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## 3 Dollar Bill February Issue

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# The 3 Dollar Bill

February 1994

3 Dollar Bill is the URI Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Association newsletter. The newsletter is published the first week of each month during the academic year. Everyone is invited to submit letters, poetry, fiction and/or non-fiction for consideration for publication. Articles can be sent to GLBA c/o Student Senate, Room 138, Memorial Union.

## Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Association (GLBA)

The GLBA is open to all graduate and undergraduate students at URI (including CCE). The organization is committed to fostering a safe and comfortable environment for people of all sexual orientations. We recognize that each gay, lesbian or bisexual person is at a different stage of the "coming out" process and that each has different needs. GLBA is a support organization as well as one that strives to promote social change. Meetings are held on the first and third Tuesday at 7:00 pm in the URI Women's Center. If you want to learn more about the GLBA, you may leave a message at the Women's Center, 792-2097, or you can stop by our office in Room 126 Memorial Union. If you wish to speak to someone confidentially about GLBA, or you have personal issues you would like to discuss, please leave a message at the above number and a member of the GLBA leadership will return your call as soon as possible.

## Gay Students Club

The Gay Students Club is an organization exclusively for gay, lesbian and bisexual students. This is an opportunity to meet other gay people from URI and the surrounding communities. If you are not "out" and want to get to know other people, come to one of the socials. Attendance is strictly confidential. Socials are held on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month at 7:00 pm in the URI Women's Center. For more information, call 792-2097.

## GLBA Office Hours

The GLBA has a new office at 126 Memorial Union. The following hours have been established. Come by for a visit, and don't leave without offering a tip for decorating!

Monday	10a-12p, 2-4p
Tuesday	11a-1p
Wednesday	2-4p, 6-8p
Thursday	4-6p
Friday	10-11a

## Youth Conference Set for March 26

On March 23, the University of Connecticut will be hosting a youth conference called "Children from the Shadows: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered Youth at Risk". There are three goals for the conference. The first is to educate and sensitize those who provide services to adolescents and their families about issues of prejudice, homophobia, violence, isolation and substance abuse. The second is to provide opportunities for L/G/B/T youth to network, learn and to support each other in a safe environment. The third is to advocate for change by providing attendees with some of the tools they'll need to make a difference.

Karen Harbeck, PhD, JD, author of 'Coming Out of the Classroom Closet', will be the keynote speaker. The closing ceremonies will include remarks from Al Ferriera, M.Ed, founder of Project 10 East. Other speakers of note from the gay and lesbian community will provide information on clinical and educational aspects of G/L/B/T youth.

If you are interested in attending the conference, call 792-2097 for an application. The cost of the conference is 15.00 for full-time students.

## Committee to Eliminate Homophobia and Heterosexism

The Committee to Eliminate Homophobia and Heterosexism (fondly known as the "H&H Committee") is a group of faculty, staff and students from the URI community committed to making URI a safe place for people of all sexual orientations. The committee was started by Diane Goodman almost two years ago as a response to the generally negative attitudes toward gay, lesbian and bisexual people on this campus.

In addition to taking on the issue of homophobia, the committee continues to consider ways of eliminating heterosexism, a form of institutionalized homophobia. A resource listing for courses presenting gay and lesbian issues as well as professors willing to be facilitators for discussion panels and/or workshops has been compiled.

Other projects from the committee are the Safe Zone sticker campaign and OUTFLICKS, the lesbian-gay film series cosponsored with the GLBA and Voice for Choice and supported by a grant from the Richard Katzoff foundation.

The committee is open to all, and it is particularly encouraging to see more graduate and undergraduate

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### **OUTFLICKS**

OUTFLICKS, the URI Lesbian-Gay Film series, supported by the Richard Katzoff Memorial Fund, presents *Just Because of Who We Are* and *Tongues Untied* Tuesday, February 22 at 7:00 pm in White Hall Auditorium. In *Just Because of Who We Are*, the issue of violence against lesbians is examined. Attempts at institutional "cures" are also discussed. *Tongues Untied* looks at homophobia and racism affecting the lives of gay black men.

