

Commentary

A Place All Our Own. Is It A Dream?

I have always loved the out of doors, especially the wilderness areas normally associated with mountains. I was surprised after kicking down the proverbial closet door that there was a subset of the lesbian/gay community that felt much the same that I do about mountains and the out of doors. A group did something about it, they came out of their own kind of closet.

your are there, 13 years ago, in Index Washington. A small town of about 300 people located deep in the foot hills of the Cascade Mountains- populated mostly by loggers and other backwoods types. The news blazed through town that a gay/lesbian group called Triangle Recreation Club (TRC) had leased 5 acres of state forest land for a camp ground. The response was somewhat less than enthusiastic.

Today, however, attitudes could not be farther from what they were then. It has even come to the point that the local, straight-owned and operated, general store has refused to do business with people that make nasty comments about the 'faggots'. The change was because TRC supported the community in any way they could,

whenever they could.

The facility has grown to just over 55 acres including 82 campsites accessed by about 5 miles of trails. In 1988 it provided outdoor recreation to approximately 3,000 gays and lesbians from all over the North west. The organization has grown to the point were, in 1988, it had to spend \$14,000 on improvements to keep below the maximum allowable assests of a non-profit organization.

I'm thankful that I happened to be in the area in the late '70's and again in recent years, so I could become part of it and enjoy the facility. Upon my return a few years ago, I discover just how much I had missed the place, the camaraderie, the brotherhood and sisterhood.

Can something like that be done here? Is there a group like that in Vermont? A group of gays and lesbians interested enough, strong enough and smart enough to make it happen? A group to provide an inexpensive outdoor recreational facility for lesbians and gay men? A place all our own.

I believe that it can happen here. I believe that the New England and eastern

Canadian community is strong enough to make a project like this at least as successful as TRC. Maybe, with some one else's mistakes to learn from, even better. I believe so strongly that I have started looking for the right piece of land.

A place all our own. Does it have to be a dream?

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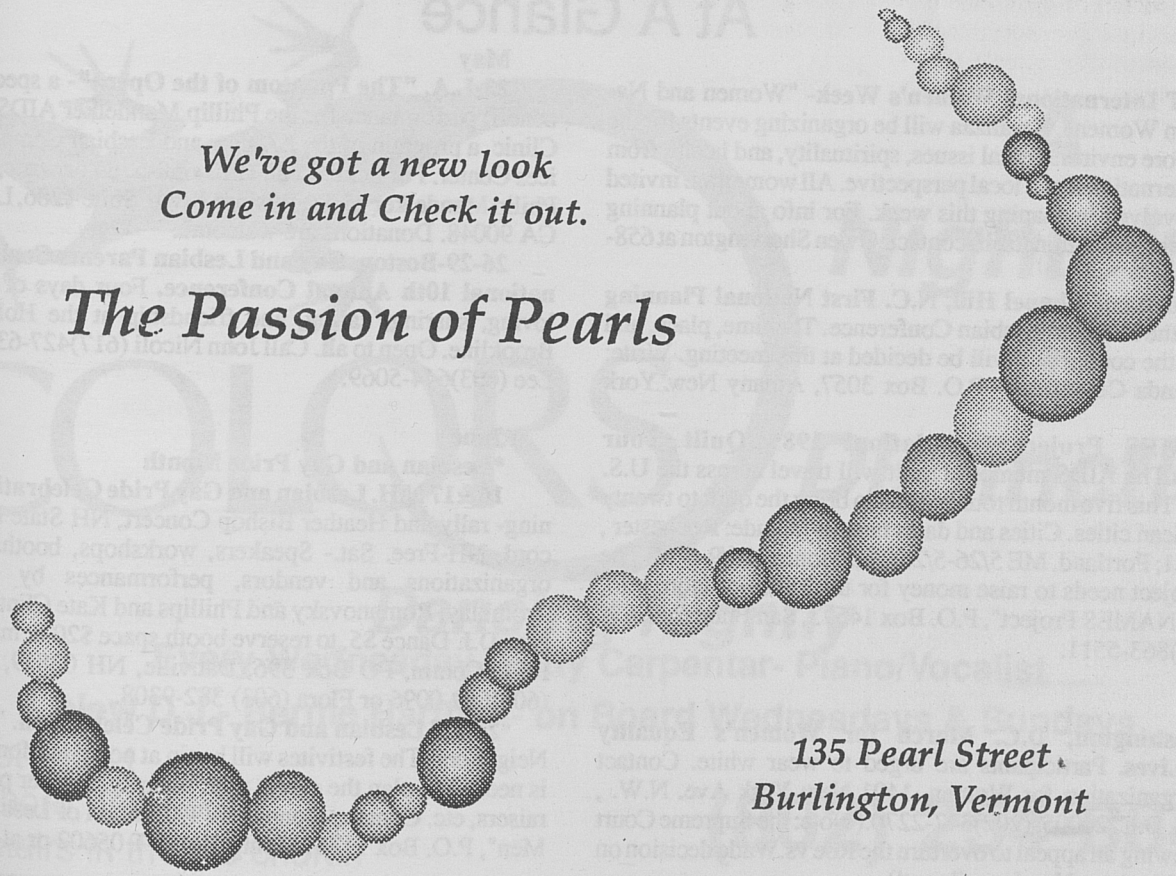
Kwanzaa from page 1

For the future, Kwanzaa envisions expansion with music. Reaching people not now aware of diversities, even of their own culture and ethnic backgrounds, but also of other cultures, helping them to embrace differences showing them how much is to be gained by diversity.

Watch for notice of Kwanzaa's upcoming concert this month on the Calendar page.

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The Passion of Pearls



*135 Pearl Street.
Burlington, Vermont*