

JUNE 2005

FT PUBLICATIONS

PRESENT



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EVERY MONTH

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COMMUNITY

NEW HAVEN GAY
& LESBIAN COMMUNITY
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PROJECT 100 OF
HARTFORD

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EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH
PHOTOGRAPHER
STEVEN VASCHON

SHOWCASE YOUR PRIDE AT
THE 18TH CONNECTICUT GAY
& LESBIAN FILM FESTIVAL

PERFORMANCE ARTISTS
SPOTLIGHT
SAMANTHA CHANEL

FREE PREMIERE ISSUE

Letter from the Editor

Mission Statement

***Finer Things Magazine* will be a remarkable magazine suitable for all ages, which showcases a variety of emotions that occur in the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender community. The primary focuses of *Finer Things* are the arts & literature, education, entertainment, fine dining and nightlife.**

Letter from the Editor

Welcome everybody, to the very first issue of *Finer Things Magazine*. What else can I say? It has been a long time coming.

First and foremost, my staff and I would like to tip our hats to both *In Newsweekly* and *The Metroline*. Over the years, those two publications have always been entertaining, informative, and enjoyable read ... vital in the gay and lesbian community of Connecticut! I extend my hand to them in friendship as our publication, *Finer Things Magazine*, enters Connecticut. I assure you, we come in peace. The way we see it, there is enough going on in gay and "gay-friendly" Connecticut to fill six gay and lesbian magazines!

Now, about *Finer Things Magazine* ... *Finer Things Magazine* is a free, monthly magazine which will be distributed throughout Connecticut on the 1st or 2nd of every month. *Finer Things Magazine* is and always will be a full color magazine.

In each issue, a set amount of space will be donated to each of the three gay and lesbian community centers in Connecticut: *The New Haven Gay and Lesbian Community Center*, *The Triangle Community Center*, and *Project 100*.

Also in each issue, we will set aside pages for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender artists, poets, and photographers. Selected artists and their works will be published. And by the way, we encourage submissions of such works from anyone and everyone.

Furthermore, we here at *Finer Things Magazine*, reserve the right to refuse service. Our commitment is simple: No adult video store ads, no escort ads, and no 900-numbers.

Also, beginning very soon, we at *Finer Things Magazine* will be creating and establishing charitable foundations, which will at times directly and sometimes indirectly benefit the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender community.

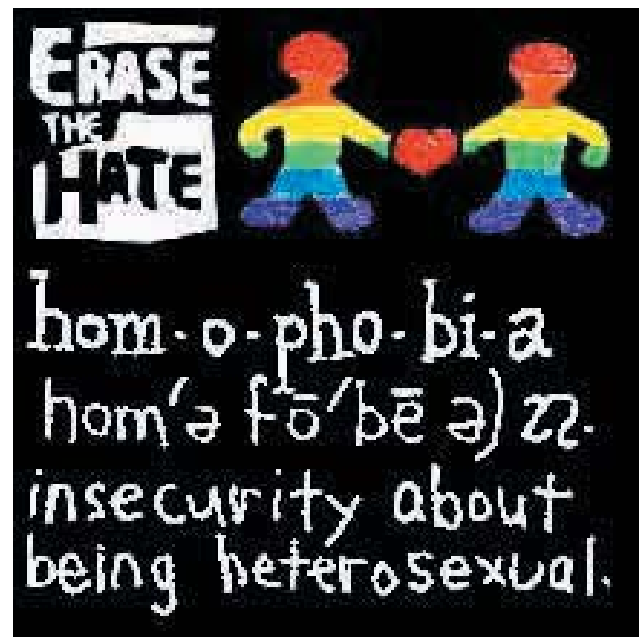
It is my pleasure in this landmark issue of *Finer Things Magazine* to be an official media sponsor of *AlteRnaTiveS Inc.*, and *The 18th Connecticut Gay and Lesbian Film Festival*. Since *Finer Things Magazine* is primarily an art and literary magazine, I felt as one of two editors that will be covering this event, it was a perfect fit. My partner Jerome agreed. I don't feel there is a better way to celebrate Connecticut Gay Pride Month than taking in a flick or two at the film festival this year, and yes, *Finer Things Magazine* will be there.

There are several people I must thank for lending their support to the premiere issue of *Finer Things Magazine*. First and foremost, I would like to thank Dan Millet and Joshua Angelus from *The Connecticut Gay and Lesbian Film Festival*. I would also like to thank, and in no particular order: Ken and Tasha at *Project 100*, Brian and MJ at *The Triangle Community Center*, Susanna at *The New Haven Gay and Lesbian Community Center*, Joey and George at *168 York Street Café* in New Haven, Bryan and Jamie at *The Chez Est* in Hartford, Gregory at *The Golden Street Gallery* in New London, Hsin-Yi Huang at *Hygienic Gallery*, Don at *O'Neill's Brass Rail* Jim and Bob at *The Wall Street Gallery*, Jane Weiner, Elliott Strick, Chris and Rob at Easton Mountain, John Proto at *Raveis Realty*, Anthony Cervoni at *Coldwell Banker Premiere Realtors*, Ray at *The Sober Camel*, Elissa at *The Relationship Company*, Lynn at *Zane's Cycles*, Paul S., Jeff at *Bentara* and *Central Steakhouse*, Karen., Robert, Cam, Jed, Janet Lee, Natasha, Steven Vaschon, Samantha Chanel, Jerome, Kevin, Matt, David, and of course, my grandmother, Connie.

Again, welcome to *Finer Things Magazine*, where it's Gay Pride Month ... every month!

In the words of the immortal Bob Fosse: "It's showtime folks!"

Bryon



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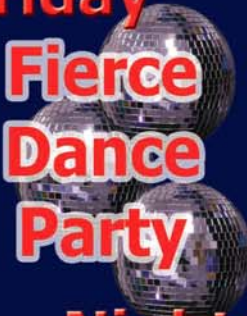
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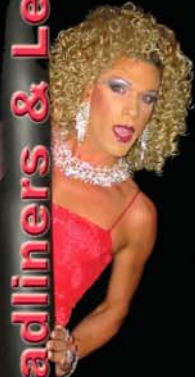
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Staff Directory

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"Gifts of Diversity"
A Celebration of
Gay/ Lesbian Pride Month
May 26th – June 26th
Kat Murphy,
Greg Bowerman,
Sgott MacKenzie

Upcoming Shows:
July 2nd – July 31st
Matt King,
Sgott MacKenzie

Aug. 6th – Sept. 4th
Helen Langfield,
Gretchen Hatfield,
Sylvia Malizic

Sept. 10th – Oct. 9th
Sacred Visions:
Juried Exhibition



Ron Jackson Suresha
Thursday, June 16th - 7:00 pm

Recent New London transplant Ron Jackson Suresha authored the groundbreaking GLBTQ studies book, **Bears on Bears: Interviews & Discussions**, and edited several fiction anthologies, most recently **Bear Lust**. He is senior editor of the nonfiction anthology **Bi Men: Coming Out Every Which Way**, to be published Autumn 2005.

