

a e GAMES

Homogenius

Gay Trivia Game

REVIEW BY BOB BOLYARD

At family (the genetic kind, not the "family" kind) gatherings, my siblings - usually headed up by my sister - their kids, my mom and anyone else still awake after a traditional huge home-cooked meal, gather around the table and play board games. Of course, decisions need to be made. Will it be Taboo, Scattergories, Whatzit, or one of the various editions of Trivial Pursuit? And then, who's going to be on whose team? Boys vs. girls? Counting off of threes or fours? Left side of table against right side? By now it's time for another piece of pie.

My aforementioned sister is the one who brings the games and therefore is the one who knows and enforces all the rules. Everything is black or white. Rules are rules. No interpretation needed. This is the background that I brought to the table when asked to review "Homogenius - The Game."

To play the game, I gathered my "family" together, ate a big meal, and then assumed the role of my sister. And if you know me or my sister, this wasn't a big stretch.

The press release that came with the game and the box it came in were quite impressive. But, like online personals that offer outdated or wrong pictures and misleading stats, closer inspection is disappointing.

The object of the game is "to get out of the closet." Players (2-6), with their rainbow-colored playing pieces start at the bottom of the board (a not so gay-looking picture of a closet), and "each turn, a player rolls the die and moves the number shown to either a blank square or a

starred square.

If the player lands on a blank square one of the other reads a 'rumor' card question to them. If the player lands on a starred square one of the other players reads them a 'potpourri' card question. Whomever (sic) gets out of the closet first wins."

That's it. And that ain't black or white. What happens if you answer the question correctly? Or don't? Do you get to move forward, backward or jump ahead? No clue. So, before we got started we had to make up some of our own rules. Not a good way to start a "friendly" game among "family." Especially when copious amounts of vodka and beer are involved.

And then there are the questions. There are two different piles of cards, "Rumor" and "Potpourri." Samples of the "Rumor" card questions:

- What openly gay singer and songwriter posed naked with her girlfriend in a PETA ad?
- This out of the closet fashion photographer captured the essence of the world's most beautiful women.
- Truman Streckfus Persons was the real name of this famous author? (sic)

Rumors? These sound like facts to me. And for your own amusement, the answers are, respectively, Melissa Etheridge, Francesco Scavullo (you didn't know that?), and Truman Capote (duh). These questions have at least some obvious connec-

tion to "gay and lesbian culture." But others don't. It would have been informative, entertaining and downright nice had they given some background information on the answers.

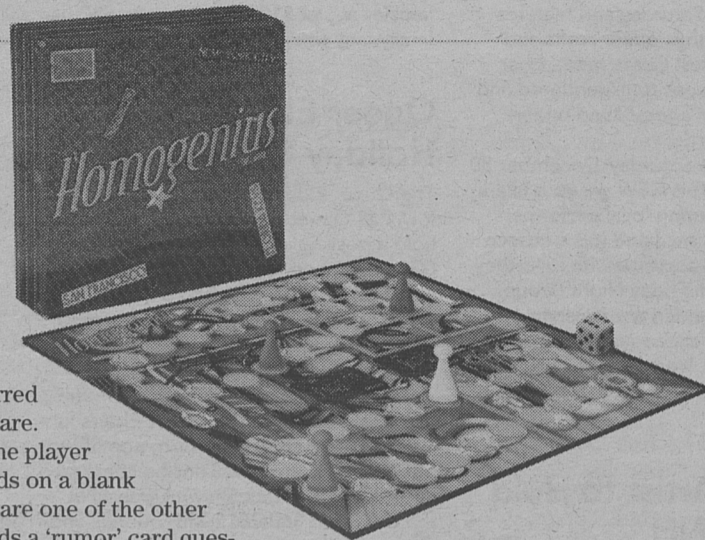
The "Potpourri" questions aren't any better.

- What color handkerchief is a gay man most likely to have in his jeans pocket?
- What does this acronym stand for? B.L.G.
- A 25-year-old British man died of a mysterious disease in Manchester. It is now believed that he was the first recorded person to die of AIDS. What year was it?

Feeling stupid? Or did you know the answers are red, bi-lesbian-gay, and 1959? If you got any of them right you get to ... whatever you decide because the rules of the game aren't going to tell you.

Overall, this game isn't worth the \$34.99 being charged. Get a group of friends together, a stack of old People magazines and turn on Logo - you'll come up with your own "rumors" and "potpourri" and learn a lot about each other as you're doing it. ▼

➔ Bob Bolyard is a peer outreach worker at R.U.1.2? and writes the What's Up!!! online calendar for community events. He can be reached at bob@ru12.org.



a e BOOKS

Self-Organizing Men

Writers Explode Trans-masculinities

REVIEW BY LESLIE AND SHAHN FREEMAN-DYKESEN

Jay Sennett's new anthology, *Self-Organizing Men*, represents an ambitious effort to grapple with issues of social privilege, cultural assumptions, and public presentation, versus personal subjectivity among trans-masculine individuals and transgender communities.

Like most anthologies that have documented both emerging theory and current practices, *Self-Organizing Men* alternately falters and triumphs. The writing moves unevenly, from essay to poetry to a mix and a mutual interview. Art is dappled throughout: pictures, small sculptures, drawings, cartoons. Some pieces reinforce gender norms based in male privilege, by focusing on female-to-male transsexuals' relationships to their bodies in terms of "lack," or by describing transsexual and transgendered men's struggles for acceptance as struggles for recognition as "real" men rather than for fully realized and respected selfhood.

The best pieces, including essays by Aren Azura and Bobby Noble, and poems by hip-hop statesman Tim'm West and Vermont's own Eli Clare, contribute to the growing discourse of transfeminism, not merely seeking ethical models of manhood, but challenging the gender-binary scaffolding of patriarchy, and analyzing gender in relation to race, class, and capitalism.

Tim'm West's poem closes the collection, a contribution of introspection and self-declaration from a place many FTMs choose to recover from the pain and aftermath of transition. West offers us a history of sorts, and reminds us that all gay men - not just transsexual gay men - struggle with acceptance and self and what masculinity can mean to a person who doesn't fit the dominant image of a man. Clare offers a poem about testosterone and butchness and queerness.

How does one make the decision to stop living as a lesbian and live as a gay man? How does one make any decision to come out? Clare does so with eloquence; articulating the dissonance that many transmen feel about the choices that are presented to them at the beginning of their medical transitions.

Noble, who discusses female-to-male transition as a racialized experience with very different ramifications of power and status for transmen of color, offers a new theoretical paradigm, which encapsulates the strengths of *Self-Organizing Men*: trans in-coherence, a positive, productive disharmony, a collective state of paradox and flux.

If you are FTM identified or if you are not, this is a highly valuable collection of stories from members of a community that never fully coalesced. From members of a community that may always be in some kind of transition, whether we see it or not. ▼

➔ *Self-Organizing Men*, edited by Jay Sennett, may be purchased from Homofactus Press, or downloaded at www.homofactuspress.com.

➔ Leslie Freeman-Dykesen holds a BA in Liberal Studies with concentrations in Gender and Dis/ability, and is now pursuing an MFA in Creative Writing. Shahn Freeman-Dykesen is former executive director of The American Boyz, a nationwide FTM non-profit, which sponsored and organized the annual TrueSpirit conference. Leslie and Shahn just celebrated their civil union on the campus of their alma mater, Goddard College.

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Out in the Mountains was instrumental in developing the LGBTQ community in Vermont, a community that ultimately led the nation in securing civil rights for same-sex partners.

The Vermont Freedom to Marry Task Force honors the profound accomplishments of this paper and the community it nurtured.