

S.A. FISHBURN

{CUSTOM CABINETRY}

{AUTOCAD DESIGN}

{PLASTERING}

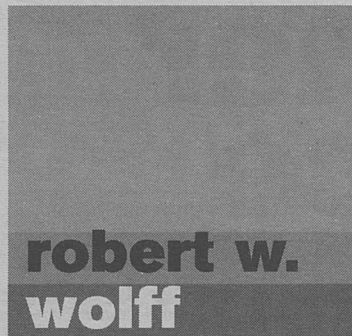
We bring years of experience and a passion for excellence to everything we do.

Exact and professional, straight forward and honest, skilled and quietly confident. Call us for a consultation.

S.A. FISHBURN, INC.
DANVILLE, VERMONT 05828
802 684-2524
fish@kingcon.com

Views: Understanding Elders

Editor's Note: Below is the text of the comments Bob Wolff delivered as a member of a six-person panel of elders at the We Are Everywhere conference on lgbt aging. A large percentage of the audience was made up of social workers at various elder-services agencies and social work students.



Please understand that within everything I am going to say I am not assuming that all of you are heterosexual even though my brief shorthand comments may sound that way. Also, please know that before I finish these comments I probably will use a word that scares and angers a lot of people; the word QUEER. I am going to use this emotion-filled word because I would like our community to own the word and use it to mean Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender people and all those who stand with us as we address our equal rights. In 1970 the word GAY had the same emotional charge around it that QUEER does today. So, we can get over Queer and own it like we did GAY.

is not possible for me to change this orientation through mental health or religious activities. Understand that I may believe that God made me gay just as the creator made you as you are. Understand that my relationships may not begin and end at sex acts any more than do your relationships.

Understand that LGBT

your intake questionnaire indicates to me that the organization accepts and understands people of my sexual orientation.

Understand that I may have a substance abuse problem. The built-in homophobia of our society may provide me with feelings and concerns from which I try to get away through substances. This substance abuse problem may exacerbate other health issues.

Understand that even though I am over 65 I quite likely have a sex life. Understand that I may not be lonely or live an unproductive life. Don't assume that because I prefer relationships with men, relationships that sometimes involve expression of affection or love via sex, that I want to express myself sexually to young men or boys, or men of any age without their willing involvement in that sex

Even though I am over 65 I quite likely have a sex life; don't assume that because I prefer men, I want to express myself sexually to young men or boys.

This morning I am going to underline or introduce some particular areas in which I think old Queer people wish you would grasp and understand as you relate to us. I am going to personalize my comments because I think that will be more meaningful.

Understand that I may not be heterosexual. Know that I may not be unhealthy, emotionally unstable, depressed or manic because I develop my most meaningful relationships with other men and relate sexually with men. I am more likely to be anxious and/or depressed about earning enough to pay for my rent, food, medical care and prescriptions than about being gay. Understand that because I am gay and the TV stereotypes have us behaving like flakey queens that we are not all flakey queens. Not that there is anything wrong with flakey queens.

Understand that while you may be queasy about what I do sexually in the privacy of my home with my partner, I am not. Understand that, whatever your religious experience or experiences with other people in the past, I may not want to change my sexual orientation even if I could. Understand that I may be happy with my orientation. Understand that I may have gone through hell in an attempt to change my orientation before I knew it was okay to be queer. Understand that it

people may be spiritual or religious even though you may think that these things are mutually exclusive. We may not praise, honor, worship or thank Goddess or God, but then again, perhaps greater numbers of us than is obvious do worship a higher power.

Know that I may be uneasy about coming out to new health professionals in a clinical setting, even if I have health concerns growing out of behaviors related to my sexual orientation. I would like you to know that it will be easier for me and my brothers and sisters if you develop a non-heterosexist organization and make it clear on paper that you understand that your clients may not be heterosexual. As part of making services from your organization acceptable to LGBT people, you will certainly want to make your organization one that LGBT individuals may serve openly. Finding my sexual orientation on

play. Don't assume that I dislike womyn or underrate their contributions.

Understand that I may have children, friends and a life partner. Assume that, like everyone else on earth today, I may need to be reminded that Safer Sex principles must be practiced all the time if I expect to remain HIV / Aids negative.

Understand that even if I can be joined with a partner in Civil Union here in Vermont I may not be happy or accept that I am a second class citizen in respect to the US Government, not able to share federal benefits like Social Security, joint tax options, etc. Don't expect I will be glad that I cannot transfer Vermont Civil Union or Marriage benefits from state to state. Understand that I am not happy that young LGBT people growing up today cannot immediately feel the joy that heterosexu- >>



Terry Light

Sales & Leasing Consultant
Please call 802-660-8099 x-107
(1-800-833-5945) Cell 802-309-0554
or E-mail terry@burlingtoncars.com
for information or appointment
333 Shelburne Road,
Burlington, Vermont 05401

Burlington Subaru

A diversity of ingredients

Creates the richest feast!

From outdoor picnics to special dinner parties...

City Market has all the ingredients!

City Market
Union River Co-op

Your Community-Owned Grocery Store
Open 7 am - 11 pm every day • 802-863-3659
82 South Winooski Avenue, Burlington
EBT cards, CATcards, Knight Cards & manufacturers' coupons welcome!