

savoirflair

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NEW ENGLAND'S LGBT MAGAZINE

PINK PAGES / KP MEDIA PUBLICATION

THE TALENTED MR. MITZEL

Author, Publisher
Social Commentator
Proprietor

KITSCH

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Its Own Reward

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Why SavoirFlair?

With the surge in LGBT publications as of late, the prospect of this exciting and expanding field is a mixed blessing to some. A new LGBT publication needs to find that unique niche; a hook that will engage readers, encourage awareness, and entertain the imagination. For critics it begs the question: why yet another LGBT publication?

For over 25 years, we have published the Pink Pages. Having that under our belt, we had an urge to publish a magazine that genuinely reflects the style, flavor, and culture of the LGBT community in New England. We also felt there was a market for such a magazine. Just as creativity is our guiding principle, entertainment is our end goal. The title Savoir Flair appropriately categorizes our nature. By celebrating gay/lesbian interests throughout the region, we hope that this celebration mirrors the truly distinct character of New Englanders.

And what's better? It's free! In keeping with the Digital Age, we designed Savoir Flair to be easily translated to the web where thousands of people can access our content with the click of a mouse. Whether it's online or print, Savoir Flair will never cost the reader.

As with any publication, we had to limit our scope. We couldn't be everything to everyone. New England is chock full of hard-hitting, serious publications that deal with weighty issues within the gay and lesbian community. That's not us. We recognize the tremendous job they do and applaud their activism. On the other hand, we aim to inject some flair, if you will, into the scene. In the end, we hope that critics rephrase their question and ponder:

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Kitsch

by Liz Washer

Bad Taste Is Its Own Reward

kitsch: adjective/ ki-CHÉ/: of a display that is tawdry or vulgar
(syn: ostentatious, pretentious) noun : art in pretentious bad taste



Gay men and lesbians love kitsch. Kitsch is campy, kitsch is irresistible, and many of us are perpetually in search of the ultimate piece of treasured trash that will make our homes unique. Kitsch is our way of feeling superior to a black-and-white culture that views kitsch as either “real art” or “real trash” – because we know kitsch is both! Below are some classic Kitsch home items that are sure to delight.



FLAMENCO DOLLS

The ultimate nostalgic reminder of the fabulous time you had on vacation in Spain, or perhaps you bought one of these dolls for Great Aunt Gertrude as a present. Either way, how could you resist?

KITSCH CLOCKS

Owning a clock is so passe – don’t we all operate on Gay Time these days? – but if you must know the ACTUAL time (you know, what the straight world runs on), you won’t lose any Queer Fashion Points by displaying one of these stunning Kitsch clocks.

Rest assured, your eyes do not deceive, it is indeed a piece of toast. The latest fashionable timekeeping piece, or a really “crummy” clock? We’ll see how long it lasts before the mold sets in.

What home would be complete without a really grotesque face ogling us at all hours? If your partner’s 6:00am face doesn’t fit the bill, this clock will surely fill the void.



LAMPS

How about shedding a little light on the subject with one of these delightfully tacky lamps? Possibly the greatest item of kitsch to be found in the mainstream, Lava Lamps are the staple of 60’s nostalgia. They can provide hours of entertainment even without the aid of certain substances (although it helps). Perhaps the moving light brings us back to our primal, cave dwelling selves, crouched in front of a roaring campfire. Perhaps they have hypnotic properties. Whatever the reason, no neo-hippie-raver home is complete without one.





Ride 'em cowboy! After a hectic day on the ranch herding coworkers and trying to lasso a pay raise, come home and relax in the light of this pair of tasteful cowboy boot lamps, complete with hand-painted shades. You never know when two-stepping might make a comeback.

Need I say anything here? Could you possibly pass up a set of 70's style amber bead lamps?



PORCELAIN KITSCH

Have you ever wandered through an antique shop and asked yourself, "Self, who buys this stuff?" In case you haven't had the pleasure of antiques, we've compiled a selection of the porcelain horrors found all around the world. You're welcome.



Here's a chance kitsch encounter we had while auction-voyeuring on eBay (those last-minute bid wars make for fabulous drama). These porcelain kids had a reserve price of \$20. (Already highly overpriced), and the final price reached \$90.! Can you imagine these little children adorning your mantelpiece, delighting and entralling your guests? Let us put our hands together and pray that the bidder wasn't disappointed!



Another chance find was this porcelain manger scene, to celebrate the birth of Christ. Doesn't the infant savior look peaceful lying in his manger? Nothing says piety quite like porcelain.



Continued on next page

BATHROOMS

Is nothing sacred? Apparently not! It may be the smallest room in the house but that shouldn't mean it should be overlooked; its very nature lends itself perfectly to the art of kitsch.



If you want to go for the royal flush, perhaps this facility will make you the Queen of Hearts. Its crowning glory is undoubtedly the beautifully crafted golden throne. Although a bathroom like this will provide endless opportunities for bad puns, can you imagine parking your behind on this metal seat on a cold morning?

For the slightly more discerning, this angelically-designed toilet seat will be a sight to behold in any bathroom. Not at all pretentious, it comes with simple assembly instructions too.

If you are constantly accused of taking too long in the loo, these seats will provide you with the comfort and speed you need for true bathroom efficiency. They'll even throw in a tune for free!

ELVIS

Of course no article on Kitsch would be complete without the King. Elvis memorabilia will continue to provide bad taste iconography for decades to come. ▼



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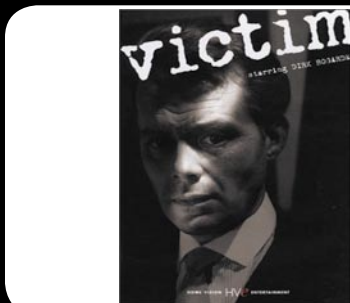
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What's Old Is New

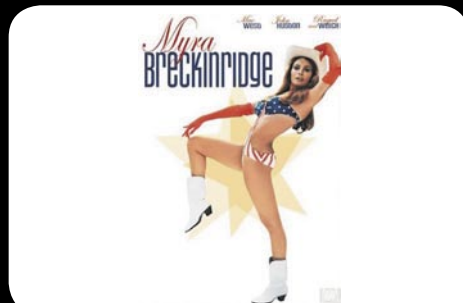
by Henry Levine



THE VICTIM

Starring: Dirk Bogarde, Sylvia Syms, Dennis Price. **Directed by:** Basil Dearden.

A window into an era in England when anti-sodomy laws were in effect, *The Victim* stars renowned matinee idol, Dirk Bogarde, as Melville Farr. Farr, a distinguished barrister who thwarts a blackmail attempt by revealing his homosexuality, seeks out another gay man who has been extorted in a similar blackmail attempt. After Farr's lover (Peter McEnery) commits suicide, Farr is determined to beat the blackmailer. In the end, Detective Harris (John Barrie) helps Farr in exposing the blackmailer. The film was pivotal in paving the way for the legalization of homosexuality in England. *The Victim* was one of a series of Post-War "social problem" films credited to the director Basil Dearden. Leaps and bounds ahead of popular culture in 1961, *The Victim* was the first English language film to use the word "homosexual."



MYRA BRECKINRIDGE

Starring: Mae West, John Huston, Raquel Welch. **Directed by:** Michael Sarne.