The films are free and open to the public.

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The committee is open to all, and it is particularly encouraging to see more graduate and undergraduate students as members. If you are interested, the committee meets every other Friday in room 202 of the Memorial Union. You can also call 792-2097 for more information.

### **Pammy Sterns Purim Party**

On Sunday, February 27 at 4:00 pm, Pammy Sterns (aka Linda Rosenbloom) celebrates Purim ("one of the few fun Jewish holidays") at AS220 in Providence. She will present a series of skits in celebration of life as a lesbian, Jewish woman. There will also be food, mingling and raffle prizes. A donation of \$3 is requested; all proceeds will go to the Samaritans, OPTIONS Resource Guide, and YWCA of RI's Teen Support Group.

## Domestic Partnerships

What is a domestic partnership? For simplicity, his article will define domestic partnership based upon a definition used in a San Francisco bill.

*not related by blood; neither was married nor were they related by marriage; they share the common necessities of life; they declare that they are each other's principal domestic partner; and neither has, within the first six months, declared that he or she has a different domestic partner.* I would like to add that this is a same sex couple and who are at least 18 years of age with the ability to enter into a legal contract.

For further clarification, reference to domestic partner benefits and rights will be under the assumption that these are the same rights afforded to legally married heterosexual couples.

For many gay, lesbian, and bisexual students, faculty and staff, the issue of domestic partnership has yet to be an issue. However, for those involved in long-term relationships in which both partners rely upon each other for emotional and possible monetary support, the lack of legal recognition can be a painful and legally bureaucratic nightmare. There are many reasons for this, but one clear cut example is a situation based upon my own experience.

One morning my partner woke up with an excruciating pain in her side. We decided that the best solution was to take her to the local hospital. Before she could be seen we had to fill out the usual extensive paper work. We agreed early on in our relationship that we would be "out" and therefore declare each other as "spouse" on all paperwork, documents, etc. When we returned the chart to the registration nurse, she asked for the name of a relative to contact in case of an emergency. We told the nurse that I was the nearest relative. Due to the fact that we had no written documentation that would allow me to sign for any medical procedures, the nurse was unsatisfied. Therefore, her mother was the only next of kin, but she lives 800 miles away. Of course, my concern at the time was for my partner's health, so I chose not to debate the issue. Now, however, I have had time to think over several of these issues and realize the severity of the lack of legal recognition of partnerships.

Domestic partnership concerns are multi-faceted. These issues attack us as individuals, as couples and as families. In most states, there are no laws to protect gay, lesbian, or bisexual people from discrimination. Several

gram benefits are also denied family members of lesbian, bisexual and gay employees and students.

Although this topic may seem dismal, it is not. There are many steps that individuals and groups can take to address these negatives and turn them into positive, educational, and facilitative processes of change. A first step is assisting the university in recognizing and acknowledging the serious repercussions of not recognizing domestic partnerships. Challenging the administration to accept this view is often a difficult, but worthwhile endeavor. Second, encouraging the university in developing solutions to the domestic partner issue will be a primary and motivating factor for change. One such solution is implementing a task force. This task force should consist of a core group of appointed people that include members from all areas of faculty, staff, and students—consisting of gay, lesbian, bisexual and heterosexual people from all units and levels of the university. The task force's responsibility should be twofold. Primarily, the task force should study and identify injustices and discrimination experienced by lesbian, bisexual and gay faculty, staff, and students. Furthermore, the task force should foster discussion and education while promoting recommendations that would aid the university in advocating change in its handling of sexual orientation issues.

Although the domestic partnership issue may not directly affect every member of the gay community, it is important that we are all aware of the issues surrounding domestic partner recognition. Working together to combat heterosexism and homophobia in all areas will greatly add to this civil and human rights movement. If anyone has any information regarding or reaction to this topic, please contact me in care of the newsletter.

