

Hyacinthus & Apollo: Celebrating the Love of Men

by Bill Lippert

As spring flowers burst from the warming soil, few blossoms have a sweeter scent than the Hyacinth. How many of us realize that this beautiful flower commemorates the mythological love of two men for each other?

Every spring since I first stumbled upon the story of Apollo & Hyacinthus, the sweet-smelling fragrance of the Purple Hyacinth has symbolized a special affirmation of the deepness of love between two men.

As recounted in an article by Robert Barzan, "Gay Male Mythology," the ancient Greek story of Hyacinthus and Apollo commemorates this love.

Apollo, one of the most popular of Greek gods, fell in love with the handsome Hyacinthus and the two became constant companions. To the Greeks Apollo was a model of virility, and god of prophecy, music, poetry and healing. Hyacinthus, on the other hand, was a mortal of royal blood, the son of a Spartan king. Besides being his lover, Apollo was also an instructor to Hyacinthus, teaching him the arts of music, poetry and the skill of athletics. It is through Hyacinthus that these gifts are said to have come to the rest of humanity.

Apollo and Hyacinthus enjoyed playing athletic games. One afternoon, as was the Greek custom, they hurled the discus. Apollo threw first, but as Hyacinthus ran to retrieve the disk, it bounced and struck him in the head, mortally wounding him. Apollo took his friend into his arms and lamented the death of his beloved:

"Oh, that I might be able
To earn back your life
Or forfeit my own along with yours!
Though the rule of fate
Restrains us in this,
You will yet be with me forever,
Held in my lips' remembrance,
The Lyre struck by my hand,
My poems will sing of you,
And as a new kind of flower,
You will bear a mark
That describes my groans of grief."

(from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* - Translated by Arthur Evans)

As Hyacinthus died, Apollo turned his spilled blood into the beautiful purple hyacinth to commemorate his beloved.

In ancient Sparta, this myth captured the hearts of the people, and a three-day feast, the Hyacinthia, was celebrated annually in the spring with athletic games, dances, banquets and a holiday from work.

As spring flowers finally begin to burst forth, we shall enjoy the daffodils, celebrate the Easter lilies, and anticipate the roses of summer. But as we revel in the spring blossoms, let us linger with the the fragrant beauty of the Purple Hyacinth and remember the love of Apollo and Hyacinthus, affirming still today the goodness of love between two men. ▼

Calendar

April

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ADDISON COUNTY YOUTH INITIATIVE MEETING — For all people, young and old, interested in supporting g/l/b/t/q youth in Addison County. 7 p.m., Hsley Library meeting room (downstairs), Middlebury. Call Hugh at 802 388-6503 or Thelma at 802 623-6131.

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WOMEN OF THE WOODS (W.O.W.) SPRING FLING — Easter egg, scavenger hunt, skiing, sliding, snow-shoeing, etc. Food will be provided. 2 p.m., Washington. For more info, call (802) 229-0109.

RUTLAND AREA POTLUCK — A monthly potluck for the Rutland g/l/b/t community and friends, sponsored by Men's Health Project. Bring a dish and anything else to share (games, music, etc.). 6:30 p.m., United Methodist Church, Rutland. For more info, call Chris Tebbetts at (800) 649-2437.

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OUT IN THE MOUNTAINS DEADLINE — for material to be printed in the May issue. For information, call Hugh (802) 388-6503.

10-13

"BREAKING THE CODE" — Hugh Whittemore's play performed by the Champlain College Players. Tickets \$6 adults, \$4 students/seniors. 8 p.m., Alumni Auditorium, Burlington.

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CHILTERN MOUNTAIN CLUB—bikes and hikes Patriots Day Weekend in Vermont. Call Bob (617) 226-3812.

CHILTERN MOUNTAIN CLUB—spring skis at Killington. Call Mike (603) 644-7658.

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INTERWEAVE POTLUCK — Potluck brunch for l/g/b/friends and families. Feel free to attend service at 11:00 am. Brunch at 12:30 pm, First Unitarian Universalist Society (downstairs), 152 Pearl St., Burlington. For more info, call Lisa at (802) 862-0251.

W.O.W. TAX DEADLINE PARTY AND PLANNING MEETING — Potluck with video or outdoor activity if spring-like. 11 a.m., Plainfield. For directions, call 454-8654.

2ND SUNDAY OUT — Coffeehouse & dance. Pyralisk in Montpelier. 7-10pm. Cover charge. Call Amy at (802)244-1203.

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AIDS 101: What Everyone Needs to Know About HIV/AIDS — Monthly educational session on HIV transmission, prevention, antibody testing, statistics, and trends. Free admission and condoms. 7 p.m. at Vermont CARES, 30 Elmwood Avenue, Burlington. Information and RSVP to (802) 863-2437.

