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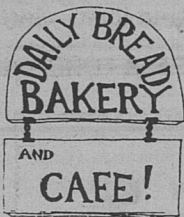
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ATTENTION:

Out In The Mountains is moving and needs assistance from you now, more than ever.

Office Furniture: A locking file cabinet, book shelves, partitions, desk, computer table, office chairs (Good ones, please. Your new editor has a bad back.) — we're basically starting from scratch, so if you have office stuff, we can probably use it.

People: Cleaners to shape up the new space in Richmond, movers to help drag what we have in Burlington to Richmond (see Calendar Oct. 3 listing), people to help with distribution of the paper, advertising sales people (yes, we'll pay commission), a Calendar manager (only takes 3-5 hours a month), data entry help (someone who know Filemaker would be nice), writers, writers, photographers, and writers. If you are interested in getting involved as a member of the OITM staff, come to a meeting (Calendar Sept. 30), call 865-9294, or email oitm@together.net

OP-ED

Is the Lewinsky scandal simply a straight thing?

BY GLEN ELDER

OK, so I too am titillated, reviled, and curious about what Clinton and Lewinsky did in the windowless corridor outside the Oval Office. There, I've admitted it! It is beyond dispute that the week that past was one that demanded an emotional response, even if that response was to avoid news about it. The nagging question at the back of my head, however, is what does this mean for lesbians and gay men? Doubtless, the gendering of story will elicit different responses from the gay men and lesbian women, the age gap may have some of the parents among us uneasy, or not. So what follows here then is my particular take on the affair, as a gay man who now lives in Vermont and has taken serious time away from pickling to put a couple of ideas down on paper.

Of course this is nothing new. Ever since I arrived in the United States eight years ago, there has been some steamy sex story exposing the inherently contradictory fascination/revulsion that America has with sex and power. First there was Clarence and Anita, then there was Tailhook, followed by OJ and the titillation that this mixed race marriage produced, Gene McKinny, etc. What makes the Lewinsky affair different, of course, is that unlike so many of the sex scandals, this is just two white folks going at it. The other American obsession - race - appears to be absent, on the surface anyway. One wonders what the fall-out would have been if Monica were black or Latina?

My first response was that this is a "straight" mess and so, like birth control, it really did not concern me. But of course, that is untrue. Sex, whenever it enters into the public arena, usually impacts us all. The more time passed the more I began to see how. Then this week, it hit me. He described these days as the darkest days of his life. When were the darkest days of my life? When I struggled with the fact that I was gay. This led me to draw parallels between what Clinton is experiencing and the lives that many gay men and lesbians live on a daily basis. Huh?

No, I'm not saying we all get a fanfare every time we walk into a room, I wish! What I am saying is that he has been forced to confront his "non conventional" sexuality in public, to come out so to speak, and have it define him, his

family life, his work, and probably his chapter in history. Rather than recalling the historic moments in the Rose Garden than hinted at Peace in the Middle East, or his late night brokering of peace in Northern Ireland, we are left with the idea of a middle aged man being blown by a young woman in a seedy dark hallway. His mark in history is under threat of being reduced to a cumstain on a blue dress.

See Mr. President, as much as you might have preferred that Star did not ask, so

cape nor hide from the contradictions of sex and power. Conversely, what hope do the most disempowered among us have for living unbothered lives? How can we, without fear, have sex and perhaps if we are lucky find love in such a climate? If we do, we should not take it for granted.

So whether the impeachment goes ahead or not, as gay men and lesbians we should be very nervous about a society that is so hypocritically titillated and reviled by the Lewinsky affair. One thing is

What hope do the most disempowered among us have for living unbothered lives?

that you did not have to tell - when it comes to sex, that formula just does not work! The secret always slips out and then you have no way of defending yourself. Ask the hundreds of lesbians and fewer but no less traumatized gay men who have had to give up lives in the armed service. Once the accusation is out, the best you can do is deny it and the more you deny it, the guiltier you become.

Further, I felt increasingly nervous about the way in which so many citizens seemed to follow the old trope that he had lost "moral authority". From my perspective the real loss is the ceded opportunity to expose sexual politics for what they are. Rather than denying, covering up, and hedging his bets he could have rewritten the book on US sexuality and power by admitting to the affair and saying so what? By playing the rules as laid down in the compulsive heterosexuality handbook he backed himself into a corner and could not win. What I mean is this: So, the guy's a slut! Big deal. I would rather have a slutty President in the White House than some disembodied head of State who acted with "moral" authority especially when that "morality" defines me as a sexual outlaw.

Now I know there are a great number of you thinking - he's forgotten the one big factor: Power. Clinton was in power; most gay men and lesbians are not. Of course, but that is what makes the whole thing all the more pernicious. Even the President of the United States, the most powerful man on the face of the earth who apparently used a great deal of it, can neither es-

certain, when the dust settles, we will have a new sexual landscape in the United States. A national conversation has already begun to redefine sex, sexual relations, and morality. Even if that conversation is mostly about two heterosexuals, it can not leave homosexuals or society's responses to them unchanged. My guess is that the new landscape will be one that is more hostile to sexual minorities. For President Clinton the real sadness is that being forced to "come out" will not liberate him. Not now. I hope the same is not true for the young women and men contemplating "coming out" somewhere in rural Vermont.

Marriage Update

continued from front page

lawyers, approached Attorney General William Sorrell and gave him the opportunity to modify a 20-year-old opinion from the attorney general's office ruling that same-sex marriages were not permitted. Sorrell declined to modify the opinion and that led to the lawsuit.

A Chittenden Superior Court judge decided the case in favor of the state late last year, but showed some support for the idea.

Since the case went to the Supreme Court, both sides have filed written arguments and a number of interested groups, including other states, have also filed their views. Now the case will be argued before the five justices of the court. They then will take the oral and written arguments and decide the law.

It is unclear how long after oral arguments a decision might be issued. The court has decided big cases very quickly before. The Brigham case last year, which found the old way of funding education unconstitutional, took just seven weeks to decide. Others have taken many months.