

The Blocks Game

by: Walter Zeichner

I met in late September with a group of gay men to share and discuss our spirituality. I enjoyed hearing about this very intimate part of peoples lives and sharing myself. We decided to meet every month or so and take turns sharing a reading or experience with the group. The group is open to other gay people who'd like to participate. Anyhow, a theme I perceived throughout the conversation was that we were talking about connection, the wholeness we each have at the core of our being. Each person shared something that said to me that spirituality is an experience, not an idea. We also talked about the excitement of claiming our spirituality as gay people in a world where organized religion has been, and continues to be, oppressive to us.

I talked with the group about a process I have experienced that has been a powerful spiritual experience for me, and my desire to offer this process, a game, to our gay/lesbian community. The men supported me to write about the game and offer it to the community through OUT IN THE MOUNTAINS, so I am. I'm offering this because it is a powerful community builder, which I know I can benefit from, think others can benefit from, and which I think can be a powerful manifestation of spirituality, community and common unity.

THE BLOCKS GAME

A group assembles in a large comfortable space. The first task of the group is to choose what they would like to experience during the game. This is done in the form of a brainstorm. Examples of what people might want to experience could be Love, Joy, Trust, Community, Integrity, Empowerment or anything that you can feel. Usually a long list is compiled, not everything being of equal importance to everyone. Through a simple process of the group shouting out numbers from 1 to 10 what each word is as a priority the list is reduced to 5 or 6 that the entire group is aligned with. These words are Part I of the game. Through a similar process one word is chosen for Part II. The group then divides into groups of 4 to 6 people who will be together for the duration of the game. At this point the rules are explained. The rules are:

1. You are with your group for the entire game. If someone in your group decides to stop playing then your group stops playing. You can take 10 minute breaks as often as you like, but you must stay together as a group.

2. The game is played by each group doing demonstrations of each word. The demonstrations are nonverbal, and can include only the participants and the wooden blocks that are provided. The demonstrations are made to groups of people called Receivers; people who have played the game before, and who have come only to receive and support the participants. The demonstrations are for the purpose of communicating the essence of each word to the receivers so that the receivers "get" the word, experience the feeling through witnessing the demonstration. The receivers are present with the intention of receiving communication, so they are "cleared" before they start receiving. Once a group has demonstrated all of the Part I words from that group, the group moves on to demonstrating the Part II word. When they have completed that task then that group is invited to join in receiving communication from the other groups. The game ends when either everyone has joined in receiving, or no one wants to demonstrate anymore. Everyone is always a winner.

That is how the game is played. It sounds simple, and it is. It's also very powerful in confronting people with their blocks to giving/receiving support, issues of commitment, whatever issues the specific words bring up. I've been part of this game at least 12 times, as participant, receiver, overview person and workshop leader in a men's workshop that has incorporated the blocks game. I think the game, in addition to bringing up the issues just mentioned, offers a powerful opportunity for community to form (common unity), increased access to feeling and creativity.

The game was designed by Buckminster Fuller and Marshall Thurber, and is based on the theory of SuperLearning, which means integrating right/left brain learning so that both rational-linear and nonrational-circular thought processes happen and are experienced simultaneously.

Lambda Legal Defense & Education Fund Receives Bequest.

William "Scott" Mahoney died at the Veteran's Hospital in White River Junction, Vermont on the 21st day of July, 1986. In the September issue of OITM, a tribute to him said, "His commitment and energy and wit will long be remembered and appreciated." Scott's commitment will be remembered and appreciated not only by those of us that knew him, but also by gay men and lesbians throughout the United States.

Early in August, Bruce Murray, Executor of Scott Mahoney's estate, filed his Last Will and Testament in the Probate Court for Orange County. In that will, Scott left all of his assets to a trust. Murray and Ellie Spielberg are the Co-Trustees of that trust. Although the terms of the trust are not a matter of public record, Murray and Spielberg have announced that the primary beneficiary of the trust is the Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund of New York. After making certain payments to specific friends of Scott's, all of the remaining income and, ultimately, the principal of the trust will go to Lambda. Murray and Spielberg estimate that the principal of the trust will exceed \$150,000.00.

When Tom Stoddard, Executive Director of Lambda, learned of the bequest, he said "We are extremely pleased to be the recipient of this gift. It will enable us to continue the

legal work on behalf of lesbians and gay men throughout the United States. The work that we will be able to do as a result will be a tribute to Mr. Mahoney's commitment to human rights for all."

David Curtis, of Hinesburg, Vt., and a member of the Board of Directors of Lambda commented, "Scott Mahoney was a very special Vermonter. His gift to Lambda is a reflection of the special nature of the man. This bequest, which represents the largest single bequest ever made to any gay rights organization, will enable Lambda to continue it's vital work in the area of lesbian and gay rights and will serve as a lasting memorial to Scott."

Scott Mahoney was a lifetime Vermonter. He was born and raised in Barre, and graduated from UVM in 1960. He was a longtime resident of Newbury when he died. It was only after his wife died after 45 years of marriage that he came out as a gay man. As usual, Scott accomplished that process with style, wit and grace, speaking at the Gay Pride march in Burlington and being interviewed by the Valley News (it was front page news). In the article in the Valley News, he ended the interview with the comment, "... I think I am a nice person." Scott was more than a nice person. He was an exceptional human being.

Neurologically this is reputed to increase the use of synapses in the corpus callosum of the brain. This means that more of the brain is used after participating in a SuperLearning experience than was being used previously. Part of the stimulation that occurs during the game that is responsible for this result is the use of music constantly throughout the game; specifically SuperLearning music (60 beats per minute).

As I've said, this is an intense game, and can bring up a lot of feelings for people. It can take anywhere from 6 to 12 hours. It is very much oriented to dismantling blocks and barriers both in us and between us, and to building community. I believe its valuable, which is why I'm offering it.

I'd like to put on a blocks game for our lesbian/gay community in December or January, on a Saturday. We need a large comfortable space where we can be noisy and healthy snack food. We could either get these things from within our community or people could contribute \$5.00 to \$10.00 and I'd arrange a space and buy food. If you are interested in participating, receiving or finding out more you can contact me at The Forsberg Center, 323 Pearl St., Burlington, VT. 863-5510.

Lesbian Nuns: Breaking Silence

Joe B.

Book Review

Sister Rachel was a beautiful woman, though all that was visible was her face, constricted by her starched white habit. It was in the second grade and I was in love. This woman radiated goodness, a striking contrast to the nun I had as a teacher the previous year. Sr. Lauraine was a wicked, evil woman, or so it seemed at the time. I can not imagine any six-year-old who would not be terrified of her. In the eighth grade, Sr. Virginia brought a vitality and life to science that has remained with me to this day. Still later in my education I would learn calculus from a brilliant old woman with a Ph.D. in mathematics who was also a nun, and two computer languages from a nun with a Ph.D. in computer science. A now dead aunt of mine was a nun and I have a sister whom I respect and admire a great deal who is a nun. I am an atheist. My life so far has been filled with nuns.

It was with great interest that I began reading "Lesbian Nuns: Breaking Silence". In this compilation of stories we are treated to everything from the sublime to the ridiculous - from individual searches for purpose and meaning through austerity and asceticism to young women in bridal gowns singing "Veni, Sponsa Christi (Come Spouse of Christ)" at their profession of final vows. This certainly is a queer world we learn about, including: flagellation, chapter of faults, Mother General, stigmata, etc. The stories, contributed by former and current nuns, are mainly reflections on life as a lesbian in the convent, what possessed them to join or remain and the circumstances of departure. The stories are all filled with emotion, much of it anger. Many of the accounts