## NAMES PROJECT AIDS Memorial Quilt

A portion of the NAMES PROJECT/AIDS Memorial Quilt will be on display in the Memorial Union Ballroom space, February 16-18. The display will be open Wednesday, February 16 through Friday, February 18 from 10AM to 4PM and on Wednesday and Thursday night from 7PM to 9PM.

The event will kick off on Tuesday evening with the showing of Common Threads, a documentary of the history of the quilt. The movie will be shown at 8:00pm in Edwards auditorium. The keynote address will be given at 7:30pm.

If you are interested in volunteering for the event, please contact Stuart Simons or Jeremy Marzella at 792-2726. Even if you do not volunteer, go and see the Quilt. It is something that each person should experience for him- or herself.

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Domestic partnership concerns are multi-faceted. These issues attack us as individuals, as couples and as families. In most states, there are no laws to protect gay, lesbian, or bisexual people from discrimination. Several college campuses have included sexual orientation in their non-discrimination clause, however, very few have supported that claim. What are some of the consequences and effects of not having domestic partner recognition? The lack of domestic partner recognition affects us in terms of not being able to include members of our family in university benefits such as health care. Our partners are not given access and benefits to the libraries, athletic buildings, housing, and other areas unavailable to them because of the prevailing definition of *family*. Many of us are not allowed extended bereavement, parental or sick leave. Tuition or course fee waivers and child care pro-

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### **OPTIONS Magazine**

OPTIONS is Rhode Island's gay and lesbian newspaper. It summarizes current social and political happenings in this state and gives a complete listing of resources for gay, lesbian and bisexual people. In addition, a calendar section provides dates, times and locations for events relevant to the GLB community.

If you want to subscribe to this newspaper, send your name and address to OPTIONS, P.O. Box 27444, Providence, RI 02907.

## Mark Your Calendar!

- February 15 "Common Threads" Kick-off for the NAMES PROJECT/AIDS Memorial quilt, 7:30pm, Edwards Auditorium.
- February 16-18 NAMES PROJECT/AIDS Memorial Quilt display, WThF 10a-4p, WTh 7-9p in the Memorial Union Ballroom.
- February 18 Committee to Eliminate Homophobia and Heterosexism meets, 12:00 - 1:30 in Room 202 Memorial Union.
- February 20 Phillip Robinson reads his poetry at 2:00p at the Great Room Poetry series, Roosevelt Hall.
- February 22 OUTFLICKS presents "Tongues Untied" and "Just Because of Who We are", White Hall Auditorium, 7:00pm.
- February 25 Dance sponsored by Brown University LGBTQ, \$2 admission, time and place TBA.
- February 26 Laura Berkson, Stone Soup Coffeehouse, Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, 15 Hayes Street, Providence 8:00pm Admission: \$6 at the door.
- February 27 "Pammy Sterns 1st Annual Purim Party" 4-6pm at AS220 in Providence.
- March Brown University Pride Month, Event times and locations will be published when received.
- March 1 GSC Social night, URI Women's Center, 7:00 pm
- March 11 Committee to Eliminate Homophobia and Heterosexism meets, 12:00, Room 202 Memorial Union

### CULTURE OF DESIRE: A Book Review

"Do the subculture and life-style of urban gay life in America (though homosexuality is everywhere, gayness has been and remains mostly an urban phenomenon) constitute an actual culture comparable to other ethnic and racial cultures - black, Jewish, Latin, Asian - that make up the heterogeneity of modern American life?" This is the opening question asked by Mark Browning in his book, *Culture of Desire* (Crown Publishers, 1993, 20.00). Unfortunately, that question is never satisfactorily answered in a book that turns out to be the reflections of one man and his experience in the gay world.

The question of culture must involve the entire spectrum of gay life, and gay people are most assuredly a group diverse in their beliefs as well as in their opinions on what it means to be gay. Since the author has admitted early on that lesbians are not addressed, the issue becomes one of a gay male culture. And a complete description of the gay male experience goes beyond the life of one man.

A look at some of the chapter titles is revealing: "Queer Rage - We're Here! We're Queer! Get used to

In spite of this, the book challenges the reader to examine his conception of what it means to be a gay man in 1993. The last chapter is by far the best in examining the manufactured image of the gay man, an image created by gay men, and our seeming preoccupation with sex and excitement. This particular chapter is powerful and demands that gay men examine their own conception of their sexuality.

