

health & wellbeing

MAGGIE FRAMPTON MSW ACSW
LICENSED CLINICAL SOCIAL WORKER

PSYCHOTHERAPY • CONSULTATION
ADULTS • ADOLESCENTS

MONTPELIER, VT
(802) 229-5071

PROFESSIONAL
CONFIDENTIAL

802.660.8396

Diane M. Felicio, Ph.D.

mediator *constructive conflict resolution with
an emphasis on encouragement,
clarity, and support.*

relationships
organizations
higher education

Sari K. Wolf, RN, CCRN, TMP, CAP, Reiki III
Release Fatigue and Pain

Massage/ Myofascial Therapy
Deep Tissue, Aromatherapy
Acu-Pressure

By appointment only 802-223-4715



PHONE: 802/524-9595
FAX: 802/524-2867

Carol Thayer, M.D.

PO Box 1160, RD2 • Fairfax, VT 05454

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

20.s

Pride, A Deeper Love by Thomas Henning

The height of the gay season is over. Pride has come and gone and, once again, left most of us with a few great stories to retell throughout the year. I had a blast late night Burlington Pride. Loved the boys, loved the music, loved the mood. I thought having so many options was amazing and everyone was in such fabulous spirits that it was hard not to enjoy oneself. It was a big gay party and I felt like Ms. Holly Golightly herself.

That brings me to my first point. Stand back, kids, because boy is getting on his soapbox once again. I can't help but feel a little guilty with all the celebration when I think that we might have lost sight of what we are celebrating. Now I understand that people don't always want to be involved in the political aspects of things. That it can be taxing and unpleasant. Well, as my Iowa-raised daddy used to say, 'Tough titty, said the kitty, but the milks still good.' (I will admit that I'm never quite sure what daddy's ditties mean but I'm banking on that meaning tough patutees).

The way I see it is that being gay, whether we like it or not, is political. We are a minority that is oppressed, discriminated against, and targeted by many right-wing groups. My mother always says, 'take care of you, because if you don't who will?' We, here in Vermont, are fortunate (to date) to enjoy a rather liberal environment to grow in. That is not necessarily a gift. If comfort breeds complacency, that makes our community a perfect target and make no mistake, we are a target.

The right-wing Christian groups like Operation Frontline have targeted, what they call, 'The Gay Agenda' as their next focus point. What better place to focus than the only state that has an openly gay state official and best chance for same gender marriage legislation to be passed. We are only a hate crime away from losing ground, in my humble opinion.

I think this is what we have to learn from the larger gay community. I don't know how many of us 'twenty-somethings' know who Bella Abzug was or what her contri-

bution to Gay Rights was. Do we know what Stonewall was all about or who really was responsible for getting President Reagan to admit there was an AIDS epidemic. Maybe it is just me, but I feel it is irresponsible to lose touch with that part of our history when it is fundamentally that part of our history that allows us the comforts we enjoy today.

I would love to hear other twenty-somethings' thoughts on the matter. I think that it is important to know one's history and those who have contributed to that history. I admit to knowing very little gay history and that concerns me. This is just my opinion. I don't presume to be the voice of all twenty-somethings. As if.

I have a love-hate relationship with being gay. On the one hand, I absolutely love being gay. I love the unique opportunity I have to form my own culture and to truly develop, as a person, without conventional society boundaries. I love the adventures I have that my straight siblings would never even think of engaging in because it is so against their 'norm.' Lastly, I love the opportunity that being gay has given me to look inside myself and see what I am about and what is important to me. It has given me the strength and power to look at society and say 'I don't want a place at your table, sweetpea, but you just may want a place at mine.'

I hate being gay, at times, because I constantly have to remind people, or be reminded by them, that I am not equal in Uncle Sam's eyes. I can not identify as gay and give blood. I can not be openly gay and teach, at any level, in Oklahoma (they just passed that law), and I am continually told by the media, family, society, and so forth that I am in search of special rights when they are in fact the same rights the majority enjoy.

It is hard not to engage in self-loathing when this is a clear message sent to me, sometimes from people in our own community-sometimes from people in our own family. Ultimately, if given the choice I would not 'go straight'. Not on your queer young asses would I even think about it. I would not be the person that I am today, and darlings, I am fabulous, if only in my own mind.

I equate my gayness to my being Greek (easy pumpkins I've heard all the jokes before). I was born in Greece. It is my first language and, until a few years ago, I had dual citizenship. I have had both positive and negative ex-

periences around my ethnicity. I enjoy and treasure my ethnicity. The challenge I have is that the more that I remove myself from a Greek-centric environment the more traditions and heritage begin to disappear and I start to lose my connection with that part of myself.

Now I am not saying that I need to live in a Greek neighborhood or anything like that. What I am saying is that my experience growing up in a family that cherished the Greek perspective and reinforced the Greek culture is valuable. When I get together with my Greek peers we have similar experiences and beliefs that allow us to relate on a more personal level. The less I speak Greek the harder it is for me to engage people in my native language. In short, the more I stray from my 'Greekness' the more I lose touch with that culture and community.

I think the same holds true for my 'gayness' and me. That is why I love Pride. I love the visibility, the sense of a larger identity, and that connected feeling. All the friendly boys who are working what their mamas gave them are not an unpleasant bonus, either.

The Moldavian Brunch was a perfect example. The Sunday following Pride 20.s and Vermont CARES' MHP sponsored a post-pride brunch with a Dynasty theme. It was an event. There were over 25 people, at the Radisson, dining on cous-cous and cheddar tortellini soup while sipping mimosas and bloody marys. Yolanda and Cherie Tartt were present to greet people dressed in their favorite Dynasty garb. It was two snaps and around the world. The Radisson staff was great and the people staying at the hotel were intrigued to say the least.

It was a great gay brunch with DJ Martin, who we love, donating his services to provide great tunes to dance off that brunch. Everyone loved it. So much so that people even called in to the Cherie and Yolanda Show to tell them that they loved the event. Those who attended were fierce, proud, and full of gay spirit. Thanks go to Adam, Will, Cherie and DJ Martin for all their hard work and time. We hope to have more events like this and if anyone is interested in helping to plan the events they should give me a buzz.

Another great thing happening with 20.s is that we are in the process of developing a website for 20.s. That's right, we are going on the web. The site will have a chat room so