

opinions

Holidays pose challenge for some

I'd like to welcome everyone back from the vacation. I'm very happy to be back and I'm sure you are too, right?? This Christmas I had a lot of time to think and I realized a few things about 'Christmas' and the lesbian, bisexual, and gay community/

ies. I'd like to share a few of my thoughts with you. When I say Christmas I mean the season. You may not celebrate it as Christmas so please don't be offended or excluded when I call it that. Christmas, Yuletide, Hanukkah... I have to

write this for the general Dalhousie type reader and ya'll know what Christmas means, I hope...

This time of year is difficult for almost everyone, with emotional and spiritual peaks and the added financial pressures of Christmas shopping and tuition. Many people spend Christmas alone. Many of those people are lesbians, bisexuals, and gay men. Many of us must choose between our 'families' and our partners/boy or girl friends/lovers. Of those who spend the season with family (meaning parents and siblings, or people you grew up with), many of them feel alienated or disempowered or belittled or insulted (etc.) to some degree.

Some people have redefined Christmas as a time to celebrate, to love, to be with family and friends, and to share. As we all know, many people are homo/bi/anything-other-than-traditional-het phobic. I bet you know one. So, keeping this in mind, if one were to go home and announce "I'm a dyke!" or "I'm a fag!" or "I'm a lesbian-identified lady who only sleeps with guys if they have pink hair!" the reaction may not be very pleasant.

Often the person is alienated, harassed, oppressed, (fill in almost

any unpleasant verb), and sometimes even kicked out or disowned or both. This time of year inevitably reminds them of the people who raised them — their families, or possibly the families they've never had. Most of these people will spend their Christmas either alone or not, drinking away their loneliness.

For those who are not kicked out or disowned Christmas may be difficult as well due to family pressures. Many lesbians, bisexuals, and gays are not permitted to talk about "that stuff" around relatives. Their partners/boy or girl friends/lovers may not be welcome for Christmas dinner. They may be shunned and alienated enough to wish they were 'anywhere but there' with a case of beer.

For those of us who are not out or who are 'everyone-in-the-world-knows-except-my-family' out (that's me!) there usually are problems too...

We end up biting our tongues not to scream or cry. We clench our teeth as relatives laugh at homophobic and anti-gay 'humour' on the television. We try not to yawn as each 'unmarried' gushes about their new potential (YAWN!!). We must try not to use the same 'same-gender' name over and over again 'cause then they might get suspicious. We must censor our vocabulary. My relatives must have thought there was something wrong with me. I must have said "And then (any woman's name) and her girlfriends-friend..." a million times. It's difficult being 'in' after a whole term of being 'out'. Oh well, I made it through and I'm still alive.

So if you are lesbian, gay, or bisexual, welcome back. I'm glad you made it. If you are straight, welcome back, and please keep in mind We Are Everywhere.

Rita Baker

First Baptist Church Halifax

1300 Oxford Street (across from Shirreff Hall)

January 16; 10:30 a.m. Worship

Sermon: *When God Calls You*

- Rev. John E. Boyd

Music: Wells, Willan, Bach

January 23; 10:30 a.m. Worship

Sermon: Rev. Adele Crowell

Music: Bach, Oldroyd

Student Luncheon Sundays at Noon

Ministers: Rev. John E. Boyd

Rev. Adele Crowell

Director of Music: David MacDonald



ATLANTIC CANADA ENTREPRENEUR AWARDS

BUILDING A BUSINESS?

Here's the plan: You're under 24, in school and run your own business part time, full time or during summer breaks. This venture is proof of your resourcefulness, determination and creativity. On May 17, 1994, you could walk away with top honours for this achievement at the Atlantic Canada Entrepreneur Awards.

STUDENT ENTREPRENEUR AWARD

A finalist will be chosen from each Atlantic province and will receive an all-expenses-paid trip to help celebrate the success of 28 Atlantic entrepreneurs during the awards ceremony at the Prince Edward Hotel in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

Nominate yourself or someone you know for the Student Entrepreneur Award. For more details, phone Shelley Wagner, coordinator, toll free: 1-800-565-0880. (Nominations close at midnight, February 11, 1994). This award is sponsored by the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency.

PRIX DES ENTREPRENEURS DU CANADA ATLANTIQUE



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