I don't believe the author ever answered his question. At least not to my satisfaction. But the reflections of a gay man honest with the public about his sexuality and his desire is worth reading. And I guarantee that no one will be able to read the chapter on "Paradox and Perversity" without feeling somewhat frustrated in trying to define what being gay means.

(Gary Burkholder)

Somewhere nearby it grows  
with arms permanently extended  
Never swaying nor bending  
to the earth's vibrations  
And somewhere deep under that skin  
past the grooves and pulpy bundles  
through the strips of stringy reeds  
The heart that was once suctioned in  
by woody juices  
Has wrestled free from its parenchymal shackles  
And pulses in a solitary rhythm  
To a metronome of discontent  
For no longer is it firmly encased  
in the sinewy fingers that gripped and bruised  
But now must harden, frightened and aching from the tear  
In the stillness of a strange place

(Anne Dineen)

### "Daring to Speak Love's Name" A Book Review

Are homosexuality and bisexuality to be forever separated from spirituality and religion? Can there be a unity? Dr. Elizabeth Stuart, in her book *Daring to Speak Love's Name*, proposes that homosexuality and religion can have a common ground.

Through the concept of the "theology of friendship", she shares with the reader that through friendship we are all lovers and that this is manifested through our sexuality. Regarding this, she writes "that friendship includes awe and respect for God and each other", and also "passion and sexual love are not necessarily antithetical to friendship." Dr. Stuart makes it clear that friendship and love go hand in hand, from one person to another and ultimately with God

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A look at some of the chapter titles is revealing: "Queer Rage - We're Here! We're Queer! Get used to IT". "Celebutantes: Fabricating the Fabulous Man". "Parties, Pageants, Parades: Rituals of Deliverance". As the titles suggest, most of the book is dedicated to urban gay life, the high energy and excitement of gay life in the cities.

But in only one chapter, "Reconstructing the Extended Family", is that "other" gay life explored, those who live in families and partnerships, own homes together, go shopping at the local Stop and Shops. True, this aspect of gay life was covered in the book *In Search of Gay America*. But, in order to answer the question "Can we call ourselves a culture, one that is based on desire?", one needs to hear from a representative sample of gay men. I'm not convinced that, as the author contends, that we are a culture based solely on desire.

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with arms permanently extended  
Never swaying nor bending  
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And somewhere deep under that skin  
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The book exists as a statement to the Church and the religious community as a whole, that gay, lesbian and bisexual people deserved to be recognized, affirmed and supported, not only in our personal spiritual growth but also in our dealings with the Christian community.

The book deals with topics like gay, lesbian and bisexual commitments, unions, housewarmings, partings, coming out, AIDS and death. It contains prayers and writings of pastors from different churches and allows us to see that love truly has no barriers. I recommend this book for those who are struggling or seeking answers with their sexuality and religion.

(Al Anderson)

## A Coming Out Celebration

(From "Daring to Speak Love's Name" by Dr. Elizabeth Stuart)

"Dear friends, all life is sacred and a blessed gift. **We are here today to give thanks for the gift of life and to bless the life of N, who has invited us to join him/her in celebrating her/his affirmation of her/himself as a lesbian woman/gay man. In this time when lesbians and gay men are rejected and oppressed our gathering here is a protest against unjust persecution and false judgment. We renounce the homophobia of the Church and proclaim the sacred worth of every child of the Holy One.**

(Rebecca Parker and Joanne Brown)

## A Celebration of Coming Out

(Excerpted from "Daring to Speak Love's Name" by Dr. Elizabeth Stuart)

"The first time a person comes out is a particularly significant occasion. It usually occurs as the result of and the climax to a long and uncomfortable struggle with and against a society (supported by mainstream Christian churches) which seeks to deny the goodness of lesbian and gay sexuality and labels those endowed with it as 'perverted', 'sick', 'sinful' and 'dangerous'. Gay men and lesbian women cannot but help internalize this negativity to at least some degree, and so the battle against self-hatred is also part of the struggle. To come out, therefore, is to make a statement with profound theological, psychological and political implications.

