

health services

Dr. Shoshanna Shelley Licensed Psychologist

Helping Individuals & Couples With Depression, Anxiety, Abuse, Sexual Identity, Addictions, Self Esteem & Relationship Concerns.

Over 20 Years Experience
Most Insurance Accepted
496-4964
WARREN, VERMONT

Michael Gigante, Ph.D.

Psychosynthesis
Counseling & Therapy

(802) 254-8032 15 Myrtle Street, Brattleboro VT 05301

Montpelier
229-5220

Burlington
860-6360

JOSIE JUHASZ, M.A.
Lic. Psychologist - Master

LYNN GOYETTE, M.S., M.A.
Lic. Clinical Mental Health Counselor

sliding fee scale

insurance accepted

COUNSELING CENTER OF NORTHERN VERMONT

DIANE LEARDI, LICSW

Counseling • Psychotherapy

(802) 254-7345

Brattleboro, VT 05301

Tell your vision-impaired friends
about OITM's
new BRAILLE format.

voices from the mountains

"I like growing old, I say to myself with surprise. I had not thought that it could be like this. There are days of excitement when I feel almost a kind of high with the changes taking place in my body, even though I know the inevitable course my body is taking will lead to debilitation and death.My own body is going through a process that only my body knows about. I never grew old before, never died before. I don't really know how it's done."

— Barbara Macdonald in "Do You Remember Me?"

I, too, like growing old. It's exciting to see who I have become, what has emerged from all that living. But our society isn't much interested in the aged. Like all the isms, ageism's greatest success lies in the difficulty of naming it. It disguises itself as so many other things: a T.V. documentary is filmed at the place where I work, but only younger members appear in it; few of the magazine I pick up, gay or straight, depict older people; and at most of the conferences I attend, I'm one of the few older women there.

Unfortunately the poorer you are economically, the more vulnerable you are to ageism. I've been working in the same place seven years, and yet, someone hired today is hired at the same salary I'm making. My experience is that the work place is the most likely place for older women to be ignored. I work under a Vermont State grant. I work well with the young man who supervises my grant. It is the other State employees, some lesbian, who look right through me. I know they see a gray-haired woman. I'm not dramatic like Kathryn Hepburn or as well known as Mary Meigs. These officials

have never asked me for the history I carry. They have never asked me to be a part of larger State conferences, even when I am one of the few people in the State doing the work I do. They will, instead, invite someone from out of State who is younger, better known and, probably, male and heterosexual.

Last week, I accompanied my eighty-four year old aunt when she entered a nursing home. She has dementia, and it was a difficult decision for the family to make. What I saw at the home were a few men, but, primarily, room after room of women. I thought of all that wisdom locked away from the world. They are seen as children and children they become. I do not want to intimate that nursing homes are not well run, or a place where needed care is given. But I could not help but mourn for the accumulated knowledge shut away from our everyday life. And how many of them were lesbian? We'll never know.

I identify very strongly as lesbian. I attend Pride marches. I speak up in my community as lesbian. I am known as a lesbian poet. Often times, when I attend some lesbian function, as I said earlier, I am practically the only one there with gray hair. Where are we all I wonder? And I am just beginning to be old. If I stay healthy, I have twenty or so more years of it to go.

Does this mean I'll have to fight for every inch of attention given to me? It looks like it. Does this sound familiar to lesbian ears, no matter what your age? I've been fighting invisibility all my life. It should ease at the end of it. In-

Growing Old In Vermont

stead, it increases and comes from yet another direction. But the heart breaker, the straw that brings tears to my eyes, is a lesbian who sees me not.

I learned early in life, as a child of immigrants, to take what is around me, and do the best I can with it. On my worst day, I can find something to rejoice in. I can laugh at how absurd life often is. I'm a defiant, life-oriented woman. But lesbian indifference hurts like hell. I began this in response to reading Barbara Macdonald. She says, "...I don't think my oppression as an old lesbian is self-imposed. I have no difficulty in locating the sources of it—in the larger, patriarchal society, in the women's community and in the lesbian community." Oppression from the larger community hurts, but when I meet it in the lesbian community it hurts much more. "Don't think that an old woman has always been old. She is in the process of discovering what 70, 80, and 90 mean. As more and more old women talk and write about the reality of this process, in a world that negates us, we will all discover how revolutionary that is." Yes, that's true, Barbara, but I'd like the revolution to begin today. I'd like it to begin in Vermont.

— Lynn Martin

OITM Wish List:

- 35mm camera
- Phone
- Photocopier
- Color Printer
- Office Space
- Sleep

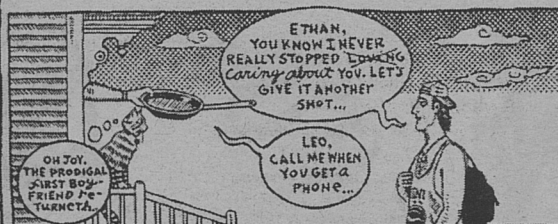
contact Chris and Don
at 865-9294

The Mostly Unfabulous Social Life of Ethan Green

by Eric Orner

The Gay Man's Guide to ALL YOUR RELATIONSHIPS (Part 2)

EX HUSBANDS are family. And like everyone else who falls under that designation, they are loved and not live-with-able.



NEIGHBORS are the lesbians with whom you share cups of coffee, tales of pet parenting, and the occasional cross cultural exchange.



AUNTIES are who dote on you, get you to eat something on occasion, and have pasts crammed with stories that make your wildest adventures pale by comparison.



CUZINS are close friends living in remote locations. Cuzins are who you call and who you visit.



KISSING CUZINS are close friends living in remote locations. Kissing Cuzins are who you call, visit, and occasionally end up in bed with.

