

ON THE OTHER HAND...

Anything That Moves?

Columnist - Kimberly A. Ward

Bisexuality and sexual 'liberalism' in general are often referred to in one breath. A look at the only national bisexual magazine's title illustrates this. *Anything That Moves* has been titled such in an effort to reclaim the derogatory stereotype and use it to help catch the eye of people who might benefit from reading it. It is a magazine dedicated to advancing and discussing not only the freedoms and issues of bisexuals, but also of transsexuals, polyamorists, monogamists and people who believe in the right of all people (no matter their shape, size, orientation, race, ability, gender or age) to be proud of their bodies, and proud of being sexual beings. Because of its very sexual nature, then, *Anything That Moves* is often marginalized and avoided by members of the glbtq community as a bit too radical to have on the shelves.

This brings the ultimate (and often revisited) question up. At what price, sexual freedom? When *ATM* reclaims this derogatory term shunted onto bisexuals for so long, are we simultaneously embracing a freedom while driving away potential allies and members of the bi community in need of a forum? On top of this question, lie some other more broad ranging questions about 1) how much true freedom the glbtq movement has managed to wrest from society and 2) how people are served by their community publications, even if they don't hold up an ideal image of who we are, individually. It is such a necessity to have publications that reflect and support the cloistered masses in communities like the gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered and questioning, communities.

Local papers like *Out in the Mountains*, *Trans*, and *Reaching Out* as well as national magazines all serve to create a connection on a national level intrinsic to the fabric of our cultures, binding together the far flung members of these communities in more routine way than any once a year pride march can ever do, just by their regularity. They come to our doors or appear on the newsstands like clockwork, reminding us that we do exist outside of our own heads and hearts, or individual relationships, while they inform us as to where we might meet, advocate, and rejoice in our lives and issues. These announcements and news stories come from all over the state, the country and, even more now, the world. Without them we would live in far more isolated world. Yet, with *Anything that Moves*, the subject of whether the twin topics of sexual liberalism and sexual orientation should be discussed comes up again and again.

From the moment I asked to have it carried in Burlington I got the strangest responses. At the Peace and Justice store (where they have now carried *ATM* for almost a year) the clerk behind the counter insisted that the magazine was carried years before but that it had too many "naked dirty old men" in it and so it had been discontinued. This startled me, since I know many of the volunteers who put the magazine together and it seemed to me a judgment statement for this person to be making. The fact that our main-stream American culture believes the only good naked person is a pre-adolescent, anorexic female is reflected in this comment. Since the Peace and Justice Center is committed to breaking the rules of the mainstream society that created such a myth, I found it hard to believe and went to the horses mouth to request the magazine be carried. The owner easily agreed to carry *Anything That Moves* as long as it continued to sell. And it does. It is sold out every time I go in! This was my goal, to get a bisexual magazine on the racks of a store in Vermont so that I would know people out there who were isolated and had no idea whether there was even a bi community could go to see the opinions and ideas of other bisexuals.

But what about getting to the population that doesn't feel comfortable or interested in a magazine which is overtly sexual? And what about getting that bi community connection with our youth, whose only connection to glbtq information and issues may be through quarterlies like *Outright Vermont's Reaching Out* magazine? *Anything That Moves* won't be showing up on their library periodical shelves anytime soon. So, where in this vast world of newsprint do they turn? My hope is that they will get more and more of their validation, acknowledgment and information on bi issues from the existing glbtq publications, not because the bi community should ride on the coat tails of any 'other' community, but because the bi population has been and will continue to be an often invisible part of the gay, lesbian, and transgendered movements. We are there, because we have been for as long as the community has existed, and we are just now beginning to have exclusively bi forums from which to speak. But we must continue to speak from within the existing queer community, so that it is not forgotten that we are a part of it, and helped to build it.

Serenity and Revolution seem like contradictory concepts, but I'd like to share a portion of my own journey that involves holding both these notions in my soul at once. These are musings about the process of embracing revolution, not a political description of my particular theories. That will come later.

