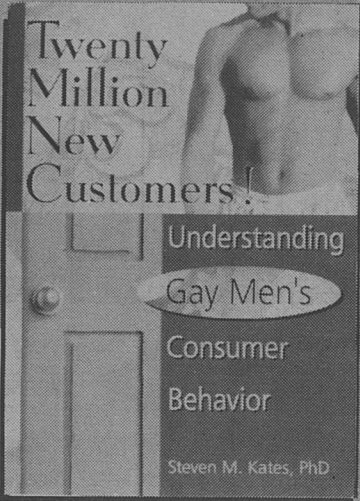


# A&E

Exploring the Consumer Patterns of Gay Men



REVIEWED BY PAUL OLSEN

Having grown tired of both the winter doldrums and the blow by blow accounts of Bill and Monica in, well, *Blowjobgate*, I was excited to have the opportunity to turn off the television and curl up on the couch with a book about my favorite sport- shopping. In *Twenty Million New Customers! Understanding Gay Men's Consumer Behavior*, Stephen M. Kates explores the consumer patterns of gay men.

Stephen M. Kates, Ph.D., is an Assistant Professor of Business Administration at the University of Northern British Columbia. His 235-page book highlights the consumption patterns, habits, and styles of gay men. Drawing on previous studies, Kates also identifies revealing psychological characteristics of benefit to business owners interested in ethically and responsibly tailoring marketing efforts to this growing market.

Using interviews and observation of the buying patterns of 44 gay men from Toronto, Kates concludes that these gay men "experienced a consumer acculturation process during which their view of the self and of the external world changed, focusing more upon meanings and things associated with the gay subculture". Kates also identified consumer rituals related to the coming out process. "The gay community uses goods and services to communicate among one another in the articulation of shared cultural meanings and...indicate the psychological boundaries of community- who is an insider versus who is not," Kates theorizes. In the chapter "Consumer Behavior as Political Protest," Kates affirmatively concludes: "Supporting gay-positive businesses and products, and boycotting businesses perceived to be bigoted...may even have real economic consequences upon businesses involved."

Kates also discusses the implications of his research for business owners. "There is the potential for various entrepreneurial individuals and or-

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## Somewhere Over the Snowbank

### Oz Comes to the Queen City

BY STUART CARTER

Lyric Theater will present *The Wizard of Oz*, April 24-26 and April 30-May 3. Performance times are Thursday, 8 p.m.; Fridays, 8 p.m.; Saturdays, 8 p.m.; and Saturday, May 2, 2 p.m., Sunday April 26, 1 p.m. and 7 p.m., and Sunday May 3, 1 p.m.. Prices are \$17 14\$ \$7. There will be a performance on Saturday, May 2 at 8 p.m., to benefit the Vermont Symphony Orchestra. Prices are \$50, \$35, \$20. Saturday May 2 at 2 p.m., tickets are 1/2 price for students and seniors.

*The Wizard of Oz*, long a favorite fable for the gay community, will soon reach the Flynn stage and will present our community with an opportunity for inspiration. The upcoming production of *The Wizard of Oz* by the community-based Lyric Theater proves a good analogy for promoting our own health. Daily, we face prejudices within ourselves and others in our society, and use our dreams and fantasies to help overcome these obstacles. However, we must always return to reality to find ways to heal our demons, or struggle with them again.

Dorothy finds herself alone in her extended family of cousin-ship, wishing that "Somewhere Over The Rainbow", the true blue sky of love will wipe away the fears of innocence that brought her to the cruel ignorance of Miss Gulch. Like Miss Gulch, we know our capability to dismiss ourselves and others with reversals of ignorance, mistrust and denial, leaves us with a game of coy, but frustrating repetition we all find too familiar. To escape our trying times, we leave the planet for a while through our dreams



The Scarecrow (Bart Cannizzaro), the Tin Woodman (Tim Barden), the Cowardly Lion (Daniel Jessie), and Dorothy (Kate Whalen)

and fantasies, where our demons safely reside, until we can bring them into the light to express them safely through our everyday activities.

In the land of Oz, the land of last wholesome hope, Dorothy finds friends in symbols and animals common to our lives: a scarecrow who wishes he had a brain he already possesses, a tin man hurt beyond his understanding of his big heart, and a lion whose father demanded so much of him when young he lost his sense of courage. The dismissals by Dorothy's family in the first scenes present to us the heartbreak of subtle cruelty to another person. These act the same as a dismissal within ourselves of our particular demon of the moment, causing a case of the Jitterbugs, a disease of discomfort and confusion. Living with the art of compassion reveals truth in healthy ways. To live without compassion for ourselves and others is to live saying, "Although you may be confused and you may not remember how to live a healthy life, you still need to struggle with daily challenges, and I am never the one to help you with that." People who treat themselves and others in this way confirm prejudicial thinking, that community requires the commission of lonely levels of labor before you reach the pinnacle of life. Such is the patronal arrogance of the Wizard. This philosophy requires us to experience these levels again in a constant repetition, for without cooperation we struggle to learn, just as the failed Wizard returns to "hob-nob" with his other wizards. This passing off of our

responsibilities, and the acceptance of responsibilities which are not ours is the construction of our lives' roller coaster-like journey of peaks and valleys. Dorothy recognizes the need to attempt these demands of her Wizard, for struggle is a part of life, but when the dream comes to an end, she still needs to come home. Still, *The Wizard of Oz* goes further.

