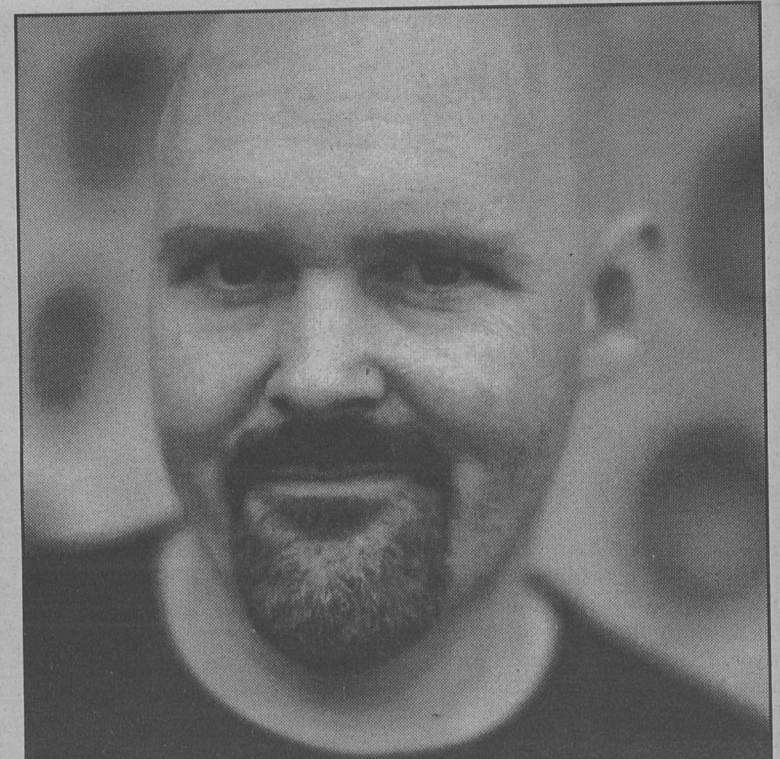
In his latest collection of short essays, *That's Why They're in Cages People!*, Perry looks at popular culture and gay life through his witty gay eye. He writes about ordinary things: his first Gay Pride Parade, visits to his family, vacations with his lover, and why a guy doesn't call back. He also shares his more unusual experiences: auditioning for *To Tell The Truth*, interviewing male hustlers for their blowjob secrets, and working the piercing booth at a Pride festival. After the seventh time I watched a steel needle go into a man's penis, Perry writes, I had to remind myself how I'd gotten into this position.

Perry is one of those people who see the funny things in everyday life, and who can write about them in ways to which we all can relate. Here's Perry imagining how some of TIVO's best features might be helpful if applied to real-life situations. A similar feature is replay. When you miss a line, you can go back 10 seconds in time and replay it. 'Boy, would that come in handy on visits to my parents. There's never a day I'm there that something doesn't fall out of their mouths that makes me go 'What the fuck? Like the time my mom asked me, 'In your relationship, are you the receptive one?' Or another time, when she said, 'I hope you never had unprotected sex with Rock Hudson.

Perry also has some great one-liners in this book. As someone pathetically untalented in math, I especially related to this one: 'I see numbers the way Dali sees clocks.

But the best thing about Perry is how joyful he is about his sexuality. Being gay is a great and hilarious gift, he observes.

Perry applies that positive thinking to a consideration of gay divas. Why are so many gays addicted to screen icons like Judy Garland and Marilyn Monroe? After observing that both women were talented, Perry concludes that they were ultimately sad victims. I realize that we gays identify with a similar sense of being born with a sparkle and beauty



Funny Guy

"'A man must be gruff and tough! Wrong ... when other people see us bursting through these walls, it's dynamic, powerful stuff.'" writer Joel Perry

That's Why They're in Cages, People!
Joel Perry
Alyson Publications
November 2003, 296 pages

that was viciously mauled by a society that seeks to destroy what it doesn't understand. But is clinging to that healthy?

A better addiction, Perry writes, is Barbra Streisand. She managed to seize the Hollywood machine and make it do her bidding, even if that meant foisting *The Mirror Has Two Faces* on us. The point is, she knows she's a woman battling a misogynistic town, yet she doesn't let that stop her because she knows she's fabulous. We too are hated and fabulous, so let's be like Babs and not give a damn what anyone thinks either.

Perry's abiding optimism and good will are best expressed in the book's last essay 'We're Here, We're Queer, Now What?' Perry won-

ders why there are so many visible gays now. If you believe in reincarnation, it's 'Why did so many gay souls chose *now* to incarnate? I think I chose *now* because it took humankind this long to perfect air conditioning and takeout. But what about you?

Perry goes on, 'Could it be happening because of the gift we have that the world needs now? I know that may seem like an odd concept. The first time I heard it, I thought, *Gifts to the world? I didn't even know the world was registered*. But we do have gifts. For instance, by our being different yet thriving and having fun doing it, we give others permission to be different and do the same.

Another gift we exemplify, for those willing to learn from it, is that despite living in a culture that spends a lot of energy trying to tell people what role to be, we shrug it off and make up our own roles. A man must be gruff and tough. Wrong when other people see us

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