At first glance, *Myra Breckinridge* is an outrageous story about a man-hating transsexual. At its core, however, *Myra* is sophisticated satire. Using Hollywood as a backdrop for poking fun at just about every American custom, the focus of the film, Myron Breckinridge, sets off for Europe to have a sex change. The homosexual film critic Myron returns to the States as Myra Breckinridge (Raquel Welch) and aims to destroy the archetypal "American male." Myra moves from New York City to Hollywood to fully immerse herself in the film industry. Along the way she schemes to scam her uncle Buck Loner (John Huston), a Western star with a conservative pedigree, out of half a million dollars and thus symbolically destroy the American male. She feigns the role of Myron's widow to gain the trust of Uncle Buck.



WALK ON THE WILD SIDE

Starring: Barbara Stanwyck, Laurence Harvey, Hallie Gerard. **Directed by:** Edward Dmytryk

Barbara Stanwyck as Jo Courtney in 1962's "Walk on the Wild Side" portrayed the first lesbian in American film history. Her performance on screen showed a real woman: filled with strengths and weaknesses. This portrayal put Hollywood far ahead of its time in how it treated lesbians in film. The film takes place in 1930's New Orleans at a place called The Doll House. This Louisiana bordello had a feature attraction: Hallie Gerard (Capucine). The interest in Hallie extended not only to the clients, but the madam of the bordello. Hallie's love of three years returns to town and discovers her true profession. Dove Linkhorn (Laurence Harvey) comes back to town from Texas with a traveling companion, Kitty Twist (Jane Fonda). Soon even Kitty is enlisted among the new recruits within Jo's bordello.

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A full-page photograph of a middle-aged man with grey hair, wearing a dark suit, light blue shirt, and dark tie. He is standing on a city street with buildings and other people in the background. The text 'The Talented Mr. Mitzel' is overlaid on the image.

The Talented Mr. Mitzel

By: Judy Van Handle

In an era when the joy of leisurely book shopping has often been reduced to online clicking or trudging through huge, cookie-cutter chain stores, Calamus Bookstore occupies a special niche among Boston's bibliophiles.

Not only does the South Station shop offer an independent alternative to the more recent homogenized book browsing experience, but it has done so as Boston's only remaining bookstore catering to the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community.

Thus, it seems appropriate that the man who kept gay and lesbian bookselling in the city alive is someone whose life has been defined by the written word, though the extraordinary length and breadth of his cultural contributions gives John Mitzel more than just a status as a literary savior. In fact, it's no stretch to call him an institution in Boston's arts community.

Long before he opened Calamus six years ago, Mitzel's literary and political activities had earned him an acidic yet witty reputation as one of Boston's longest-running gay social commentators. From political activist to founder of a radical gay magazine to biographer to historian to columnist to social critic to publisher, Mitzel is as close to a one-person historical, political and literary resource for all things gay in Boston.

"Times change but the work for improvement for our community have continued forward. I find this encouraging"

In the four decades since he arrived as a teenager from the Midwest, Mitzel has been witness to many of the most important events in Boston's gay and lesbian history, often chronicling them in local newspapers or his many self-published books. Cultural and social analysis has been an important part of his funny yet often-barbed commentary that comprises his wildly eclectic literature.

And for more than 20 years, another side of Mitzel's dedication to the written word has been evidenced by his role as a bookseller, managing a now-defunct bookstore for over 15 years before founding Calamus. All the while, he has published, both his own and other authors' works, earning accolades from the field of self-publishing.

Given the extent of his life's work, when Mitzel said, "I've always liked to read and write," it seems like a modest understatement. But his passion for writing was born out of an era that, like so many gay and lesbians of his generation, began with a personal politicization in the 1960s.

In 1965, the 17-year-old Mitzel moved to Boston from his hometown of Cincinnati, "looking for a better city. Boston, despite its many failings, looked to be a good place to be at that time."

His subsequent enrollment at Boston University proved to be pivotal. Mitzel studied with Howard Zinn, "a professor who knew his craft."

Zinn, best known for "A People's History of the United States," among 20 books, is now a professor emeritus in BU's political science department. A historian and social critic, Zinn's philosophy includes a Marxist and anarchist perspective.

Then, "Gay Liberation came along and I did join the BU gay group -- part of the Student Homophile League," said Mitzel. The SHL, a now-legendary Boston-wide consortium of gay and lesbian student organizations, flourished in the 1960s and laid the groundwork and training for the burgeoning gay movement that followed.

Mitzel also gained experience in the still-nascent arena of gay activism when he sat in on the organizational meeting of the Mattachine Society during one summer break, though he doubted that the group ever got off the ground.

The 1970s were a time of great activity and progress in the gay and lesbian movement, when new ground was rapidly being broken both culturally and politically, and Boston was at the forefront of the progress. It also was a period when Mitzel's writing began to flourish.

"The 1970s were years when everything seemed to be possible, despite all the attacks and the reactions," says Mitzel. "It was a heady time, particularly for folks of my persuasion. Boston was different then, and also different from the rest of the country -- excepting other beachhead cities, New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Ann Arbor and others."

A turning point came in 1971 when as part of a collective he helped found FAG RAG, described as a political and literary outlet for "gay male liberationists." Mitzel and other well-known gay male activists such as Charley Shively contributed to FAG RAG, which lasted more than a decade. Mitzel also helped start Gay Community News, a now-defunct weekly newspaper that for a decade was the only source of news for the gay and lesbian

The Talented Mr. Mitzel

community. Mitzel also was a regular contributor to GCN until the early 1990s.

During the latter part of the decade, men were arrested for allegedly having sex with underage boys in a suburban town, though the few who were found and pled guilty received only probation. The wildly colorful scene surrounding the 1978 case and the gay rights movement in general, which included the country's first openly gay elected official, Elaine Noble, making public statements condemning the men before any trials were held, and the arrival of gay-bashing Anita Bryant in Boston, who was booed out of town by a huge crowd protesting in Copley Square, was covered just as vividly by Mitzel in his book "The Boston Sex Scandal."

Throughout the decade, Mitzel wrote and published several other books, some having nothing to do with politics but everything with social and cultural morays and observation. One of his earliest, "Sports and the Macho Male," from 1973, hilariously skewered the straight male obsession with sports.

"Younger people have become engaged. This augurs well. So much has changed in the last 40 years, I have to have hope, which I do. I hope things get better, for all of us."

The eclectic nature of his writing continued with "Myra & Gore: A new view of Myra Breckenridge and a candid interview with Gore Vidal: A Book for Vidalophiles." Mitzel analyzed the Gore Vidal character through the filters of feminism, sexual politics and gay theory, and included a long interview (which he conducted with Steven Abbott) with Vidal in 1973.

Mitzel also wrote a well-received biography of the vastly overlooked John Horne Burns, a Harvard graduate who wrote only four novels before dying at the age of 36 in 1953, collaborated with two others on "Gay Roots: Twenty Years of Gay Sunshine: An Anthology of Gay History, Sex, Politics, and Culture." And his reach extended into erotic literature when he collaborated with Boyd McDonald on "Flesh: True Homosexual Experiences S.T.H." in 1997.

The majority of Mitzel's books were published by his own press under the imprint Manifest Destiny Press, which he founded in 1972. Under the Calamus Books press, which he founded in 2001, Mitzel printed a novel by Dwight Cathcart called "Ceremonies," based on the anti-gay murder of Charlie Howard in Maine in 1984. He also ran the Stonewall Distributors for gay books -- all of which earned Mitzel a place in the Self-Publishing Hall of Fame.