We sculpt our lives living with challenges, by acting out the meaning of our demons. These demons can be a drag on our freedoms. We can tolerate acts of violation or omission, where peoples' lives are ruined, or we can create opportunities such as drag balls, where our innermost feelings come out safely in the wholesome and fun behavior of presentational costume. These healthy moments can offer extraordinary truth and beauty.

We can live our lives this way, but we still find ourselves locked by the representation of unhealthy bigotry when we walk down our true paths. We reenter our dreams then, to struggle anew. Dorothy's many struggles spells this out for us. She timidly leaves the cute Munchkins, meets new friends, escapes the witch who then captures her, and demystifies the witch, only to find the wizard inept. With the help of Glinda, a good witch with a glimmer of light, Dorothy finally realizes the true meaning of her dream. She must return home by her own means and learn, with the help of her dream, to bring her family together.

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# CALENDAR

**6 MONDAY**  
GLITTER Gay And Lesbian Interest Film - 'Okoge' Pronounce this Japanese film about the trials of a gay couple's relationship and the fag hag who befriends them oh-koh-gay. "Very Fine! Wise and Funny ... Rich with satiric detail." — Vincent Canby, New York Times. "A wry sexual comedy where the laughter is as human as the caresses." — Lawrence Chua, VilJage Voice. In Japanese with English Subtitles - ("I give it 4 Maple Taps" - Steven) Monday Nights At The Rhombus Gallery, 7:30-9:30 PM. To Support The Rhombus Gallery - please donate what you can at these events \$2-\$6. To support your butt, bring a pillow to sit on. The Rhombus Gallery is located at the intersection of College & Church Sts. in Burlington. 652-1103. Enter on College St. Gallery is on the second floor. For more information, Contact Steven Kopstein at 802-434-5653  
email: GLITTERvt@aol.com

**8 WEDNESDAY**  
National Day of Silence  
  
Rainbow Business Association mixer at Jeff's Maine Seafood, 65 No. Main St. 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. \$10 includes hors d'oeuvres - cash bar.  
  
"A Panel Discussion with GLBTQ Youth" in regards to medical/other health care. Presented by Tami Eldredge, Director of Outright, Barbara Frankowski, MD, Rick Recchio, MD. Any medical, mental health, allied health professionals invited. 8 a.m.-9 a.m. Fletcher Allen Hospital, Burgess Building  
  
**9 THURSDAY**  
Middlebury College Queer and Ally Campus-wide Speak-out, 12 p.m.-1 p.m., McCullough Student Center  
  
To Kill a Mockingbird, stage adaptation of Harper Lee's Pulitzer Prize winning novel.

7:30 p.m. \$22.50, \$18.50, \$12  
  
Cultured Pearls, 8 p.m. Queer night out with the radical faeries at Muddy Waters; come have coffee, chat, hang out, white gloves optional.  
  
**11 SATURDAY**  
Tony Award winning vocalist Dee Dee Bridgewater at the Flynn Theatre. 8 p.m. \$22.50, \$18.50, \$12  
  
**12 SUNDAY**  
Full Moon ritual, potluck, and Burlington UU Circle meeting. All who support the Covenant of UU Pagans' mission are welcome. Wear garb if you like, and bring something for feast, a musical instrument, and a cushion to sit on. HC accessible. 6 p.m. First UU Society of Burlington, 152 Pearl ST. FMI Dian 658-9689.  
  
Goddard Lavender Screen Series: 'Bound' in the Clockhouse at 7 p.m. Screenings are free for everyone. This schedule is

subject to change, so I'd recommend people call 802-454-8311x402 before coming out here.  
  
**13 MONDAY**  
GLITTER - No book has been selected yet... we were discussing reading a play - any suggestions? Monday Nights At The Rhombus Gallery, 7:30-9:30 PM. For details see April 6 listing.  
  
**14 TUESDAY**  
Middlebury College — Panel Discussion FIGHT THE RIGHT!: representatives from the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, the Vermont Freedom to Marry Task Force, and the Burlington Womyn's Resource Center discuss their battles with local moderate conservative and right-wing groups which seek to reverse the civil rights progress that women and queer people have made in Vermont over the last decades. McCullough Students Center 7:30 p.m.

**15 WEDNESDAY**  
8:30 a.m.-1 p.m. State House Visibility Day - See Coalition Notes.  
  
Reduced Shakespeare Company presents *The Bible: The Complete Word of God (abridged)* at the Flynn Theater, 7:30 p.m. \$22.50, \$18.50, \$12  
  
**16 THURSDAY**  
Yolanda & the Plastic Family at Goddard to "break the silence" — a drag ball. Non-Goddardites will have to pay a \$5 cover 9:30 p.m.  
  
**17 FRIDAY**  
Deadline for OITM articles, letters to the editor and ads.  
  
Through 19 Student GLBTQA Retreat at Trinity College of Vermont. Workshops, networking and fun. Call Morgan at 658-0337x371 - msheets@charity.trinityvt.edu