He will be reading a variety of fiction from **Bear Lust**, and nonfiction from **Bi Men** and **I Do/ I Don't**. Suresha's own fiction and nonfiction writing appears regularly in GLBTQ periodicals and anthologies; his Website is www.suresha.com.

Gallery Hours: Thurs. - Sat. 11am - 7pm, Sun. 11-3 am

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Showcasing Pride



Connecticut Gay & Lesbian Film Festival

The 18th Connecticut Gay & Lesbian Film Festival

June 3 – 11 at Cinestudio in Hartford, CT

Info: www.ctglff.org Tel: (860)586-1136 glff@yahoo.com

The Connecticut Gay & Lesbian Film Festival is very pleased to be showcasing the works of three very talented filmmakers with roots in Connecticut. Their exceptional films will be among the highlights of our 18th Festival and two will be present in person to present their work. They would be pleased to speak with the press to discuss their work and their appearance at the Connecticut Gay & Lesbian Film Festival. The works are:

Saint Henry– Shown on Sunday, June 5 @ 2:00pm
Dir: Abigail Severance, USA, 2004, 35mm, 20 min.

In a reckless search for her father, Henry and her best friend Twiggy set out on a nighttime odyssey from sin to redemption.

Abigail Severance T: 323-957-2474 bellecote@earthlink.net

(Ms Severance will not be in attendance do to a conflict in scheduling.) New Britain native raised in Wallingford, Ms Severance's mom and mom's girlfriend live in New Haven. She received her MFA in directing from UCLA and now lives in LA. "Writer/ director Abigail Severance has a nice feel for the awkward pauses and hiccups of speech torn from life." Bay Area Reporter

Hearts Cracked Open- Shown on Wednesday, June 8 @ 7:30pm
Dir: Betsy Kalin, USA, 2004, video, 57 min.

This is an empowering journey of sexual healing and self-discovery with women who are living in a daily orgasmic state of being. Weaving together the arts of romance, eroticism, spirituality, and self-connection, tantra is the ancient belief that enlightenment can be achieved through ecstasy. A true marriage of spirituality, sexuality, and sensuality, Hearts Cracked Open offers up a feast for the senses, mind, and spirit.

Betsy Kalin T/F: 323-650 0370
betsykalin@earthlink.net
www.heartscrackedopen.com

True to the independent spirit, Bloomfield native Betsy Kalin (director/co-producer/videographer) often wears the hats of producer, writer, director and editor on her film and video projects. She received a BA in Women's Studies from Columbia University and an MFA in Directing from the University of Miami.

Harold's Home Movies – Shown on Friday, June 10 @ 7:30pm
Dir: Jason Plourde and Sean David West, USA, 2004, video, 64 min.

For more than 70 years, Harold O'Neal documented his life in San Francisco. Along with historic events, such as rubber and aluminum recycling drives during WWII, Japanese citizens being rounded up for internment. But he also captured the playful side of gay culture back when such gatherings were often considered anxious and fearful affairs. These personal archives are a revelation, an unprecedented and epic look at gay life in the 20th Century.

Jason Plourde T: 206-323-4274
Jason@seattlequeerfilm.com

Bristol native Jason Plourde returns to the CTGLFF where he was director from 1994 to 1996. A sign language interpreter by profession, he has long been involved in the Seattle Gay & Lesbian Film Festival where he is currently the director of programming. Said Jason, "It was really an honor to be able to bring together (Harold's) remarkable films, and stories."

Note: The entire Festival schedule is now available on-line at www.ctglff.org



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Matched Baggage by Cam Linguist



Many moons ago, I ended a relationship with someone I cared very much about. It was short lived, but even still the man was very nice, charming, and good looking until one day he snapped over nothing. A violent outburst, an explosion if you will from absolutely no where. Or so I thought. After a few weeks we talked and I realized something I never knew about him before. He had serious baggage from previous relationships and his childhood.

Now honey, we aren't talking about a small carry on bag

He literally had so many issues that ran so deep I felt bad for his dog, let alone his next lover.

that you can store in the over head bin on a Boeing 737. We all have those in tow, right? We take our relationship issues, preconceived notions about love from our parents, and hurts that lovers have left behind with us wherever we go. But most of us do our best to fold them up neat and tight to get them in that little bag. Why Martha Stewart couldn't pack more efficiently for a trip down lovers lane.

But in his case we are talking about a matched set of

Gucci Luggage: Two suitcases, a garment bag, shoulder bag, make up case, and a sporty lap top bag. He literally had so many issues that ran so deep I felt bad for his dog, let alone his next lover.

I was reminded of him this week when my Earthy Bisexual Pagan friend from Upstate New York, Kerstin, and I were chatting about song lyrics. She asked me if I remembered a particular one, the one she listened to over and over when she had been dumped by this cheerleader in college, Erin. Erin and Kirsten had not worked out because Erin wasn't out, and Kerstin wasn't into not being out. She acted tough at the time of the bust, but it was that first real, mad love for her. She swore off preppy "fake"

Meet a cute boy who is all wrong for you.

people forever, vowing to find someone who was "in tune" with herself. Kirsten then traded in her *Guess* and *Gap* for *Tie Die* and *Birkenstocks*, and converted to *Druidism*.

The song in question is called "Objects in the Rearview Mirror May Appear Closer Than They Are".. It is from the album *Bat Out of Hell Part 2* by *Meat Loaf*. The part that stands out is, as usual, the chorus:

But that was so long ago, and it was far away
Oh God, it seems so far away,
And if life is a highway, then the soul is just a car
And objects in the rear view mirror may appear
closer than they are

How true is that? Very!

A few years down the road Kirsten met Beth, an Earthy Celtic Druid Lesbian. Right before they were going to move in together Beth decided to take Kirsten home to meet the future in-laws. She showed up to pick up my friend dressed head to toe in country club attire. Kirsten flipped out. Just the sight of her normally bare footed, vegan earth goddess in prep drag had Kirsten

I decided to date someone that normally I wouldn't.

unpacking and breaking out the old *Meat Loaf* CD. No matter how over Erin she thought she was, she just wasn't.

I myself have to confess that I am also a victim of the same syndrome. My pattern is simple:

1. Meet a cute boy who is all wrong for you
2. Fall in love with him way too soon, and definitely before he falls for you
3. Make a huge grand gesture of romantic love immediately when you feel that first cool breeze of break up on the northerly winds. Not something simple, something so big it is sure to scare him off.
4. Drown my sorrows in chocolate and break up music for a month while sadness becomes longing.
5. Make an embarrassing attempt and reconciliation (usually while intoxicated at the local queer bar) in front of all his and my friends in response to the longing.
6. Repeat step 4, twice for good measure.
7. Apologize and settle for friendship becoming his confidant. Thus sentencing myself to suffer through the agonizing details of all his new tricks and relationships while wondering the whole time, "How is this one better than me?"