Through it all, Mitzel has continued to write for the gay press; his column in The Guide, published in Boston, has

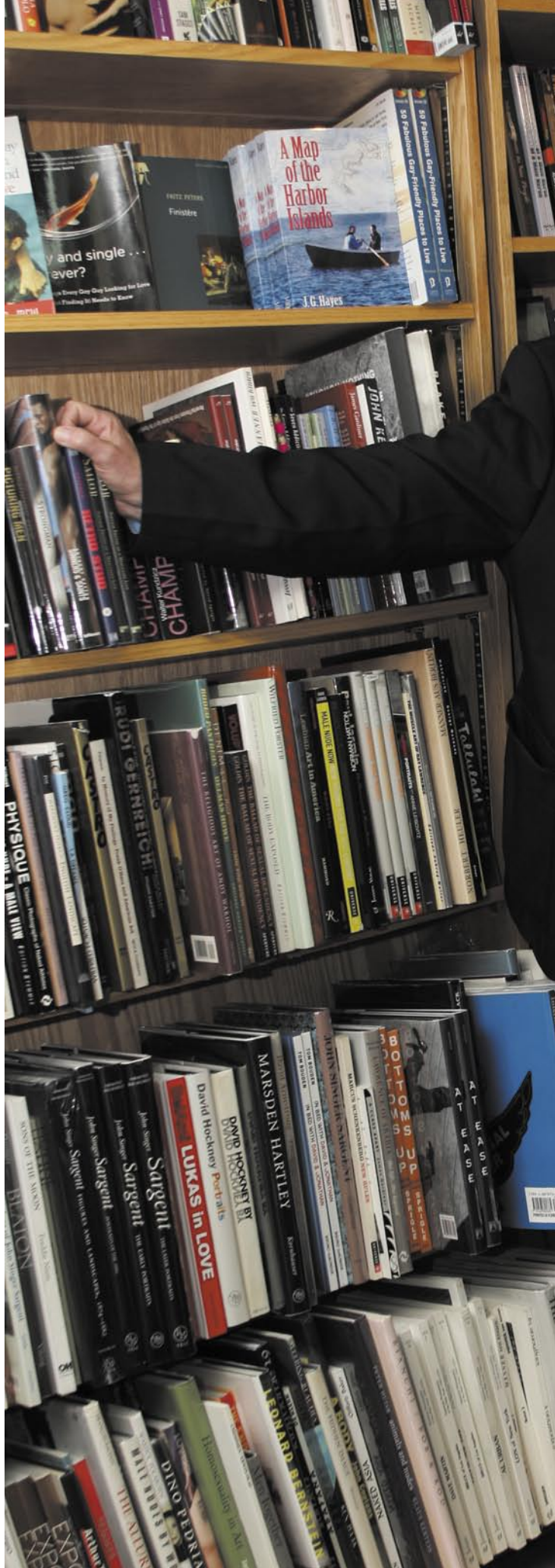




photo by Mindi Sokoloski

The Talented Mr. Mitzel

been running since 1986, marking 32 consecutive years of serving as a columnist for the gay press.

Beginning in 1984, Mitzel managed Glad Day Bookshop in downtown Boston and after its subsequent move to Copley Square. When Glad Day lost its lease in 2000, Mitzel was determined to fill the gay and lesbian literary gap by opening a new store. Three months later, Calamus opened in Boston's Leather District. (The bookstore bears the name was taken from Walt Whitman's paens to gay male love).

"I thought it important to continue a bookstore for the community, as this is not a resource available in most cities in this country," said Mitzel.

Calamus carries the usual offerings of a bookstore, from publications to DVDs to calendars gifts, and, like Glad Day, it also functions as a quasi-community center in a city that hasn't had one for close to two decades. But the books are the main merchandise, even though in an odd twist, the owner/manager/ author can't always keep up with the latest offerings.

"The funny thing is that, as a bookseller, I actually don't read as much as I once did," said Mitzel. "It's a bit overwhelming dealing with so many book titles, so many authors, I dip in on occasion. And keep up to date."

He also stays current with a perspective gained by 40 years as one of Boston's preeminent and prolific gay writers and social critics. Mitzel owns a unique perspective of what has been accomplished in the gay and lesbian movement -- and what remains to be done.

"Times change but the work for improvement for our community have continued forward. I find this encouraging," he said.

"Younger people have become engaged. This augurs well. So much has changed in the last 40 years, I have to have hope, which I do. I hope things get better, for all of us."

Calamus Bookstore's website address is www.calamus.com



Your Furniture, Yourself

What our homes say about who we are.

By M.J. DeMello

Have you ever thumbed through House & Garden or Architectural Digest, looked at a photograph of a room, and marvelled at how gorgeous it was? Or have you perhaps entered a room and for some reason just felt uncomfortable, without putting your finger on exactly why you felt this way? Why do some rooms make us feel cozy, warm and invited while others leave us with a sense of detachment?

The reason is that, just as some owners look like their dogs, some of our homes look like ourselves. Our style of decorating, our preferences in furniture and art, our taste in simple things like plants or picture frames or lamp shades... they all reflect our inner values. The way in which we furnish and decorate our homes gives others clues about our emotional needs, our aspirations and even our fears. The color schemes we prefer, our favorite objects d'art, even whether we prefer modern or traditional styles of furniture can tell others a bit about who we are. Let us now take a look at some distinctive and unique furnishings and ask the question: decorations, or personal disclosures?

The Sleigh Bed



The beauty of this bed lies in its simplicity, craftsmanship and fine materials. It has all it needs and nothing it doesn't and is made with softest Italian leather. Who might its owner be? She is quiet, kind, conscientious, and interested in security and peaceful living. She is perhaps an entrepreneur, and runs a successful business that affords her more financial stability than most. She has a life-long partner with whom she owns several dogs. She is stable and practical, and values traditions and establishments. Organized and hard working, she accomplishes just what she sets out to do. She is keenly observant of others' behavior and perceptive of others' feelings. She and her partner share many friends but tend to keep their personal lives private. Their home serves as a welcoming sanctuary from the hustle and bustle of life. Her personal desire, above all, is to believe.



Contemporary Living Room Set

*T*his three piece contemporary living room, conjures up contemporary European comfort with a bit of whimsy in the contrasting leather pattern. Now, who might the owner be? Whatever she does, she's popular and sensitive, and perhaps a bit outspoken. She is intelligent, well informed and able to understand complex problems and arrive at creative solutions. She likes to be around others and rarely spends time alone. She values competence and has a natural aversion for disorganization and inefficiency. This is apparent in the way she keeps and furnishes her home. Imagine her kitchen... stainless steel, spotless, and fitted with the best appliances money can buy. A maid slips in once a week to "tidy up," but there is little to tidy. She probably has no pets - she just isn't home enough to care for one. Her ambition, above all else, is financial security.

