

SPECTRUM

No One Knows I'm Gay - By Darren Elliott

Today is a very special day for me. It is my first birthday I have wanted to celebrate since I was in Elementary school. Before this year, I didn't consider the day I was born to be a day to celebrate. I hated myself, I hated my life. I was full of insecurities and convictions based on my sexuality that affected my entire life. I was a devoted Christian, and as such I believed homosexuality to be vile and disgusting; not that all Christians believe this, but I did. I hated myself for having the feelings and thoughts and fantasy dreams I was having. Daily I prayed that God would change me; I couldn't understand why he had made me this way if it was so wrong. Eventually I gave up and started praying for God to remove me from this earth. I was carrying so much guilt; I felt isolated and alone. I thought if my friends and family knew I am gay that they'd disown and reject me. I didn't trust anyone enough to tell them of my personal torment, no one had a clue.

Less than two years ago, my life was so perfect but I was completely miserable. I figured that if I wasn't happy then, then I would never be happy. This conclusion led me to behaviour that could have answered my latter prayer, but it didn't. I am so thankful that it didn't.

Closeted Myth: I could never live my life as a gay person.

Fact: Many people who are completely closeted have irrational beliefs about coming out that are blown way out of proportion. I didn't see living my life as a gay man to be an option for a long time. I didn't think I could face the discrimination, rejection, and social problems associated with homosexuality. I expected my family would disown me, thought my friends would reject me, and I thought that I would be unemployed. I was wrong.

My family was not accepting of my homosexuality, but when I told them they didn't reject me. Their love for me hasn't changed. I am still my parent's son, my siblings' brother, et cetera. I have to admit it wasn't easy, especially at first, but they're dealing with it. Considering how many years it took for me to deal with it myself how could I expect them to deal with it completely overnight. It does take time, but things get better. I feel more comfortable going home now than I have for years, because the threat of rejection is no longer there. I feel much more comfortable with my sexuality out in the open, it is no longer a deep dark secret.

As for rejection from friends, your true friends will want to know you for you. If your friends reject you, then you will go on to make new friends who accept you for who you are and you will have much more healthy relationships that way. Knowing that my friends accept me as I am and not as who they think I am makes all the difference in the world.

In the workplace, your sexuality should play no role. Do straight people not work with both men and women? Does their sexual attraction to the opposite sex affect their work behaviour? I certainly hope not. Society is progressing to becoming more and more gay positive all the time. Someday sexual orientation will cease to be an issue, what difference does it make who my lover is? Meanwhile, if you choose an occupation in which you may be discriminated against for your orientation, there is no need for you to disclose such information anyway. It, no doubt, will be important for you to disclose your personal feelings to your close friends, but not essential to flaunt it publicly. There is a time and a place for everything, the

work place is a place for work.

Today, on my 21st Birthday, I am happy to be alive, I am enjoying my life like never before. All those little things that before meant nothing to me, bring me peace and happiness now. Walking home from UNB I look up at the changing trees in awe of their beauty. I enjoy people for their differences and uniqueness, and feel that everyone has something special to offer. I love life and want to make a difference in other people's lives. I look forward to the future and wonder where I will end up. Despite not knowing my career direction, I feel I do have a purpose for existence, I believe that everyone does.

Tuesday November 11 is National Coming Out Day. For this day, GALA UNB is proposing a challenge to all UNB students. We want to measure the level of homophobia on campus. To do this, we are having another BLUE JEANS DAY - everyone who is gay-positive (that means you are accepting of gayness and are non-prejudiced against gay men & women) is encouraged to wear blue jeans. It is expected that those who are homophobic or prejudiced will go out of their way to be sure not to be wearing jeans, even if this means having to buy pants. I can hear it now "Attention KMart shoppers, please calm down - we have enough pants for all of you. And could those in isle seven please remove your white hoods? Thank you." A tad melodramatic I hope. I suppose I can expect to receive some Blood & Thunder for this one!

If anyone would like to leave me a message, use directory assistance. All calls are completely confidential and I will return calls discretely. Enjoy the crazy machine message!



Independence

By James Kierstead and Andrew Skaling

The Pigeon's Right Wing

New Brunswick is a province of roughly seven hundred thousand residents, comprising two major linguistic groups, who have all received handouts from other provinces vis-a-vis Ottawa for generation.

Our people have a long history of rugged independence, responsibility, initiative and individualism. The Loyalist and existing Acadian population who carved the province out of a vast forest had no benefits such as Medicare, public education, transport subsidies, or much of anything else. Each was granted a plot of land in reward for their loyalty to the crown during the American Revolutionary War. Through their own resources and the seat of their backs, they built our cities, our towns and our province.

Hypothetically, if we were to use a time machine and sent some of our current population back to the 18th century, it would be an absurd sight to see: They would arrive on the shores of New Brunswick, form a union, demand better wages, overtime, health benefits and retirement plan, before they even set out to work. Needless to say they would probably starve en masse. We don't mean to make light of the above benefits, but to indicate that today, we have it very good.

After a century of colonisation, New Brunswick had become one of the wealthiest colonies of the empire. We were a proud and independent people who were self-sufficient and did not depend on any one source for our "survival".

We have come a long way from those days of glory, fame and prosperity! After confederation, problems would arise from time to time. Rather than

look within ourselves for the solution, we abandoned our responsibility to Ottawa who was always willing to pay in part or in whole, the expense of rectifying the problem. Over time, this resulted in institutionalising dependence not only in New Brunswick, but the whole Atlantic region. Today our province amounts to a collective charity case, receiving billions of dollars annually. During the 1980s forty percent of our governments revenue came from the federal government in the form of transfer payments (i.e. Canada Assistance Plan, etc.), needless to say, none of this money has come; without string attached; we have abrogated our ability to make decisions on what forms of government programs suit our needs best.