I usually end the cycle by dating a rebound guy who would be perfect for me if I wasn't still in love with Looser # 1. I break this guys heart in return for my own heart break, and repeat step # 4 out of guilt when I realize I too am a jerk! Then of course move on to another Mr. All Wrong.

The cross roads I though were going to change my life turned out to be a traffic circle...

So I decided this time I was going to be different. This time no matter what I wanted to say, to do, or whatever I was going to do the exact opposite. And it worked, for a while...

But here I am back in my home town rebuilding my life here. The cross roads I though were going to change my life turned out to be a traffic circle, bringing me back where I belonged. Back to my family, friends, and on the fringe of my

comfort zone. I did make some minor adjustments. I moved to a much more queer section of town closer to all the happenings. I stopped working as much and decided to spend some time having a little fun and enjoying my life. And most importantly I decided to date someone that normally I wouldn't. Someone who had been chasing me instead of chasing someone else.

I decided to take things slow, or more specifically to go with the flow. Give up on my hope for a "boyfriend" and just let it be what it will be. I decided to be the care-free me that I never could be before. I didn't demand a commitment or infer jealousy at the thought of him going out with someone he had previous plans with. I welcomed the idea.

But it has been a few months now, and that baggage I thought I put in the tow trailer are so close I can read the monogram on them. Something I didn't really expect to happen started to happen. I fell for him. Usually I don't fall for the ones that like me, go figure...

So now as we sit together watching a movie, lay in

"Are we together? Is he still seeing that other guy?..."

bed at night, or even drive around town on our way to someplace

holding hands I think to myself, "Are we together? Is he still seeing that other guy? Is he going to think I am not serious because I haven't pushed him for a commitment?" Does he like me enough to make the leap from dating to relationship, or will he bolt. The question of questions appears in my head...

Is it just time to address this stuff, in the normal course of our relationship, or are the objects in my rear view mirror appearing closer than they are... And are they Gucci?

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Being A Lesbian In Today's Society by Janet Lee Spooner Written in 2004

Being a lesbian today should be easier that it was 22 years ago when I had my first lesbian relationship. I know from books I have read and from older lesbians I have talked to periodically, that it has. So shouldn't it be even easier now? In some ways, I believe it is.

At 16, I lost my first job because I was a lesbian. I was young and did not realize it was something I should keep to myself. Today, everyone at my job knows I am a lesbian. No, I do not stand up and shout it out at the top of my lungs, however, when I talk about my partner, I **I lost my first job because I was never say my "roommate" a lesbian.** or any other term that would suggest she is less to me than what she is. I work at a call center for a company that owns several top hotels, and one of our benefits is being able to get rooms at these hotels at a much-reduced rate. This is a benefit that is also extended to our families. We have to fill out a paper with the names of our families, and one of the categories of people who are eligible is "spouse/domestic

partner". This is something that would not have been an option twenty years ago. She can also be on my insurance, another option that was not available twenty years ago. So, yes I guess it has become a little easier, but we still have a long way to go.

I live in Massachusetts, which last May, became the first state to legalize gay marriages. Vermont legalized civil unions a few years ago, but that is not quite the same as a legal marriage. This means that the "commitment ceremony" that my partner and I have been planning on having, is now going to be a "marriage ceremony." While this delights me beyond belief, I still have the fear in the back of my head that this is going to be overturned. A lot of the opponents to this do not realize this means more to us than just a little piece of paper. Let's face it, as far as the love that Shanna and I have for each other, that little piece of paper is not going to make life all better for us. There are much more important reasons gays and lesbians to want to be allowed to have a legal marriage. While I am not going to state all those reasons here, for it would take many sheets of paper, I will mention a couple. One: If

This same fight to not look at us just as people, who have sex with people of the same sex.

Shanna or I were to get very ill and be in the hospital, the hospital itself could say to the other, "I'm sorry but only immediate family can go in there." One of us could be deathly ill and the person who means more to us than anything in the world can't even be by our side? Do you know how just typing that makes me feel?

There is also the fact that we are both going to die one day, hopefully after many years together, and unless we are in an accident together, one of us is going to die first. We share everything and everything we own is ours. What if the family of the one who lives decides they want everything? Guess what? They would get it! There was a couple we were friends with. They had a commitment ceremony and lived their lives. Jesse's parents treated Mona like she was their daughter. One day Jesse had a terrible car accident and died. Her parents, who treated Mona like a daughter, took everything! They would not even let Mona speak at the services. She was left with no personal things such as pictures. If they had been legally married, this never would have happened. Even if you have a will, the family can fight it, and they can win. They would never be able to win if a couple were legally married. People do not realize that to us, these things are more important than a piece of paper. Anti-gay heterosexuals say if we

are allowed to marry, we will ruin the institution of marriage. I say, how can we possibly ruin it any more than heterosexual people already have? Take a good look at the divorce rate; heterosexuals are doing a great job of ruining the sanctity of marriage all by themselves, without any help from us whatsoever.

Our president wants to change the constitution to deem gay marriages against the constitution. He says he wants to preserve the meaning of marriage. What about preserving the things that our forefathers wanted for the people of this country? They wanted all Americans to be treated equally. A president should want all Americans to be treated fairly under the laws of the United States. Apparently, George Bush does not feel this way. By altering the constitution, he would be discriminating against gays and lesbians. He would in effect be saying that we do not deserve the same rights as our heterosexual counterparts. When did this type of thinking become ok? When did the President of the United States become God? I do not think this will pass. Not because I am in denial, but because I think the majority of Americans, no matter what their opinion of homosexuality is, do not believe in changing

[Bush] would in effect be saying that we do not deserve the same rights as our heterosexual counterparts.

the constitution to discriminate against anyone. Even though I do not think it will pass, I find the fact that it is even an issue quite appalling.

Another issue facing lesbians and gays is whether or not we should be allowed to raise children. Most of the reasons given for us to not be allowed are off base. Let's take a look at one of them. "A child should have a mommy and a daddy" First of all, children should have a parent or parents that love them and care for them. How many mothers are there who do not know who their child's father is? How many mothers have a different "father figure" for their child every couple of months? How many fathers take off before a child is even born? Let's face it, just because a child is raised by "a heterosexual couple," does not mean the child is being raised correctly. There are a lot of children out there who are being raised by mothers and fathers who beat them, spend all their time doing drugs, or are in and out of jail. All kinds of situations where the child is being neglected! Is it really better for children to be raised in "that type" of home? Or in a home where the parents just happen to be two females or two males,

but are loved and cared for in a healthy environment? I have a few friends who are raising children in lesbian households, and the kids are well-adjusted normal kids. The fact is, anyone can make a baby, but not everyone is suited to take care of that baby. If children are being cared for properly and are receiving lots of love, then the gender or sexual orientation of the parents should not matter! It does not matter!