Multi Ball Clock

George Nelson designed this clock in 2000, and crafted it from acrylic, lacquered beech wood and metal. It is pure contemporary style: fun and a bit kitschy. One can imagine that the owner displays this clock prominently in his home, and wants you to like and admire it as much as he does. No matter what your personal taste, you're allowed to smile, but please don't snicker or giggle unless you want to alienate him. He is assertive and outspoken, a bit of a risk taker and prone to live life in the here and now. He is great company, stimulating to be around, and very loyal to his friends. He lives a somewhat fast-paced lifestyle and tends to neglect the more routine aspects of life. He has an excellent ability to understand concepts and apply logic to finding solutions. He probably owns at least one cat. His highly personal quest in life: to be loved.



So, what have we learned? It seems that, in recent years, our homes have become more important as places of relaxation and rejuvenation as our sense of security diminishes in this fast-moving, unpredictable world. No one can know oneself perfectly, since the human mind is far too complex to grasp in its entirety. Just when we begin to think we have a fair notion of who we are, we find that we've changed again and have to revise our understanding. This perpetual process is reflected in how we live and what our homes mean to us. Quite naturally, our homes reflect our lives through all their ups and downs, changes, turmoils and successes. It is important for each of us to have a place in the world we can call our own and that feels like a good fit. Whether we live alone or with friends, family or partners, home should be such a place. ▼

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Clare Higgins Mayor of Northampton

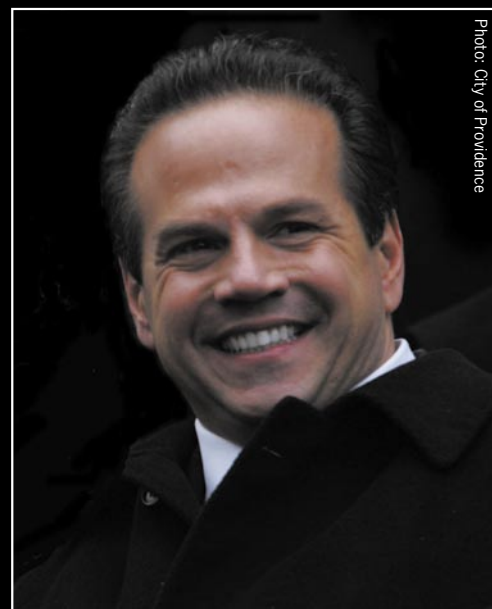


Photo: City of Providence

David Cicilline Mayor of Providence

They're liberal Democrats, openly gay or lesbian, and boast impressive political resumes that helped them win seats in their respective City Halls. But for all of their similarities, there are just as many differences between the two New England mayors.

One runs a progressive community nicknamed "Paradise City," while the other has succeeded in cleaning up a City Hall that was a paradise only for corruption. One heads a rural population of 30,000 nestled in the hills of Western Massachusetts that is known for its passionate left-of-center politics and the nickname "Lesbianville;" the other, a bustling state capital with over 100,000 residents. One has held office for four terms, the other is in just his first. One is a near lifelong resident of his city while the other grew up outside New Eng-

land. And one is a product of public higher education and earned her degree in an unconventional major over 25 years after her first try at college, the other one is a button down Ivy Leaguer with a law degree.

But whether it's in Northampton or Providence, the constituents have spoken loud and clear: they're more than happy with the stewardships of Clare Higgins and David Cicilline.

"Campaigning for this office was a way to change hearts and minds," said Cicilline at a University of Rhode Island conference. "Every day that I got to work as an openly gay mayor, I hope that I'm helping to raise awareness."

The city government that Cicilline inherited had strayed far from its original roots, when Roger Williams, who founded the city in the 1630's, named it after "God's merciful Providence"



Photo: City of Providence

David Cicilline lends a hand to urban renewal

after he was expelled by the Puritans from Massachusetts. Williams intended Providence to be a haven for religious dissenters like himself, but that idealistic purity had long been cast aside by the time a disgraced Cianci left office for the second time. Instead, it was replaced by a reputation as a hub for the New England Mob.

Cianci and his cronies added to Providence's seedy reputation. Even though Cianci's administration had begun a laudable rejuvenation of the downtown area, he and his associates were also raking in illegal contributions and money in return for tax breaks, jobs, city contracts and other perks. As well, Cianci earned national headlines for assaulting the boyfriend of his estranged wife, forcing him to resign from City Hall in 1984 before being re-elected in 1990.

But since assuming office, the 45 year old Cicilline has spun Rhode Island's biggest city in a new direction. He has received high marks from his constitu-

ents and the national press by cleaning up Providence's government while refusing to take contributions from city employees or appoint political cronies to governmental positions. With new hotels, condominiums and office buildings sprouting up, the city's downtown also is experiencing a renaissance.

Board chairman Charles Francis of the Greater Providence Chamber of Commerce told Washington Post columnist David Broder: "The mayor has been a breath of fresh air. He has brought stability to the city and confidence to city government. He has brought in very competent people. The development going on now is because of what he has done to City Hall."

Cicilline also has been an articulate spokesman for gay and lesbian rights and testified on behalf of a Rhode Island bill that would have legalized same-sex marriage.

"Respecting the right of persons of the same sex to marry will not diminish the validity or dignity of opposite-sex

marriage, any more than recognizing the right of persons to marry an individual of a different race undermines the marriage of a person who marries someone of the same race," said Cicilline during a hearing at the Rhode Island State House in 2005.

Cicilline, whose father is Catholic and mother is Jewish, a faith he practices, is as embedded in Providence as seems humanly possible; he was born in the city and attended Brown University (and was a classmate of the late John F. Kennedy Jr.). He received his law degree from Georgetown University, remained in Washington to work as a public defender before opening his own criminal defense firm in Providence, then was elected to the Rhode Island House of Representatives in 1995.

Even though he ran for mayor as an openly gay man (he came out in 1999, during his tenure in the House), Cicilline was forced to overcome the unusual

Continued on next page.



Photo: City of Northampton

Clare Higgins with aide Karen Bellevance-Grace

Continued from previous page.

spectre of a gay political group throwing its support to his opponent in the primary. Voices 4 Equality, in backing Joseph Paolini, claimed that Cicilline did not address gay issues adequately despite his sponsorship of a state gay rights bill, his membership on the Human Rights Commission and his posts on the board of directors of AIDS Project Rhode Island and the Jewish Federation of Rhode Island's AIDS Task Force. But the snub by the little-known group only drew community outrage and did little, if any, harm to Cicilline's campaign.

In Northampton, Higgins faced no such melodrama when she took office in 2000 after serving three terms on the City Council beginning in 1994, the last as its president.

Higgins' mayoral campaigns have drawn the overwhelming support of large Northampton's gay and lesbian community, especially after her initial opponent made an issue of sexual

orientation – not a particularly wise tactic in a city known for its progressive politics.

Since then, her opposition has been so weak – and her popularity so overwhelming – that Higgins has campaigned lightly and raised little money before each election yet still triumphed easily. The Victory Fund did not steer any money toward her first mayoral race in 1999, which she won with over 66 percent of the vote.

Last January, Higgins prevailed in another election when she was installed as the president of the Massachusetts Municipal Association after serving as its vice-president the previous year. She headed the Massachusetts Mayoral Association in 2004.

In a city where sexual orientation, politically and elsewhere, is largely a non-issue – city councilors Michael Bardsley and Maureen Carney and mayoral aide Karen Bellavance-Grace are gay or lesbian – Higgins

has earned plaudits for her approach to governing the city.

The weekly Valley Advocate named her the area's top politician in 2003 (she was second in 2004), stating: "As challenging as her job is, Higgins has a gift for consensus-building as well as a inexhaustible faith in the public employees who work hard to make the quality of life in Northampton what it is."