To come out is to say that the Church has got it wrong, that homosexuality is a God-given gift to be rejoiced in, not denied. To come out is to say that society (perhaps including one's own family and closest friends) has got it wrong; that being gay is OK. To come out is to make a political, even revolutionary statement, for it is to challenge those who claim authority over us and it is to defy their understanding of reality. It is therefore a risky act and many have paid the price by losing jobs, friends, children and even lives. Unless people do take the risk to break the walls of silence and invisibility that surround homosexuality and echo Luther in declaring 'Here stand I: I can do no other', society and Church will not change. Coming out is too significant an act not to have a rite of passage associated with it."

## Queer Concepts Concerning Religious Affiliation

At the end of every OUTFLICKS movie presentation there is a panel of informed guests who help address concerns and generate discussion brought about by the

better than others in God's eyes, and therefore we learn to look down upon those who are different and less desirable.

In spite of religion's history of oppression, hate and murder, I cannot condemn a gay, lesbian or bisexual person who chooses to remain a member of a Christian church. The reasons for affiliating or not affiliating with a church are personal, and there is much symbolic ritual which has deep meaning for people beyond the disagreements in doctrines such as abortion, rights for lesbian people and whether or not the Pope really is infallible. Also, if there were no lesbian people in our congregations, the oppression and homophobia would run more rampant throughout the church than it already does. Even as gay people, we have spiritual needs. And we each find the best way to fulfill them." *Gary Burkholder*

"I have never been one to judge or condemn a person, place or thing that is simply existing, causing no harm to those of us living on this earth. However, I find that when peoples' physical and emotional safety, right to personal expression or the freedom to be honest is threatened, I am intolerant. I am intolerant of child abusers and Klu Klux Klan members. I am intolerant of those who ostracize overweight people or refuse to hire a person of color. So when I'm asked about my views on religion, how should I feel when more often than not my people are not welcome in God's home? My people are told to leave and to never return. My gay and lesbian friends cannot tell and are not asked because the church is hypocrisy and will only love them if they sit quietly and pray. They will find that instead of being an all loving haven, the church will turn it's cement back, refusing to embrace. Just as the gun sitting alone on the kitchen table cannot kill, for it is the person who must pick it up and pull the trigger, so too is the bible resting peacefully in the pew rather harmless until someone spreads open its pages and interprets. With the cry of people hating in the name of God ringing in my ears, how can I not be intolerant of this institution that fosters hatred, disgust, anger (and ultimately violence) toward gay and lesbian people?"

*Anne Dineen*

"The discussion following OUTFLICKS last month, although lively and animated, left me feeling disturbed rather than enlightened. It disturbed me to realize that members of our lesbian community can just as easily exhibit the kind of intolerance that we are constantly struggling against. If our community truly values diversity - which I believe it does - then lesbian individuals who choose to remain affiliated with an established church should not be made to feel alienated by the greater community. Unfortunately, that is how I felt during the discussion last month at the OUTFLICKS symposium.

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### **Queer Concepts Concerning Religious Affiliation**

At the end of every *OUTFLICKS* movie presentation there is a panel of informed guests who help address concerns and generate discussion brought about by the movie's theme(s). The two movies in January were *STOP THE CHURCH* and *A LESBIAN IN THE PULPIT*. The discussion following last month's movies was particularly heated and left many wishing they had had a chance to throw in their 3 cents. Here are some of their views.