Being a lesbian is actually being part of a larger community: the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community. I find it amazing how intolerant some of us can be of our own people. Recently, I was in a chat room I go in regularly. The name of this room is called Lesbian Butch. We have several transgender women (FTM) who go into this room. A comment was made that they do not belong in the room. Several of us femmes said well then "we should not be in here either, we are not butches". But we, as well as everyone else in that room, knew that this was not about femmes, it was about the "boys" in the room. What I do not understand is how we as lesbians who have to deal with being discriminated against ourselves, can discriminate against others in our own community? We need to stand together as a community, not as lesbians, gay men, bisexuals or transgender individuals, but as one whole community. Even though we have come a long way, we still have a long way to go, and we are all fighting the same fight. The fight for people to look at us as individuals, the same as them; not to see us as people who simply have sex with individuals of the same sex.

Most people believe being a lesbian is all about the sex. That couldn't be further from the truth! No one has been able to come up with a concrete reason as to why some women choose to love other women and some men choose to love other men, but that reason is not simply ... the sex. For myself, I feel more of a connection with women than with men. Women are also gentler and more caring than men, and can meet my emotional needs more adequately than a man can. As for me, meeting my emotional needs is a lot more important than meeting my sexual needs. These opinions of course are mine and not everyone feels the same way.

So, is it easier being a lesbian in today's society than it

Finer Expressions

was in the past? Yes, but it's still not simple. We do have it better. We have different problems to deal with. In a way I thank God for these problems. It shows just how far we have come. In the fifties and sixties, gay bars got raided and people got arrested for dancing or being too close to people of the same sex.

Having to fight for marriage means that we do not have to hide our sexuality anymore and pretend to be something we are not. Stonewall is something that I feel more than likely could not happen today, and for that I am grateful. If we keep on fighting for our rights, people in a generation or two may not have to go through what we have, just like we do not have to go through what generations before us went through.

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Choosing Our Battles by Jed Osgood

As I listen to Jim and Greg chat over their morning latte, I begin to wonder how two gay men who are obviously madly in love with one another, could think they way they do. Jim, a construction worker from the upper East Side, and Greg, a clothing dis-

We have to pick our battles, and know when to call a truce until acceptance is ready to meet our needs”.

tributions manager from Yonkers, come together to form a perfect union. With so many things they have in common, so many of the dislikes they share. The idea that they take their own freedoms and rights for granted eludes me. I heard Jim say that “Gay marriage is just another prison. Why go to all the trouble of the paperwork and promises when we can live together and be Ozzy and Harriet without the wedding?”

I couldn't believe my ears. I wanted to chime in and remind him of the strife, the struggle, the protest, and the many gay and lesbian couples out there who do want the wedding and the paperwork. I didn't though, I just waited, hoping Greg would let Jim in on the secret. A little secret called self respect.

How could Greg live with such a closed minded, self disrespecting man? Just then, Greg, sipping from his caffeine filled

cup, leaned over and kissed Jim and said nothing. How could he be in agreement? How could he have the same opinions that are obviously flawed?

We all got up to leave, Jim went out to hail a cab when I took Greg aside. I needed to know how he could be so stupid. What he told me made me stop and seriously think for a long moment. Greg simply said, “Ten years ago, if I were to kiss my partner on the lips in a coffee house, the room would have gone silent and every eye would have been on us. With that kiss I gave to Jim, I showed that acceptance is rising, but it doesn't happen overnight. We have to pick our battles, and know when to call a truce until acceptance is ready to meet our needs.”

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A Shorter History of God by Robert Patrick

For Karen Armstrong
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And self-flagellant devices.
When, despite our ritual,
Storms remain habitual
We invent a second figure
Who's responsible for rigor,
But, to keep things tidy,
Say Sombody Almighty
Also made our persecutor--
Possibly to serve as tutor.
When complications enter,
We then begin to splinter
Into stern salvationists
And prim predestinationists
Who tend to burn each other,
Murmuring, "Ah, brother,
What a tangled web we weave
When first we practice to believe."

Usually by Robert Patrick

for H.G. Wells
Usually
There's a dominant male
To whom each prominent male
Owes fealty
And realty,
And a middle class
Which gains a little class
By loyalty
To royalty
And having more class
Than a lower class
Which labors
And kills neighbors
But is not an hysterical class
Because a clerical class
Promises Hell
Should it rebel
And Heaven
For working till seven.
There's an academic class
Permitted to mimic class
And philosophize
Until it ossifies.
There's a military class
And a missionary class
Who press alien classes
(Called mammalian masses)
Into slavery
Through Bibles and bravery,
And a Bohemian class
Which lives like a simian class
While making art giving
Reasons for living
Which alone endures
Of these cultures of yours,
Usually.

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I Do Love Myself by Natasha

I have love for myself
Now I want to love someone else
I wear my heart on my sleeve
My heart knows no one else's love
Loneliness is my lover
It lies in my bed
That's where it slumbers

My emotions blunder inside my body
The passion I want blinds me
I don't see the world the way I should
The love I desperately seek is an invisible hood
That has shielded all my other emotions

When people talk to me I am unable to listen
My eyes glisten
From tears that have fallen
I feel someone's heart calling
Saying my name
Their silhouette is unknown
But I see it in my darkness

Songs of a lover fill my ears
Sometimes that stops my tears
I sit in hiding
So no one sees my face
I shield myself with my invisible hood
Which I am now grateful to have in my possession
This obsession has become a life long lesson
That will stop when I die
When I lie
With my eyes closed forever

I have love for myself
Now I want to love someone else
I wear my heart on my sleeve
My heart knows no one else's love
Loneliness is my lover
It lies in my bed
That's where it slumbers

Plastic Strides by Karen Riggs

Talons reach out to seize
shadows move swiftly
through darkened trees

A sound...A movement
what could it be
which way have the shadows went

I feel a man walk across my brain
small feet-tiptoeing lightly
this man is small but gone quite insane

He whispers notions in my ear
babblings like a mountain stream
they start to make sense I fear

Angels roam the heaven high
I see them floating high upon the breeze
I close my eyes against the spinning of the sky

Strange words wash up in the tides
they make no sense in my mind
I walk away in plastic strides

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The True Artists

Art Work by Karen Riggs
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The Fruit Bowl



Tree Adrift

Cute Mexican at the Bus Stop by Bryon

The Mexican stood soaking to the bone,
 no awning to protect him from the pour;
 with my umbrella, him there all alone,
 I offered half; the sky fell all the more.
 He slid beneath; a smile raised his face,
 inside my bag I had an extra coat;
 he did not have a one, this sad disgrace,
 I left it there; I did not want to gloat.
 He moved in closer as his arm grazed mine,
 he said that he was sorry he was cold;
 the stream of water by the curb my sign,
 the Rio Grande's been crossed by men as bold.
 The bus I missed just water down the drain,
 my sacrifice to dry his back from rain.

Sixteen by Bryon

He snuffed the first two out, that was a start,
 this long journey of mine was almost through;
 the third and fourth died too, I felt my heart
 begin to race as if exhaling too.
 The fifth and sixth would be the next two out,
 it did not matter which of them was first;
 the seventh and the eighth began to pout,
 as he leaned in and back I heard one curse.
 The ninth and tenth, they didn't have a crutch,
 to lean upon as he did them both in;
 the next five followed suit, they'd warmed so much;
 just one remained, how long my journey's been!
 "The sixteenth candle, your lighthouse..." he said;
 I blew it out and took sixteen to bed.