Higgins' time as a Northampton resident has dovetailed with the city's renewal, a dormant downtown turning into a model for urban prosperity. The city simply reinvented itself over the last three decades. Its sleepy business district was transformed into a bustling downtown brimming with art galleries, boutiques, gourmet restaurants, and performance venues, while an outdated department store became Thorne's Market, a vibrant urban mall. With Smith College, a member of the elite Seven

Sisters educational group, also serving an important part of the city's landscape, Northampton began to live up to its nickname of "Paradise City," initially bestowed by opera singer Jenny Lind over a century ago.

It was into this environment that Higgins stepped in the mid 1970s, arriving in Northampton after dropping out of Brooklyn College. She then studied at community colleges, taught in and directed the Hampshire Community Action Commission's child care programs for 22 years, and served as a labor activist while also finishing her degree at the University of Massachusetts in 2003 in the University Without Walls program.

From the start, the 51 year old Higgins has displayed an unconventional approach to the office. She is known for her puckish, and sometimes self-deprecating, sense of humor. During her first term, she agreed to have her hair dyed purple that raised almost \$11,000 for the Pride Zone, the city's GLBT youth drop-in center.

"If this doesn't come out tomorrow, I'm calling the cops on you," she joked to the employees of the salon where her hair was dyed.

And Higgins never misses Northampton's annual Gay and Lesbian Pride Parade in May, often serving as a speaker. In her first appearance after being elected mayor, in 2000, Higgins told the crowd at the post-parade rally: "Your support is what put me on this stage. I applaud ever one of you for taking risks every day."

In July, Higgins had an unusual reason to check out the downtown streets crowded with lunchtime shoppers and offer her own opinion as to why a young bear made its way into a tree in a parking lot just steps from Main Street.

"It's just looking for the bear necessities," said the mayor. ▼

For more information on the Northampton or Providence visit their websites: www.northamptonma.gov
www.providenceri.com.

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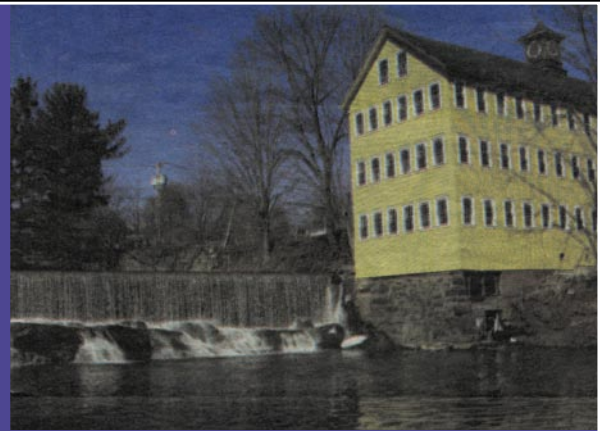


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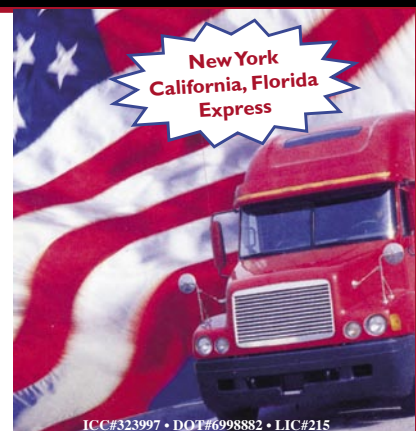
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gl blogs

by Maxx Buccini

Tirelessly searching for the pulse of Boston? No need to pick up The Boston Globe—look no further than the Boston blogosphere. The nation's blogging fixation has hit the Hub with influential blogs such as www.bostonist.com, www.bean-towners.com, and www.universalhub.com becoming a daily dose for versant Bostonians. Yet, the real trend has come in the form of gay and lesbian blogs in New England.

A crude combination of “Web logs” and a recent addition to Webster's Dictionary, blogs are online journals written by anyone and everyone filled with rants, reflections, criticism, and observations that are read by whomever cares enough to peruse their musings. Becoming famous (or infamous) for their relentless coverage of Election 2004, blogs are now the newest venue for gossip, fashion, trends, entertainment, and style.

The gay and lesbian community was ahead of the national curve in their blog savvy with Andrew Sullivan particularly leading the pack. Now, gay and lesbian bloggers are taking to the blogosphere faster than Heidi Klum can say: “you're out.” Of course, Boston is no exception.

Just as the straight blogosphere contains a wide variety of subjects, gay and lesbian blogs in New England have their



own unique nuances. While some are solely dedicated to the subject of gayness, most provide insightful analysis on a range of topics covering the social spectrum. From politics to Prada, these blogs gush with the latest trends in the Hub of the Universe.

Appropriately, these bloggers provide tag lines for their online ruminations encapsulating their own world view in one (sometimes not-so-coherent) thought. Whether it be frivolous and playful titles like, Cirque du So'Gay (<http://cirquedusogay.blogspot.com>): "I spend my days curing hepatitis, and I spend my nights killing my brain in front of the television, intellectualizing Top Model as much as possible with my dear roommate Annie" or contemplative ones such as, Third Decade (http://third_decade.typepad.com): "The writings of a reluctantly optimistic, happily cynical, gay, African American Bostonian," blogosphere consumers have quite the selection.

The blog, Only In The South End (www.onlyinthesouthend.com) by a "A gay Jewish male making it big in the South End of Boston" opines on world events. Blogging about Travel, Politics, Family, and his social calendar, Only In The South End runs the gamut between his opinionated views and newsworthy facts that he reports to his readers.

Coming Out of Left Field (<http://bostonian71.blogspot.com>) by an "arts-lover, sports nut and liberal lesbian in Boston" has a particular New England feel to it. She comments on the Red Sox, a Maine vacation excursion, and includes frequent jabs at Beacon Hill politicians—all certainly considered New England pastimes. She also included a clever tongue-in-cheek litany of her "gay agenda" containing items such as: doing two loads of laundry, taking her parents out for Father's Day brunch, and making sure to fit in her regular nap.

Some gay and lesbian blogs provide news and information on organizations or causes, like the New England School of Law OUTLaws (<http://nesloutlaws>).

gay blogs

<http://cirquedusogay.blogspot.com>

http://third_decade.typepad.com

www.onlyinthesouthend.com

<http://bostonian71.blogspot.com>

<http://nesloutlaws.blogspot.com>

<http://gaynewengland.tblog.com>

www.designerblog.blogspot.com

<http://amanyala.blogspot.com>

<http://bostonwill.livejournal.com>

www.rinow.org/category/issues/lgbtqq

<http://gaysense.spaces.msn.com>

www.newyorkex.blogspot.com

blogspot.com). Billing itself as an outlet for GLBT law students and the community at large, the blog's many gay and lesbian contributors update their readers on new political initiatives, volunteer opportunities, internships, and events that benefit the gay community.

While tBlog (<http://gaynewengland.tblog.com>) humbly refers to itself as the Gay New England Daily Blog, it regularly posts apropos articles of general interest. In Café Politico (www.cafepolitico.us), "Stacy" writes in her blog from Massachusetts on political issues facing women, the GLBT community, and international affairs.