"There is no question that most of the Christian churches do not accept homosexuality as a valid lifestyle. Some of those that do even still "rank" heterosexuality as the preferred sexual orientation. Even such a "liberal" view becomes the breeding ground for homophobia, hate and death, because we teach our children that one is better than the other, and that means that certain people are

"I have never been one to judge or condemn a person, place or thing that is simply existing, causing no harm to those of us living on this earth. However, I find that when peoples' physical and emotional safety, right to personal expression or the freedom to be honest is threatened, I am intolerant. I am intolerant of child abusers and Klu Klux Klan members. I am intolerant of those who ostracize overweight people or refuse to hire a person of color. So when I'm asked about my views on religion, how should I feel when more often than not my people are not welcome in God's home? My people are told to leave and to never return. My gay and lesbian friends cannot tell and are not asked because the church is hypocrisy and will only love them if they sit quietly and pray. They will find that instead of being an all loving haven, the church will turn it's cement back, refusing to embrace. Just as the gun sitting alone on the kitchen table cannot kill, for it is the person who must pick it up and pull the trigger, so too is the bible resting peacefully in the pew rather harmless until someone spreads open its pages and interprets. With the the cry of people hating in the name of God ringing in my ears, how can I not be intolerant of this institution that fosters hatred, disgust, anger (and ultimately violence) toward gay and lesbian people?"

*Anne Dineen*

"The discussion following *OUTFLICKS* last month, although lively and animated, left me feeling disturbed rather than enlightened. It disturbed me to realize that members of our lesbigay community can just as easily exhibit the kind of intolerance that we are constantly struggling against. If our community truly values diversity - which I believe it does - then lesbigay individuals who choose to remain affiliated with an established church should not be made to feel alienated by the greater community. Unfortunately, that is how I felt during the discussion last month at the *OUTFLICKS* symposium.

It is important to remember that spirituality and religious beliefs are very personal matters. My choice to participate in religious services is based entirely on spiritual convictions that are as much a part of my psyche as my sexual orientation. I am not willing to give up the kind of religious participation that I feel comfortable with for any political or social reasons. It does not mean that I don't oppose certain political and social church teachings as vehemently as any other activist. I choose to separate my spiritual life from my political activities. It is an important distinction.

I do not take offense to criticism aimed at the political or social teachings of the Roman Catholic Church, which represents the spiritual tradition that I

w. I engage in that kind of criticism as well. Indeed, people within any institution who create change. But do not take offense to criticism of individuals who choose to participate in any religion. Individual choice is a value that the lesbian community needs to support."

*Peter Quesnel*

"Hatred is not a family value. The religious right and factions of other Christian institutions, namely the Catholic church, would have you believe that hatred not only is a family value, but a religious one as well. Each time these conservative groups speak in the name of Christ to legitimize their positions of oppression and self-righteousness, my skin crawls. Several years ago I began to study the bible for my own personal reasons, and learned much from the Gospels about Christ's life. His main teachings centered around love and compassion, which he modeled consistently by choosing to live among all different kinds of people, particularly those who were shunned by others — whores, lepers, and tax collectors. His focus then was not to divide, but to unite and accept all people. So when religious fanatics and other conservative groups justify their reasons for bigotry and ostracism against gay, lesbian, and bisexual people (and frankly all people who do not fit into their myopic schema) as an indication of Christ's teachings, I wonder what bible they've been reading. I propose that these institutions have masked their original purposes of Christianity to serve their own needs, and have created a caste system that openly discriminates against those who do not belong. I believe that their interpretation of Christ's life is faulty and untenable, which misrepresents all Christians at large. Hatred may hang like tapestry on the walls of certain churches, but does not cloak the minds and hearts of all those who consider themselves religious."—*Marie Lynch*

"When rejecting our religion in light of our sexuality, I think we need to make a distinction between religion as institution and religion as our own spirituality. For example, for those who are or have been Catholic, it is important to remember that there is something deeper happening, despite the political and societal influence the Church has in our society. There exist those people within the Church who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender who participate and support their communities. More importantly, these individuals should not be seen as "hypocrites" or "those who sleep with the enemy". In my experience, they are focused and pure, wanting to bring love and peace. Sometimes the battle may be won from the inside out. We, as homosexuals, bisexuals and transsexuals, need unity not necessarily from outside our

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YOU CAN USE A PEN NAME.  
ALL SUBMISSIONS MUST HAVE  
A PHONE NUMBER WHERE  
YOU CAN BE REACHED.