Planets of Pride By Our Resident Astrologer, Miguel Gonzalez

Capricorn 12/22-1/19. OK. I realize I have a lot to prove to you. You read too many horoscopes. Welcome to the only one who truly knows you. You're not really looking for wisdom anyway, are you? Let's call a spade a spade. You are more interested in seeing how close I can get, and secretly hoping you will be able to laugh at how far off I actually am. By now, you are either offended, or astounded. In either case, I got to you. More will be revealed next month.

Aquarius 1/20-2/18. You share your sign with our illustrious editor. He is a handful and a half, and needs a hell of a lot more than an astrologer to help him decide, what he is going to do next. All of you, Aquarians, are pretty much the same. On any given day, in any given circumstance, you need more than an auger. You need a staff. Over the course of the next few weeks, you better make sure you have someone to pull the reigns when you cannot. Make sure you also have someone close by who's not afraid of pulling the plug.

Pieces 2/19-3/20. You need to spoil yourself now and then. Reward yourself, despite what others may say. Spoil yourself once or twice just to spite them and let them know just how much money you spent. You always seem to pull things together anyway. I am not talking about money so much as I am about your overall balance. However, run too hard and fast and you will get winded, spiritually and financially. This month, spoil yourself indeed; once, but then pay a bill, before spending another dime. You'll be glad you did.

Aries 3/21-4/19. Easy does it. One thing at a time. No, I am not suggesting that you head to your local AA meeting, but I am urging you to repeat stupid little clichés like this when you need to, especially when it comes to working or looking for work. You will always be worth more than you are paid for. Others see that too. The problem is, the ones who can't see that right now, are for the most part the ones who can pull the strings that need to be pulled to change your circumstances for the better. To the ones who recently started a new job, this is the calm before the storm. Pack a lunch instead of eating out.

Taurus 4/20-5/20. I feel as though I am entering a ring of another kind with you, a more traditional one. Oh, where is my red, velvet cape? Is that it? Wrapped around the neck of the last person you wanted to strangle? I come in peace. Going from zero to sixty in the anger department may get your points across, but it also pushes people who are closest to you into tight, scary corners. The least you can do since they truly do care about you is smile at them now and then, and promise that in the future, you'll pick your battles a little more wisely. You know, the ones who truly DO need to be taught a lesson.

Gemini 5/21-6/21. Can you sit down for five minutes and really let what I am about to say sink in somehow? Take a minute or two and let this idea set for a bit. It is in your best interest to get wherever you need to be on time this month. This does not mean race there. It means leave earlier. Much, much earlier. Don't leave early either.

Cancer 6/22-7/22. Nice to meet you. How are you? Are you having a good time? That's nice. Smalltalk! It's a great tool for you right now. It's working for you. It won't next month. Enjoy the benefits of it now. By the third week of this month, you are going to risk being referred to as "smug." And on you, that smug looks nasty! Oh, and stop grinding your teeth. Enamel!

Leo 7/23-8/22. Don't try to stand on Pride Rock until you've earned the right to. Yeah, I'm talking to you. Cutting corners and expecting everyone else to get you through is not going to work for you for very much longer. Do the work yourself. Put in the hours. Put in extra hours. Send someone else home early. Believe me, considering what's coming up for you; you'll want to be able to take all the credit for it. If you've started your own business, proof-read!

Virgo 8/23-9/22. Oh, you poor dear. You poor, poor dear. People in your life are either driving too fast or too slow. Your trip to pick up eggs and milk doesn't need to be like a scene out of a James Bond movie. Stop tailgating. If you read this, but you continue to do it anyway, I can promise you at least one close call, if not, a real mess.

Libra 9/23-10/22. This month is going to be a test for you. Spring has sprung. Love is in the air. They are smiling because they like what they say. Just make sure it's the one you want before you venture to smile back. If you are already involved with someone, try smiling at him or her once in awhile. If you really care about the person, a smile will speak even louder than actually saying, "I love you."

Scorpio 10/23-11/21. Well, you know yourselves better than anyone else. As a matter of fact, I have decided this month to play it safe with the lot of you. I would hate to see that you stopped picking up *Finer Things Magazine* just because the astrologer pissed you off in the first issue. Stop picking up after everybody! Let the mess stay there until the one responsible for it cleans it up. By the token, stop trying to save that individual you keep trying to rescue. This person is taking advantage of your kindness. Cut the leach, loose.

Sagittarius 11/22-12/21. What are you doing? I mean, really. What were you thinking? Did you honestly believe you could play with fire and not get burned? This goes beyond accidentally leaving a telephone number where someone might find it or forgetting to clear the history list on your cell phone. You claim you're not into telling on yourself but then you go ahead and do just that. I'm not necessarily talking about how you conduct yourself in your relationships with others. I might also be talking about how true you are to yourself. You know what you need to do. Stop doing the opposite because you're second-guessing yourself. And if your cell phone is hella shady by some slim chance, erase the lists the second you are able to. Like, right now.

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Up Close & Personal

The Author of "Rear View" & the recently published book "Rear View 2" Steven Vaschon

Why choose this type of particular subject matter?

Ever since I first learned that I had an attraction for men, a majority of the images I've seen depict the all mighty male "penis". Still today, most photographers who shoot male nudes tend to focus on that area.

My personal preference has always been those precious curves 'round back. I don't know why but for some reason I felt strongly that there might be others who felt the same as I did in wanting to see more backsides in photos. However, I wanted to present it in a way that was first class, stylish, sophisticated and artistic.



Why choose photography as a medium for your art?

Quite honestly, it was a bit of a fluke. I can't say that I'm one of those people who aspired to be a photographer since an early age because that's just not what happened. Someone bought me a camera a few years ago and it got stolen during my first month of living in L.A. Years later, I was finally making enough cash from my new employer in San Francisco to be able to afford far more than just my bills, so during lunch one day, I bought a replacement camera. I truly had no idea of how to use it, but it sure felt good owning one again.

Shortly after the purchase, I enrolled myself in a beginner's photography class and here I am.

How would you equate your work to other artistic forms of expressions such as poetry or painting?

This form of photography is very much like painting, which is what



makes it so wonderful! What a lot of people don't realize is that "absolutely everything" in the photo is a part of the artistic expression. (Not just the model.) I'm not shooting a collection of photos with models standing in front of boring, plain backdrops in a studio. Nor is this journalistic type photography where the models just happen to be in a specific place and time with me just happening to show up at the right time to shoot them.

These images were shot in many different beautiful homes, located in various cities & states throughout America, as well as London. When I initially prepare to capture an image in one of these homes, I first do a tour of the home to determine which perspectives may lend to a wonderful image. Then when the conceptualization and creative process continues, I carefully consider the most creative and interesting perspectives to shoot the model. This means making careful mental notes of every in site, (in front of and behind the model. Absolutely no light is incidental. All things are considered and used "as is" or manipulated in some way for in every photo.