On the cultural side, Designerblog's (<http://www.designerblog.blogspot.com>) author describes his content as the "Thoughts of a theatrical designer, amateur historian, opera lover and gay father, and now gay husband, from Boston. A blog for the Arts and Gay Issues." His expansive knowledge of history and art is put on display as he reveals his current reading list that would impress even the late New York Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan. His postings vary from architectural diagrams and new artistic pieces to his adventures in Provincetown and a review of the British comedy "Kinky Boots." Similarly, AmanYala (<http://amanyala.blogspot.com>) blog by a gay Greek-American in Boston features Thoreauvian references and the overall theme of his connection to nature.

What attracts countless Americans to blogging is the element of writing a public diary. Your thoughts, ideas, concepts, and



philosophy can be shared with millions of people with an effortless right-click. Exposing your personality to the world seems to be a common theme in many blogs devoted to the lives of their authors. Rather than commenting on current events, pop-culture, and everyday happenings, these bloggers look inward for inspiration. A method of catharsis for some, pouring their life story onto an online template appeals to a sense of free expression and self-importance.

In a blog titled, "Gay AA'er and his life 17 years sober," (<http://bostonwill.livejournal.com>) the author delves deeply into his private ordeals and problems. Portions of his blog consist of open letters to friends, reflections on traumatic events, and the difficulties of being sober in a community not known for abstaining from alcohol. Blogs have also been used as coming out tools easing the transition from closeted life to a new and open one. While some choose to make their sexuality known on the cover of People Magazine, others choose another avenue like blogs to discuss their emotions.

Despite what you hear from native Bostonians, the Hub is not all New England has to offer and the same goes for gay and lesbian blogging. Rhode Island's National Organization of Women (NOW) (www.rinow.org/category/issues/lgbtqq) has a specific section in their blog dedicated to LGBTQ issues posted by women in the lesbian community. In Maine, GaySense (<http://gaysense.spaces.msn.com>) presents articles on everyday events ranging from the Andrea Yates verdict to the controversy over "Baby Talk" magazine showing a mother breast feeding on the cover— every one peppered with sharp commentary.

New York Ex (www.newyorkex.blogspot.com) written by "An ex-NYC lesbian now living in Vermont, dishing irreverent com-

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mentary on whatever the hell she pleases” provides an entertaining look into her new life in Vermont. She refers to herself as “The World’s Most Powerful Lesbian” and, according to her, New York Ex has lasted for a year and five months—long past the typical one-year lifespan for blogs.

All of these blogs open a window into a certain segment of the population. Gay and lesbians in New England, and around the world, are broadcasting their lives to the public and many think the reaction will be positive. Nick Hanneman, Marketing Associate for Gather.com, believes that gay blogging is aiding the GLBT rights movement, “Many people in today’s world have a skewed view of the gay and lesbian world and I think blogging is an interesting and often personal insight into the lives of GLBT people around the world. From hangings in Iraq to weddings in Massachusetts, blogging is able to capture them all in real time, from a slightly more subjective viewpoint.”

Gather.com is a Boston-based online social networking site centered on content where blogging is an important component. Hanneman believes that this type of “social media site” offers “a range of member-created content and member-created groups, many of which focus around gay and lesbian issues. These groups vary in size, but run the topic gamut.” Utilizing these methods, he believes, will begin to change negative perceptions and stereotypes.

The blogging obsession that has gripped the country demonstrates just how drastically media and communications are changing. Once upon a time, families would send out yearly “What We’re Up To” cards now some are directing friends to their family blog. As we saw with the Dan Rather saga, the mainstream media has been put on notice that investigative journalism has a new face. Celebrities live in fear of popular gossip blogs that track their every move. Blogs inherently mirror our culture and ourselves; we notice our own interests or opinions in many postings. In fact, that is what seems to entice blog watchers and will continue to make blogging the spirit of our age in the 21st Century. ▼

“From hangings in Iraq to weddings in Massachusetts, blogging is able to capture them all in real time, from a slightly more subjective viewpoint.”

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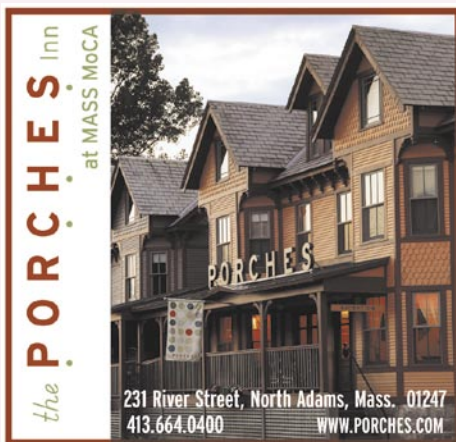
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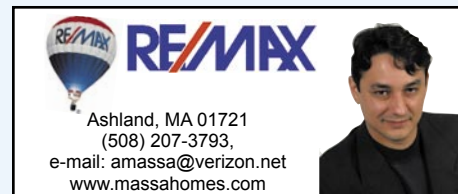


