

Arts Review

Book Review: *Hidden From History*

by Michelle Thomas

The history many of us were taught in schools, colleges, and society at large is usually of a "white-washed" variety; any mention of an important historical figure's sexuality was hidden under the rug or dismissed with an "Oh, they were only good friends; there's no evidence to say otherwise." Fortunately, within the last few years much work has been done on the history of gay men and lesbians. With the new book *Hidden from History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past*, editors Martin Rauml Duberman, Martha Vicinus, and George Chauncey Jr have drawn together the work of many gay and lesbian historians to give the reader a sense of his/her identity through the past three thousand years or so.

However, *Hidden from History* is not a simple storybook with neat little chapters on different time periods. The essence of the book is to give meaning to this history. Especially in the sections dealing with the pre-industrial age, much of the discussion centers on whether there was such a thing as a "homosexual identity" during that period, since sexuality in general is of fairly recent understanding.

John Boswell, author of *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality*, argues in his essay on Ancient Greece, "Revolutions, Universals, and Sexual Categories," that there was indeed an understanding of homosexuality as a separate sexual identity from heterosexuality based on his reading of Aristophanes's speech in Plato's *Symposium*. David Halpern uses the same text in his essay "Sex Before Sexuality: Pederasty, Politics, and Power in Clas-

sical Athens" to say that sex was used in Ancient Greece as a demonstration of one's power, not of one's sexuality. According to Halpern, men had sex with boys, both slave and free, basically to show who was in charge.

The sections on the Medieval period and the Nineteenth Century continues this discussion by analyzing public opinions and punishment for what was then termed "inversion." The essays on the modern era include a look at the early gay movement, when persons identified themselves clearly as homosexual and not as a product of whatever society dictates.

One impressive aspect of this collection is that it covers a wide range of cultures. The problem with some books dealing with gay and lesbian history (such as the recent *Lesbian Lists*) is that they give the impression that homosexuality is an entirely western phenomenon. *Hidden from History* includes essays on China, Japan, Cuba, and South Africa, offering a well-rounded and global view of how gays and lesbians were and are visible in the whole world, not just in certain countries and cultures.

Hidden from History is not a book to be read all at once; it is much too "heavy" a book for that. Rather, it is a book to be sampled in small bits in order to fully understand the arguments set forth concerning the nature of sexuality and thereby more fully appreciate the wide scope and nature of our history as gays and lesbians. Perhaps, with books such as *Hidden from History*, gay and lesbian history will no longer be reduced to disclaimers such as "Oh, they were just good friends" again.

Therapy Groups Starting

A ten-week group for partners of adults who were sexually abused as children is now forming in the Burlington area. The workshop will be co-led by Hollie Hurewitz (CCMHC, MACP) and Michael Watson (Ph.D., CCMHC).

The group will focus on helping partners find support, handle intimacy conflicts, understand the healing process, and so on. The group is open to partners in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships.

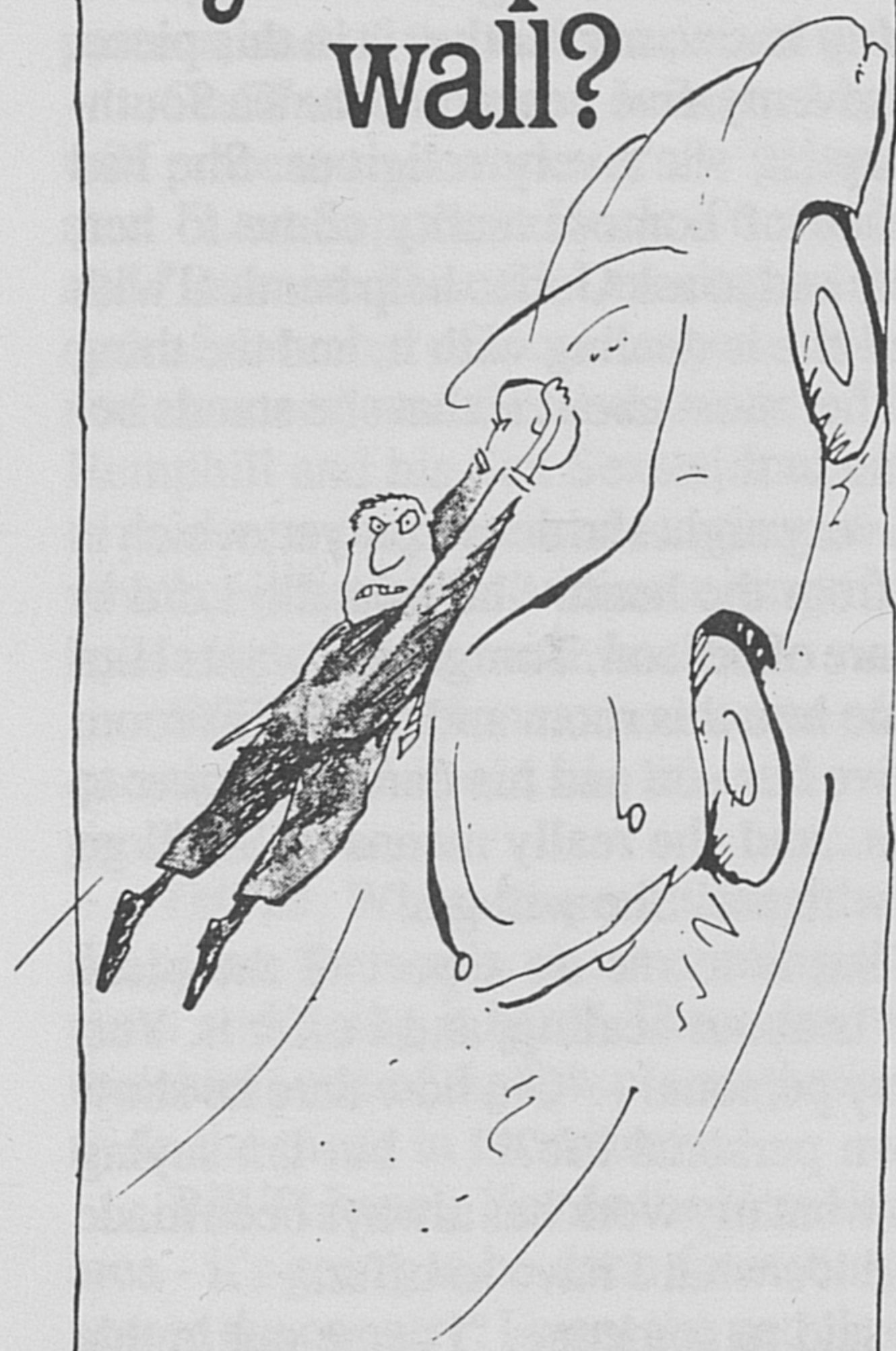
Hurewitz will also co-lead another group for women who were sexually abused a children. Euan Bear, survivor advocate and author of *Adults Molested as*

Children, will be the other leader

Participants will focus on finding support; learning new skills in setting limits; working through crisis; looking at issues of intimacy and sexuality; dealing with anger, grief, and loss; and understanding the healing process. The group will be emphasize both individual and interpersonal work using personal sharing, writing, and homework assignments. Meetings will be held on twelve consecutive Wednesdays beginning in mid-January.

Most insurance is accepted for the two groups. For more information, call Hollie at 862-6758 and leave a message.

Are your car insurance rates driving you up the wall?



Calm down.

Leave it to The Good Hands People.

Compare Allstate rates.
Ellen Hetherington
863-3808

Allstate[®]

Allstate Insurance Company, Northbrook, IL