I was introduced to revolutionary ideas in the mid-70's when there was a large community of women committed to protest, activism and community-building, who expressed themselves through writing, art, music and political discourse. We definitely commanded attention in the streets and in the media. We were fervent, brave, loud and proud. We pissed off a lot of people (including each other), and we were instrumental in creating many sweeping changes in the dominant culture: rape crises centers, women's health centers, commissions on the status of women, job equity changes, violence against women awareness - the list goes on and on. We tenaciously clung to the tail of a piece of universal truth about oppression that saved many of our lives and expanded global consciousness. I am incredibly grateful that I somehow landed in the thick of that heady era and shouted as loud as I could at the time demanding liberation. If you had mentioned the word "serenity" to me back then, I would have equated it with boredom, wimpiness, passivity.

After a few years, I recognized I was a drug addict. I fell in love with pot because it helped alter my consciousness and ease the transition from suburbanized Air Force wife to radical lesbian feminist. Ten years ago I found myself trapped in such excruciating inner isolation that I reached out for help and focused on healing, letting go of concepts of revolution since they terrified me as I sobered up. (I acknowledge that turning my back on revolution was a privilege since a lot of oppressed

people in this world would be dead if they gave up their revolution for long periods of time.) In other words, over the course of ten years, I switched bottom lines. No longer do I base life

sense that and will want what I have instead of my insisting they grab onto it or be damned. It means that I do the footwork of revolution but not get too attached to the results which are largely out of my hands. I

can only do my own small part, and only time will tell (perhaps not even within my lifetime) if the planet will be saved from hu-

man destruction. I no longer entertain grandiose notions that I have control over results. It means that if my prime motivation is revenge, I need to step back and develop another strategy since revenge (self-righteous anger) keeps me reactionary and obsessed rather than compassionate and ethical. It means that I need to infuse my revolution with joy if I want to keep embracing a concept that doesn't burn me out and turn me into a bitter, unapproachable human being. Anger is one of my most useful tools in fomenting revolution. I wouldn't even bother with any of it if I weren't profoundly angry at the stranglehold patriarchy has on the world. I treasure my anger, but I seek plenty of help in not letting the anger drive me into a corner - especially horizontal anger directed at my radical sisters and brothers. This is not to say that when I put out my views, plenty of people will not get furious. It just means I don't necessarily have to react with public fury at that moment but can vent the rage in a safe place where it won't entirely block communication.

Let me tell you, it takes tremendous effort to channel revolutionary energy constructively. I constantly ask for help these days. I'm passionate by nature, a screamer by upbringing. Spiritual discipline and impulse control do not come easily. I make a lot of mistakes, but I've learned to apologize more readily as well. I know I can't do it alone; hence, I am intent on building community. But by putting serenity first in my life, I can begin to trust that the revolution, when and if it ever comes about, will have a healthy, compassionate foundation and not just end up patriarchal bullshit in reverse.

Crow's Caws

On Serenity and Revolution

Columnist - Crow Cohen

decisions and actions guided by concepts of revolution. Instead, when push comes to shove, I try to base my actions on concepts of sobriety, serenity, humility.

Counter-revolutionary? I don't think so. Recently I have finally come around to re-introducing the word revolution into my thoughts, my vocabulary, my community. (Those universal truths have a way of creeping in the back door even if the front door gets slammed shut.) I have reached a point in my spiritual development where I feel I can afford to again invite such a potentially wild, unnerving, heady, grandiose, dangerous, ungrounding, (let's face it - "high") concept back into my life. Don't get me wrong. I never completely gave up political activism all those years. I just didn't let revolutionary ideology rent too much space in my head because I associated it with being stoned, and I needed to break that obsession before I could think clearly. (By the way, I'm not suggesting that the use of drugs and alcohol mess up all people. Not everyone who uses these substances turns into an addict. I certainly did, though.)

I believe that valuing serenity can inform the forging of revolution. How might that play out? For one thing, I attempt to avoid power-driven argument. That means that I do the best I can not to nag, scream or shove my ideas down someone's throat whether they like it or not. I also count on attraction rather than promotion to get my ideas across. This means if I'm holding onto a piece of universal truth, it will change me from the inside out. People will

OFFER VALID WITH THIS COUPON

10% OFF
STOREWIDE

**BUY 1 FISH
GET 1 FREE**
up to \$5
value

\$3 OFF
Any Pet Bath or
Groom Dogs & Cats

655-0421

**NOAH'S ARK
PET CENTER**

6 Roosevelt Highway
Rt 7 Exit 16, Colchester
Off I 89 - Across From Libby's

(10% Offer Not Valid on Dog & Cat Food)
One coupon per purchase. Excludes sale items or other promotions

Family Owned and Operated Since 1991