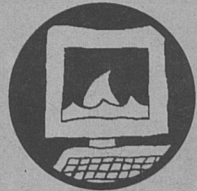


CYBER



SHARK

Online Information about our Global Community

BY MIKI THOMAS

One thing I love about the Web is that it allows me to learn about cultures around the world without having to leave my apartment.

I've been discovering sites from areas one would never think of as having a GLBT community. Obviously, in many cases, the situation for gays and lesbians is nothing like what one would find in Western countries. Visiting sites from far-flung places provides a reality check — things here could be much worse.

Take, for instance, Zimbabwe. Robert Mugabe, its notoriously homophobic president, made international headlines when he attempted to bar gays and lesbians from Zimbabwe's International Book Fair a few years ago. To read up on that incident and the response it generated around the world, check out the Gays and Lesbians of Zimbabwe site.

Namibia also has a problem with intolerant government officials wanting to ban GLBT groups in the country, but that hasn't stopped the Rainbow Project from organizing. Its site includes news reports and letters to the editor from Namibian newspapers. The latter provide a fascinating look at how average Africans feel about homosexuality.

Our next stop is the Balkans, where what used to be Yugoslavia is located. Out of the small republics formed there in the wake of communism's collapse, Slovenia pro-

vides the most liberal atmosphere for the GLBT community. Croatia once had a thriving community, but due to corruption at high levels of government and tensions among warring neighbors, the situation has once again become oppressive. You can read up on Croatia at the *Croatian LesBiGays on Internet* site.

Serbia has a GLBT group called Arkadija, with a sister group, Labrys, for lesbians. Although male homosexuality is no longer illegal, that doesn't mean all is well. Gays are often harassed and subject to police raids. Lesbians never had legal recognition one way or the other; in this patriarchal society, 'lesbian' means 'whore.' As if Slobodan Milosevic doesn't have enough groups to hate, gays and lesbians are apparently on his list as well. For more information, check out the Arkadija site.

If you think that a country that would whack your ass for mundane offences might also have problems with gays,

you're right. According to the *Travel & Resources: Singapore* page, although the young, educated, and professional class in Singapore is fairly liberal in its attitudes towards homosexuality, the government doesn't share such views. Needless to say, the police act accordingly.

Perhaps the most gay-friendly areas are located up north. I remember reading an article a few years ago about how Canada's Yukon Territory was becoming a popular spot for gays and lesbians to relocate. The atmosphere there is fairly tolerant; the Yukon was among the first Canadian jurisdictions to provide domestic partner benefits. The Gay and Lesbian Alliance of Yukon provides resources and social activities for the GLBT community. Its site offers more information about the GLBT scene (but nothing about relocation).

Although Iceland's population is smaller than Vermont's, it does have one thing Vermont doesn't yet have — same-sex

marriage rights. The country also has anti-discrimination laws and hate-speech protections in place. Samtokin, Iceland's premier GLBT group, can take credit for many of the changes there; it is currently working on adoption rights for same-sex couples. Written in both Icelandic and English, Samtokin's site provides a fascinating look at how such a small country can have a thriving community center. (RU12? take note!)

If you are interested in learning more about the international GLBT community and how you can help victims of government and social oppression, check out the site for the International Gay & Lesbian Human Rights Commission. The IGLHRC site provides action alerts and mechanisms for writing nasty notes to governments that oppress GLBT citizens, publications for sale on subjects ranging from gays in Russia to women's rights, and articles and updates about the GLBT community at large.

The IGLHRC is also hiring so if you want a career where you can make a difference, definitely check them out!

Odds and Ends

Concerned about the proliferation of hate sites on the web? So are the folks at the Anti-Defamation League. The ADL is now providing a HateFilter that you can download at its site to help protect children and impressionable adults from accessing hate sites.

Vermont Pagans and their friends have a new resource on the web — the Vermont Wiccan & Pagan Resources page provided by the Burlington UU Circle. In addition to information about the UU Circle, there are extensive links to both Pagan and non-Pagan resources.

The Vermont Rainbow Connection homepage will be getting a face lift; a news section will soon cover all the news that doesn't get mentioned on the show. ▼

THE HOT LIST

Gays and Lesbians of Zimbabwe
www.icon.co.za/~stobbs/galz.htm

Rainbow Project
www.trp.org.na

Croatian LesBiGays on Internet
www.geocities.com/WestHollywood/1824

Arkadija
www.neww.org/ceewomen/arkadija.htm

Travel & Resources: Singapore
www2.best.com/~utopia/tipssing.htm

Gay and Lesbian Alliance of Yukon
www.gaycanada.com/galayukon

Samtokin
www.mmedia.is/~gayice/

International Gay & Lesbian Human Rights Commission
www.iglhrc.org

Anti-Defamation League
www.adl.org

Vermont Wiccan & Pagan Resources
members.aol.com/~ht_a/Firebearer/index.html

Vermont Rainbow Connection home page
www.together.net/~lavender

Stay in touch with the Vermont community between issues of OITM.

We've set up three new e-mail listservs to keep you up to date with everything from the local gossip to national issues.

VTPrideNet: an e-mail discussion list. LGBT folks from across Vermont — and the people who love them — can now exchange messages

If you'd rather get your chatter in one neat package instead of individual messages, check out VTPrideNet-digest. Instead of getting each e-mail separately, you'll get one long message that contains all the day's postings.

For those who aren't up for chatter but want to keep up with major newsevent notices and paper deadlines (of course), there's VTPrideNet-announce. There's no discussion on this list — just announcements as events warrant.

To subscribe to any of the lists, send e-mail to

majordomo@queernet.org

In the body of your e-mail, you should include one of the following lines to specify the list you want to join:

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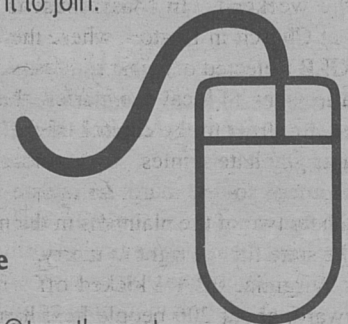
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