BEYOND 076: Implications for the Prevention of Perinatal Transmission of HIV — A full-day conference for health professionals. All day at the Capital Plaza Hotel, 100 State Street, Montpelier. For more info, call Susan at (802) 229-2557.

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AIDS DAY AT THE STATEHOUSE — All day in Montpelier. For more info, call Susan at (802) 229-2557.

WHAT'S THE DEAL WITH ORAL SEX? — A workshop for gay/bi men sponsored by the Men's Health Project. 6:30 p.m., Fletcher Free Library, Burlington. For more info, call Chris at (802) 863-2437 or (800) 649-2437.

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CHERIE TARTT STARS in her new review *Cherie "Tartare"—She came, She saw, She ate it raw!* (a lounge act) 8 pm Blairs, Plattsburgh. A Benefit \$5.00.

INSIDE OUTRIGHT VT- A one hour introductory group for g/l/b/q young people under 23 wanting to know more about Outright. An opportunity to learn what services Outright offers including what a typical peer support looks like and how it works. Meeting the last Friday of every month from 7-9pm. 1.800.GLB-CHAT.

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CHERIE TARTT STARS in her new review *Cherie "Tartare"—She came, She saw, She ate it raw!* (a lounge act) 9pm 135 Pearl, Burlington. A Benefit \$5.00 cover.

OUT IN THE MOUNTAINS — Envelope stuffing for May issue, 10:00 am; Staff/Board Meeting for all interested at 1:00 p.m. 109 South Winooski Avenue, Burlington. Come find out how you can get involved with the newspaper and related publishing ventures. For more info, call Hugh at (802) 388-6503 or Steven at (802) 864-6399.

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MEN'S TEA DANCE — Sponsored by the Mansfield Bucks for the Men's Health Project. DJ, snacks provided, no cover. 7-10 p.m., 135 Pearl, Burlington. For more info, call (802) 863-2437.

MAY

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W.O.W. MOONLIGHT MONTREAL TRIP — See the Old City, the Biodome, and go on the cruise if you dare. Meet at the Park'n'Ride in Montpelier at 8:30 a.m. RSVP by April 20 to 454-8654 to arrange overnight accomodations.

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OUT IN THE MOUNTAINS DEADLINE for materials to appear in our special June "Pride" issue. For more details on submission procedures, call Hugh at 388-6503. ▼

The Price is "Right"

The Christian Coalition has provided toll-free telephone numbers to its members so that they may contact their congressional representatives at the Capitol without any charge. That way, they can lobby more effectively against things like gay marriages and a woman's right to choose.

Of course, anyone can use these numbers, so we suggest that you do, too! Any charges incurred will be billed directly to the Christian Coalition. Call today, call often.

1-800-962-3524
1-800-972-3524

Letters to the Editor

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Soaking up Soaps in St. J.

Hello Fellow Soap Fans!

Have you been following *Soap Opera Digest's* choice for best show of 1995? If not, then you're missing out on what Marlana DeLacroix of *Soap Opera Weekly* calls "the daytime equivalent of Must-See TV."

For the past several months, "All My Children" has had a gay character. This is not a first, but never has a gay storyline had so many emotional ties to the main characters of a show.

Michael Delaney is a gay teacher. His students include Scott Chandler (whose mother Cindy died of AIDS in the equally controversial and compelling

storyline that resulted in Emmys for both her portrayer Ellen Wheeler and David Canary, who plays both Scott's adoptive father Stuart and his uncle Adam), Bobby Warner (whose parents are supercouple of the eighties Cliff and Nina Warner), and Laura Kirk (who is not Brooke's deceased daughter although Brooke is currently competing with Janet for surrogate motherhood). Michael is also the brother of Laurel Dillon (who has been murdered by homophobes in a hate crime directed at Michael), making him Tim and Amanda's uncle, and Trevor's brother-in-law.

The writers and producers have gone out of their ways to compare the "Christian" Right with Nazi Germany. Michael came out in class during a discussion on how the Nazis segregated people by tags; he declared that he would have been forced to wear a pink triangle. Stuart, Adam, Palmer, Gloria, Dixie, Jack, Myrtle, and several other characters have defended Michael by stating that everyone is different in their own way and no one should be judged because of it. Stodgy old Enid Nelson (remember Greg?) has taken up the crusade against Michael (just as she

did against HIV+ Cindy) and other characters are being forced to take sides and question their own beliefs, most notably Trevor, who twice has freaked out upon seeing Michael dining out in public with another man. (His wife Laurel's response to his accusation that two men eating together in public meant there was something sexual going on: "I'll remember that the next time Dixie invites me to lunch here.")

Daytime viewers are being treated to a storyline that boldly tackles the audience's negative opinions and stomps them into the ground. Gay and gay-friendly soap fans need to let the networks know that we are an important demographic who should not be ignored. Let's all show our support by tuning in!

Steve Sowell
St. Johnsbury, Vermont ▼