What I do is "paint with light", redirect shadows, shoot from interesting perspectives & use special lenses and various photography techniques to manipulate the image to an eye catching result. Many images take nearly two hours to light. This is why it can be frustrating at times to show someone an image and have them comment only on the model's butt.

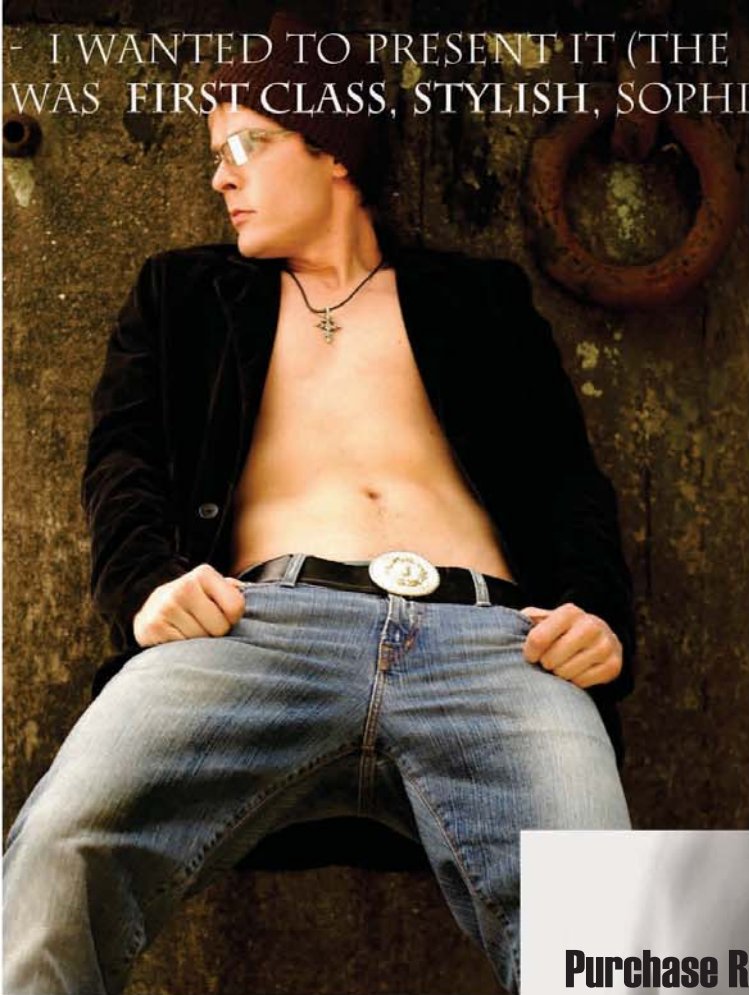
Is there going to be a follow up to "Rear View 2"? Would you ever consider a female version of "Rear View"?

Rear View 2 is the last "Rear View (anything)" that I'll ever do, lol. I will surely do more books which feature all or mostly male backsides, but not with that title. My next book project will be called "Chapter 4" which will feature four striking male models with complete chapter of images devoted to each model. Although a majority of the images will still be "backsides", a good portion of

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- I WANTED TO PRESENT IT (THE MALE FORM) IN A WAY THAT WAS FIRST CLASS, STYLISH, SOPHISTICATED AND ARTISTIC.

--Vaschon



VASCHON

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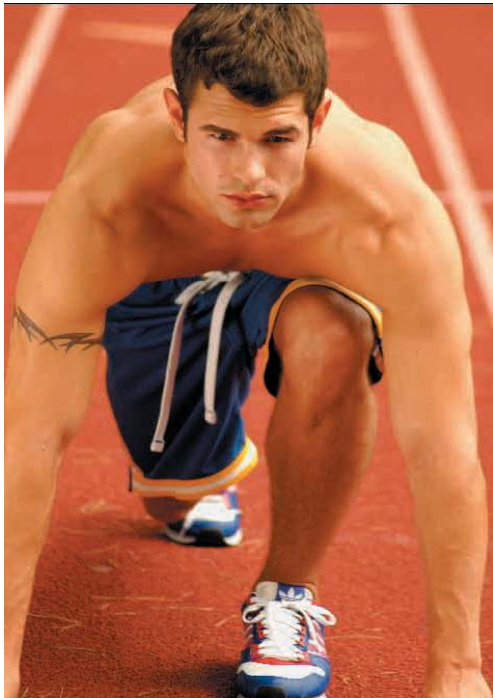
STEVEN
REAR VIEW 2
VASCHON

-IT CAN BE FRUSTRATING AT TIMES TO SHOW SOMEONE AN IMAGE AND HAVE THEM COMMENT ONLY ON THE MODEL'S BUTT.

-Vaschon



Up Close & Personal



the images will show everything else as well.

I've been asked about doing a female version of this book several times. But my honest opinion is that there are far more straight photographers than gay ones. And those photographers have already photographed ever possible inch of a woman that can be photographed. My aim was to stay away from things that are far too common.

Most importantly, (as with any artist), this photography is a form of 'self expression' for me. It's depicts my perspective and opinion of what's most attractive and exciting about the male physique. And it does it in a way that is eloquent, romantic, respectful, taste-



ful and undeniably artistic. Much like the way that I would treat a partner in an intimate relationship.

What is the overall reaction that you are trying to instill in the audience?

I've never wanted people to equate my name to pornography such as "Falcon", "Chi Chi La Ru", "Kristen Bjorn" or "Matt Sterling". My name is "really" my name and I want to be known as a well-respected, artistic photographer. Like any artist, I should be allowed the unspoken license to occasionally be provocative, but it always makes me cringe when people refer to my photos as "erotic". My hope is to stimulate people's "minds" as well as any other part of their body. However, I am resigned to the fact that many people will never get it and will only view my work with regard to whatever sexual stimulation they can get out of it. C'est la ve'

Who or what, if any, helped influence your style and art? Do you have a particular artist that you admire or strive to be?

Herb Ritts without a doubt! I also marvel at Michael Angelo's work. I've always viewed the human body as work of art. There are many ways to present it as such. As long as there are people out there who understand where I'm coming from I'll continue to do what I do. I don't know if I'll ever be as well established and respected as Herb Ritts, but the future looks bright from this perspective.

Based on a couple of photos, is your favorite movie *Bonnie and Clyde*?

(Giggle). The images you're referring to were taken for a magazine in NYC which was doing an entire issue on "bad boys, gangsters and various controversial public figures." These images were taken as part of a fashion spread which accompanied the articles in that issue. Each image served a dual purpose of mimicking a true life story or characters while showing off stylish new fashions by Diesel and other clothing stores.

My favorite is the portrayal of "Lucky Luciano" and "Joe the Boss", (two mob rival mob leaders) who met for a truce over a long lunch and card game in an Italian restaurant. Lucky excused himself to the men's room and by doing so, gave signal to his boys to quickly storm in and shoot Joe the Boss. This image depicts that true life incident while showing off hip, stylish, clothes being worn by Lucky.