Today, we have made some progress; 30% of our government's revenue comes from the federal purse (or rather Alberta, Ontario and British Columbia). We are on the verge of reclaiming our proud heritage (both English and French) and our rightful place in the greatest confederation ever to be. We need the lack of Ottawa's help, this will gain us a new respect amongst the people and provinces of Canada, and create a home grown independence and economic prosperity. We must do more ourselves and expect less from the Federal government, above and beyond what we contribute in taxes.

A good family, where all the children are adult, is not based on the children continuously whining and milking their parents, but a group of strong, independent group of individuals who will come together to solve the problems that afflict them all.

Metanoia by John Walk

Last week I concluded with the thought that perhaps the women's movement, as well as the men's movement, could be party to divine action. One could make that case if one understood why divine action might be revealed in these movements, something not readily claimed by many men or even women. Again, such an argument can be supported I believe on the basis of the first few chapters of Genesis.

Those chapters indicate quite clearly that God calls both men and women to a common task: a task of being God's vine-regents on earth. That task involves unfolding the rich diversity of human potential and of planet Earth, in a manner that preserves both for generations to come. By being and working in conjunction the human cause is best advanced. Also, in such a working relationship humans collectively, more so than merely individually, reflect or image God. Who is to ensure that the task put to humans by God will always be done in common? Whose responsibility is it to ensure that freedom and equality is preserved? Who will look after the rights of those trampled upon?

Genesis 3:16 predicts rather than sanctions what will happen when humans individually and/or jointly operate independent of God and each other. In pain, fear and frustration, rather than in comfort, peace and joy, they will sustain and reproduce themselves. All too often in asserting independence, we have achieved short-

term gain, only to introduce long-term pain. Our treatment of the environment is but one blatant example. History past and present is replete with numerous others.

If the past reflects patriarchy—the authority and dominance of men—then they have not understood or regarded the human task as common, but rather the right and responsibility of only one gender. When choices are or were made not to ensure or enshrine equal opportunity, rights and responsibilities for all, men failed in the common task. Instead of partnership, men advocated a dominance. Instead of a partner, women received a dominus (master). If men have failed in their task, have women in any way also been party to that very failure? If men have not sought or succeeded in achieving or maintaining freedom and equality for both genders, have women also failed in that? Is the extent to which they acquiesced to an unjust status quo the extent to which they too assisted in maintaining an imbalance?

The feminist movement has made that very point, if I'm not mistaken. It has lashed out angrily at the gender injustices perpetrated by men, all the while gently chastising women for perpetuating their own oppression. Silence in the face of injustice is not a virtue. Inaction in the face of a "peaceful" status quo is not defensible. God often displayed anger at the ancient people of Israel for their false peace: "peace, peace, they say, when there is not peace"

(Jeremiah 6:14).

The feminist movement is just when it strives to redress imbalance. But this movement too bears within it seeds of distortion. When its striving begins to reflect mere inversion of past or present injustices, nothing has been learned nor gained. When the struggle is for the assertion of power, it can hardly reflect divine action. To replace one dominating power with another is a failure to appreciate both the message of Genesis and tragedy in history. Success in any power struggle, regardless of the gender, is a failure to advance a common human task. What was conceived as a struggle for justice, is; then birthed as a struggle for individual power and control. Would the men's movement then supersede, in its recognition and redressing of the sins of the past?

All too frequently, humans learn lessons the hard way. Men and women seek power, but fail to realise that to give it away is to gain it. Jesus did that. Perhaps he was the first true feminist. In a very tightly knit patriarchal society, he contravened social convention to remandate women to a common task with men. No doubt he would also qualify as founder of the men's movement. He recognised that gentleness, uprightness and virtuous words are more powerful and liberating than brutality, ignorance and deceitful utterances.



Forest Breeze

by Tim Connelly

The Problem With Foresters

After looking at the title, a myriad of real and imaginary problems probably came into the minds of the readers: we enjoy beer too much, spend too much time throwing axes around or, more to the point, our sole purpose is to profit from the exploitation of our country's forests regardless of the repercussions. It is this last image of foresters that I would like to focus on or, rather, it is this point of view that has become so firmly entrenched in some people's minds.

The environmentalist movement would have you believe that foresters are biased in the favour of industry. Newspapers and television news programs are often filled with people encouraging this point of view, and rarely do foresters come forward to present their point of view, and thereby allow the public to form an informed opinion on the various forestry practices in question. This is the problem with foresters. Our unwillingness or inability to communicate has indirectly given us an unsavoury reputation with the public.

By communication I do not mean publishing articles such as "Planning and Executing Stand Improvement Strategies To Increase White Pine Volume in Stands", or reports containing pages and pages of data that is meaningless to the general public. While such information is important to us foresters, it does nothing to help the layperson understand the reasoning behind the decisions foresters make. What is needed are clear, concise and accurate articles explaining, for example, why stream sedimentation and loss of fish habitat are not always results of clearcutting.

Recently the Faculty of Forestry has changed its name to the Faculty of Forestry and Environmental Management. This is the first step to convincing the public that foresters do more than just find or develop stands of valuable timber. It lets them know that forestry students also become environmental consultants and conservationists who care about the environment and who are able to balance most forest interests.