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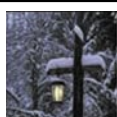
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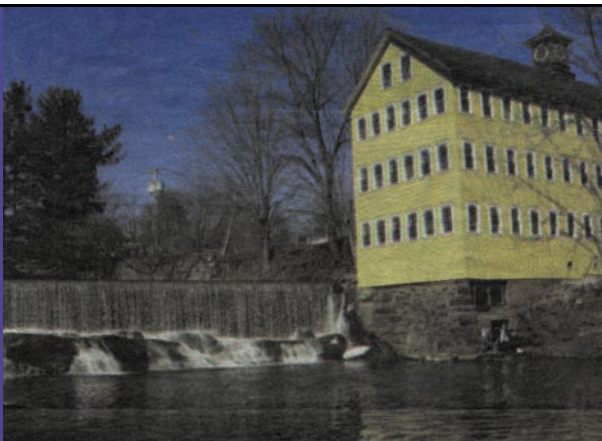
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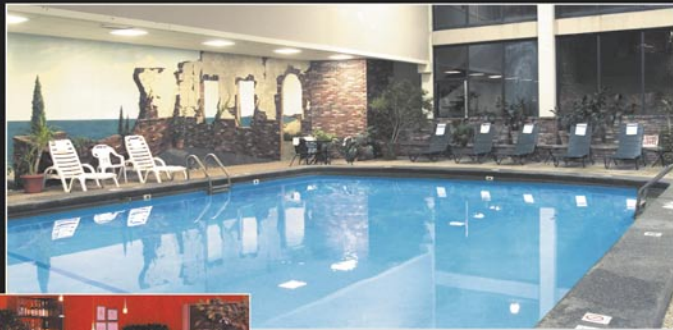
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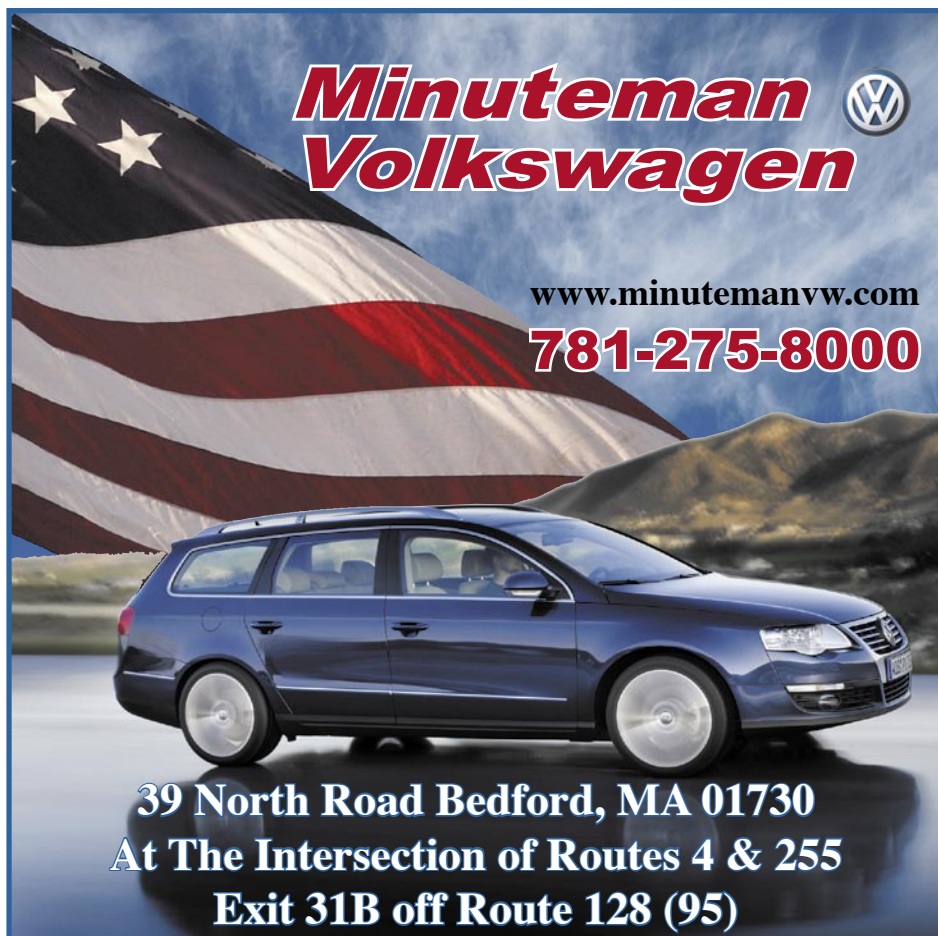
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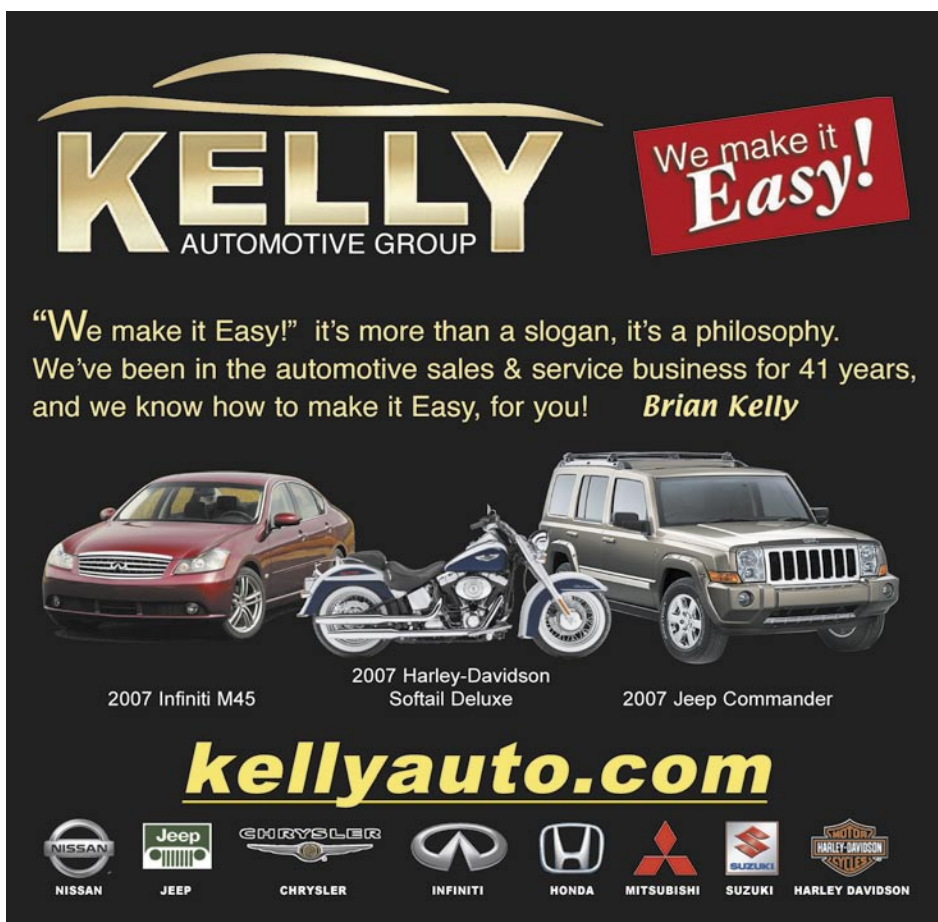
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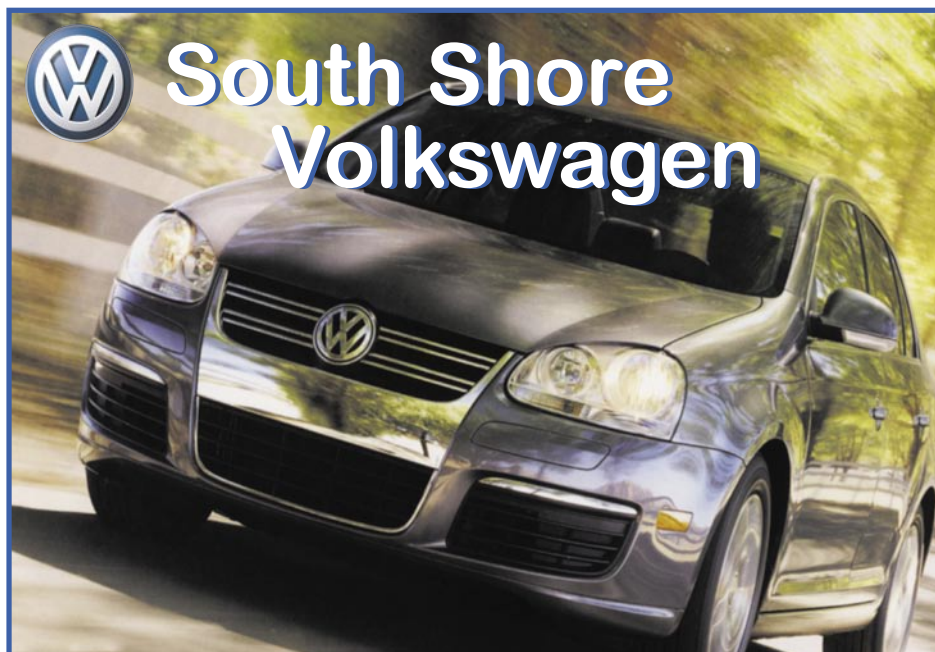
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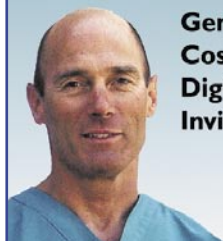
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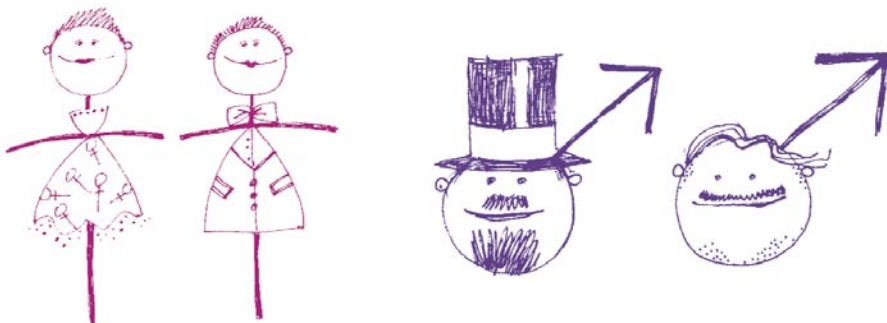
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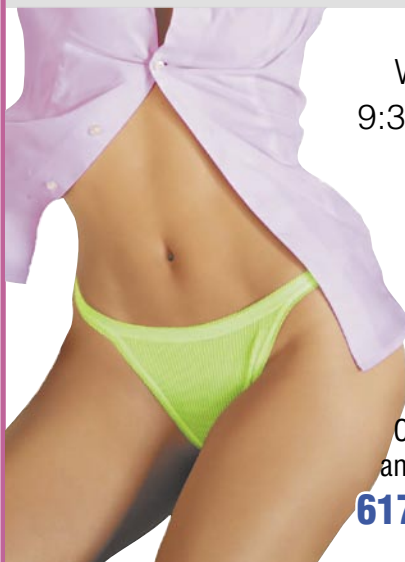