Editor Interview with Performer Samantha Chanel



It didn't take long for Samantha Chanel to bring down the house at the AIDS benefit at *Club Shake* in New Britain on Sunday, April 25, 2005. She not only brought it down but build up a whole new one all on her own. During the intermission, I had the opportunity to sit and chat with the diva for a little insight into her world. I left stunned! Samantha held the title of Ms. Gay Latina 2002 in Connecticut. She is Ms. Laura Latina 2005 and also Ms. Polo 2005.

Finer Things Magazine: Who were and are your role models in the entertainment business? And why?

Samantha: "I admire Jennifer Lopez and Beyonce. They both started from the bottom, worked their way to the top, but they are still real and down to earth."

Finer Things Magazine: How often do you perform?

Samantha: "I perform on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays in Connecticut, as well as in New Jersey and in New York. I do three shows per night."

Finer Things Magazine: What's coming up next for you?

Samantha: "I want to go national. My dream is to be Ms. Laura Latina in New Jersey as well as a pageant in Las Vegas."

Finer Things Magazine wishes Samantha the best and recommends seeing her perform if you haven't yet.

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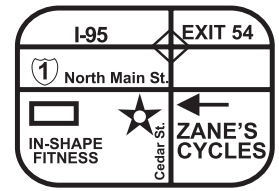


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ADVERTISE: Reach the Fairfield County LGBT Community directly by advertising in the Triangle Community Center newsletter NEWS & VIEWS. For rates, specs and schedules please contact Michele Stone at TCCEditor@aol.com or call (203) 853-0600.

The TCC is home to a number of dynamic group meetings and organizations that support the LGBT community. Included among these is the TCC sponsored youth group—OutSpoken, the Lesbian Literature Group, the Womyn's Social and many other educational and social activities.

Saturday, June 18, 2005, Westport, CT
4th Annual Fairfield County GLBT Pride
"Our Time Is Now"



See page 23 for details and visit www.ctgay.org for information as it unfolds.

The Lesbian Literature Group
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For more information, contact:
Marlene Leja: ML3017@hotmail.com
(203) 526-0824

Womyn's Social Group

Meets the first Friday of the month at 7:30 PM
For more information, contact:
Margaret O'Connell: MOConnell@aol.com.

OutSpoken-Youth Program

Meets every Sunday from 4-6 PM
For more information, contact:
Dan: (203) 227-1755
Doug and Dan: (203) 838-2367
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Love Makes a Family

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Bernie Kettle: Bernie@lmfct.org
(203) 622-6004

Men's Social Group

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For more information, contact:
Chad: Operaman_06611@yahoo.com

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Website: www.nhglcc.org

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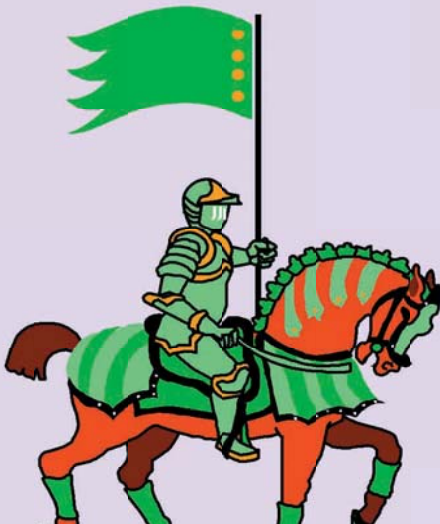
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18 & Proud!

by Anthony Bennoch

June is almost upon us, and the thought occurred to me...what in the world is there to do in Connecticut for Gay Pride month? The answer arrived when I opened my mailbox and discovered a small gold postcard announcing the 18th Connecticut Gay & Lesbian Film Festival. Yep, they're finally legal! And their 9-day birthday celebration is being held from June 3 – 11 at Cinestudio at Trinity College in Hartford.

Inspired by my good luck in finding the postcard, I ran to my computer and typed in their website address (www.ctglff.org). I quickly found the Film Schedule link and delved into a world of queer films I thought only existed in San Francisco or New York. The line-up of films seemed quite varied and interesting, and some of the photos looked particularly tantalizing. I'm not usually one to go to movies more than once a month, but I immediately saw four or five that I wanted to check out.

Dutifully putting on my reporter hat, I decided to call the festival organizers to arrange an interview. Dan Millett, Executive Director of the Connecticut Gay & Lesbian Film Festival was more than happy to talk with me about the festival.

Finer Things: So how would you characterize this year's festival?

Dan Millett: Let me just say that it's a great year for gay film in Connecticut. With so much going on in the political arena and with the GLBT market emerging in such force, the variety and quality of films we'll be presenting this year is outstanding. And as always, we'll be showing many clever little short films and cutting edge films that you won't find on your neatly packaged cable or network TV lineup.

FT: I heard that you sold out the theater when you showed "Latter Days" last year. Are there any films this year that you think will draw another sell-out crowd?

DM: Our opening night and closing night films are always very popular, and this year we have some great films lined up. We're opening with the New England premiere of "My Summer of Love," a film that recently won the British

equivalent of the Oscar for Best British Film. And the closing night is "Straight-Jacket" a comical look at a Rock Hudson-like, A-list, Hollywood star who would do almost anything to protect his hetero image.

FT: And I see you're showing a film recently featured on the cover of the Advocate Magazine?

DM: Yes, we're showing "Eating Out" with *Desperate Housewives* hottie Ryan Carnes – that promises to be another busy night. This film is a good example that goes to show, without a venue like our film festival, even some of the biggest gay films in the industry would never make it to the state.

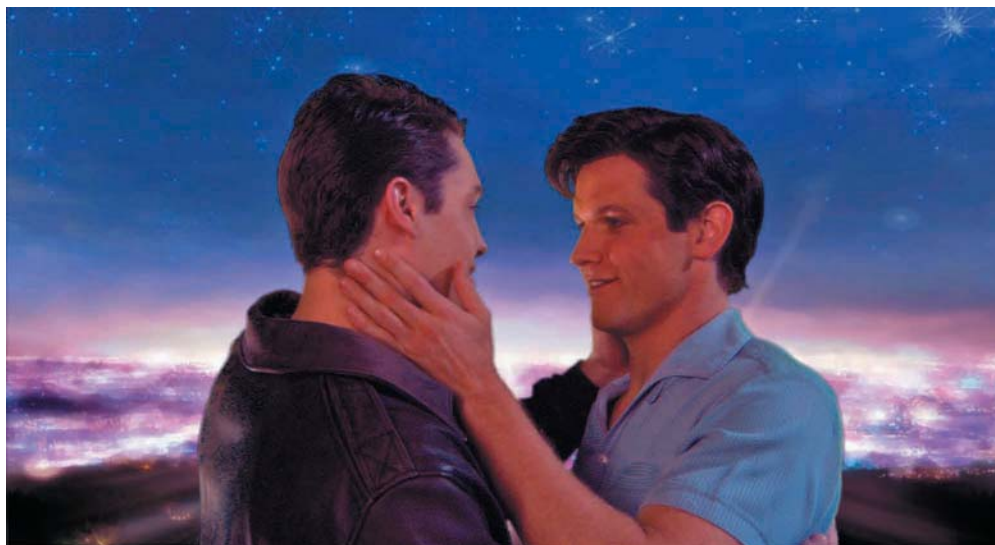
FT: Switching to the political front, Connecticut seems to be on the cutting edge of gay rights. How is that reflected in the festival this year?

DM: We'll actually be hosting a Gay Marriage Matinee on Sunday, June 4th, that will showcase some great films on the topic. I don't think a lot of people know the history behind the Goodridge V. Department of Public Health case that broke down barriers to gay marriage in Massachusetts. "Saying I Do" tells their compelling story, as well as the stories of other pioneers in the past year. "Late Wedding" tells the touching and funny story of a couple who finally got married after 48 years together. A panel of speakers, including the "Saying I Do" filmmakers and representatives from Love Makes a Family, promises a lively and thoughtful discussion.

FT: Will any other filmmakers or actors be attending the festival?

DM: Yes, we will have several filmmakers in attendance this year, some of them originally from Connecticut. Betsy Kalin, a Bloomfield native, will be attending the Connecticut premiere of her film





"Hearts Cracked Open" [screening Wednesday, June 8th]. This film weaves together the arts of romance, eroticism, spirituality and self-connection, exploring tantra, the ancient belief that enlightenment can be achieved through ecstasy. In addition, we're lucky to have Jason Plourde, a Bristol native, join us for his fascinating film "Harold's Home Movies" [screening Friday, June 10th] that features an unprecedented look at gay life in the 20th century through a collection of 70 years of home movies.

FT: So what else are you doing to make it more than just a night at the movies?

DM: We think of the festival as much more than just a night at the local cineplex. It's an important cultural event for our community, and we'll have plenty to do besides just watching movies. Once again this year, local restaurants like Trumbull Kitchen, Timothy's and Alchemy will be taking part in our Cinema Café, allowing the audience to come early and enjoy a meal before most weekend shows. We'll also be having a silent auction and live auction again this year, with items up for bid like a pair of plane tickets to any European destination and a New England to Nova Scotia cruise. And as always, our opening and closing night parties are a lot of fun, with DJs, dancing, food and drink available. It's truly going to be a great year.

The Connecticut Gay & Lesbian Film Festival will be held at Cinestudio, on the campus of Trinity College:

**300 Summit Street
Hartford, CT**

Friday, June 3 – Saturday, June 11

Visit their website at www.ctglff.org or call 860-586-1136 for directions or additional information. Advance tickets are available online.



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“Look Back On Me” New England Celebrates the 150th Anniversary of Walt Whitman’s 1855 edition of Leaves of Grass.

An exhibition consisting of colorful and whimsical items embodying Walt Whitman’s name and image in commercial advertising. The intention of this exhibit is not to make a critical appraisal of his work but rather a light-hearted approach to Walt Whitman.

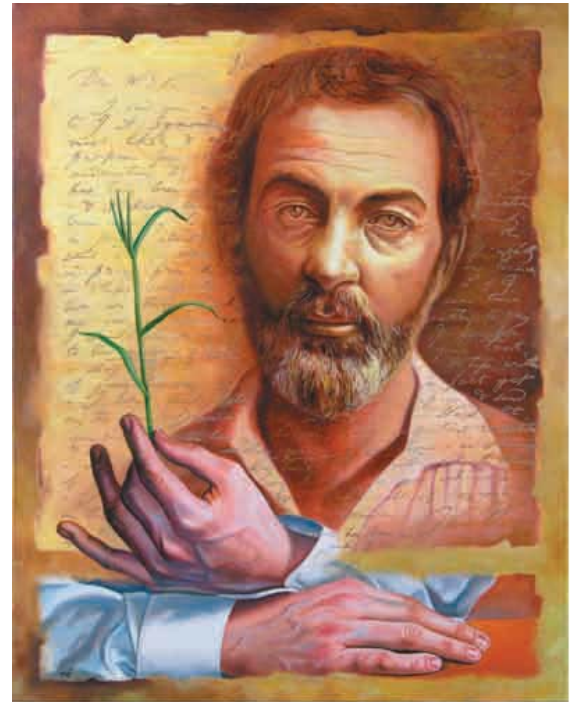
July 1st – September 30, 2005
Reception: Thursday, July 7th 6 –8 PM

In addition, several major events are being planned for September 22nd and 23rd. A performance of “I Sing The Body Electric”, a concert of Whitman songs and several distinguished visitors to lecture and take part in panel discussions.

Central Connecticut State University
Burritt Library – New Britain, CT

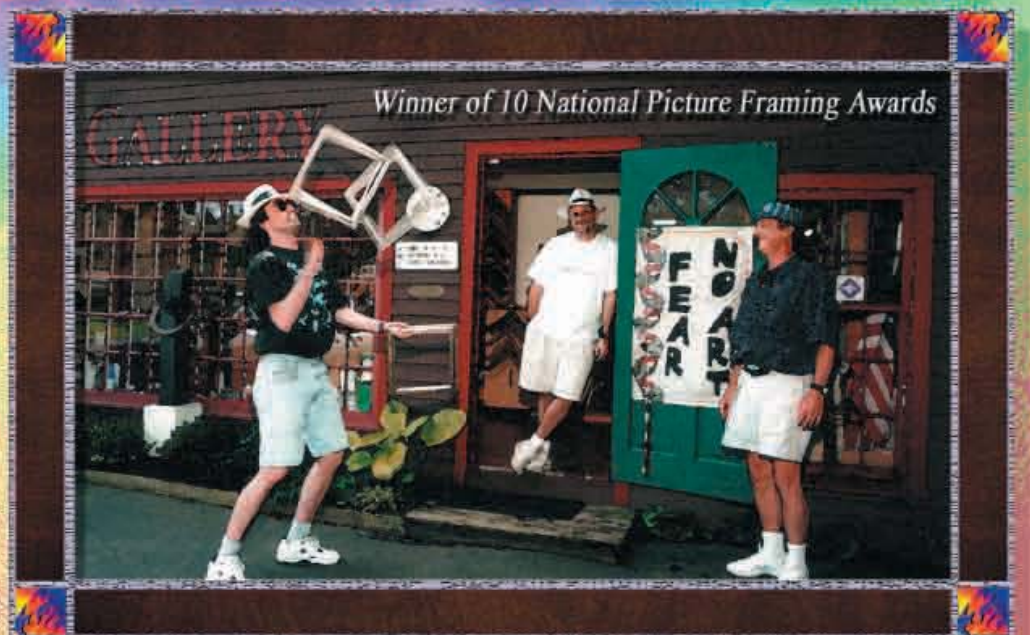
<http://library.ccsu.edu/lib/archives/Whitman/index.html>

Contact: Frank Gagliardi
E-mail: Gagliardi@ccsu.edu
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