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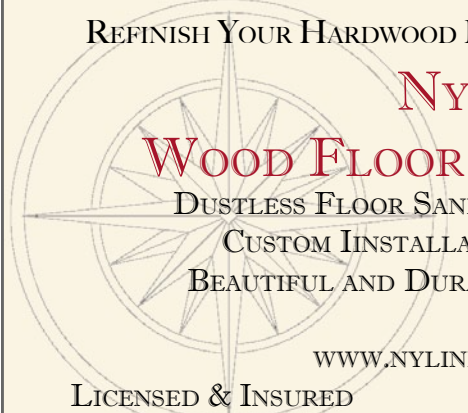
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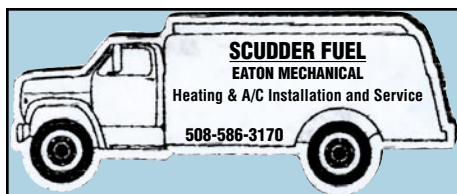
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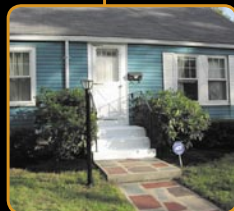
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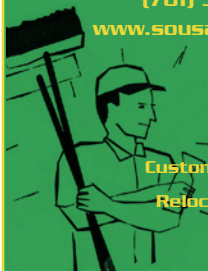
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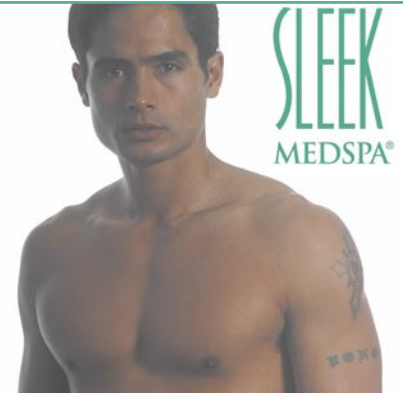


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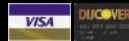
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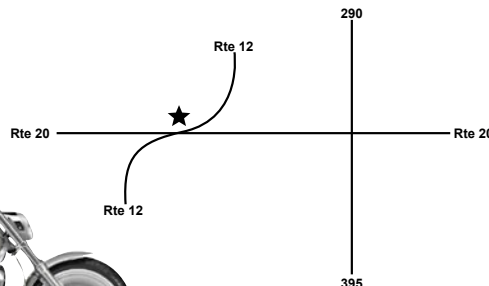
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A Community Medical Alert

Cytomegalovirus, also known as CMV, is very common. The majority of adults have antibodies to CMV in their blood (indicating they have been infected) by age 40. Usually, CMV produces no symptoms. However, serious CMV infections can occur in people with impaired immunity (immunocompromised hosts), such as those with AIDS. One serious CMV infection is CMV retinitis, which can cause blindness. Retinitis usually begins in one eye, but often progresses to the other eye. Without treatment, progressive retinal destruction will lead to blindness in 4 to 6 months. Even with continuous treatment, the disease can become worse, causing blindness. This may be because the virus becomes resistant to

Michael A. Purdy, O.D. the drugs, so that the drugs are no longer effective, or because the patient's immune system has deteriorated further. Patients with CMV retinitis also have a 25-40% of developing retinal detachment, in which the retina detaches from the nerves of the eye, causing blindness. Systemic CMV infection can also occur. About 25% of people with AIDS develop CMV retinitis. Therefore, AIDS patients with a CD4 count of less than 100 cell/ mm³ should be examined periodically for retinitis, even if they have none of the symptoms listed below. An AIDS patient (especially one with a very low CD4 count) who has visual disturbances should seek medical attention and arrange for an eye exam. Below you will find other eye conditions that can cause visual disturbances.

Presbyopia -- difficulty focusing on objects that are close. Occurs after the age of 40

Cataracts -- cloudiness over the eye's lens, causing poor nighttime vision, halos around lights, and sensitivity to glare. Daytime vision is eventually affected. Common in the elderly.

Glaucoma -- increased pressure in the eye, causing poor night vision, blind spots, and loss of vision to either side. A major cause of blindness. Glaucoma can happen gradually or suddenly -- if sudden, it's a medical emergency.

Diabetic Retinopathy -- this complication of diabetes can lead to bleeding into the retina. Another common cause of blindness.

Macular Degeneration -- loss of central vision, blurred vision (especially while reading), distorted vision (like seeing wavy lines), and colors appearing faded. The most common cause of blindness in people over age 60.

Eye infection, inflammation, or injury.

Floaters -- tiny particles drifting across the eye. Although often brief and harmless, they may be a sign of retinal detachment.

Retinal Detachment -- symptoms include floaters, flashes of light across your visual field, or a sensation of a shade or curtain hanging on one side of your visual field.

Optic Neuritis -- inflammation of the optic nerve from infection or Multiple Sclerosis. You may have pain when you move your eye or touch it through the eyelid.

Bleeding into the eye.

Temporal Arteritis -- inflammation of an artery in the brain that supplies blood to the optic nerve.

Migraine Headaches -- spots of light, halos, or zigzag patterns are common symptoms prior to the start of the headache. An ophthalmic migraine is when you have only visual symptoms without a headache

Dr. Purdy received his Doctorate of Optometry from the New England College of Optometry and is a member of the large diverse Urban Eye MD Associates team which cares about our community and all the health issue which we face. At Urban Eye MD Associates our skilled team provides comprehensive dilated eye examinations which every child and senior citizen should have annually and young adults every 1-2 years. During the routine eye exam we determine refractive error, ocular health of the eye, as well as screen for any ocular manifestations of systemic diseases such as Diabetes, HIV, and Hypertension.

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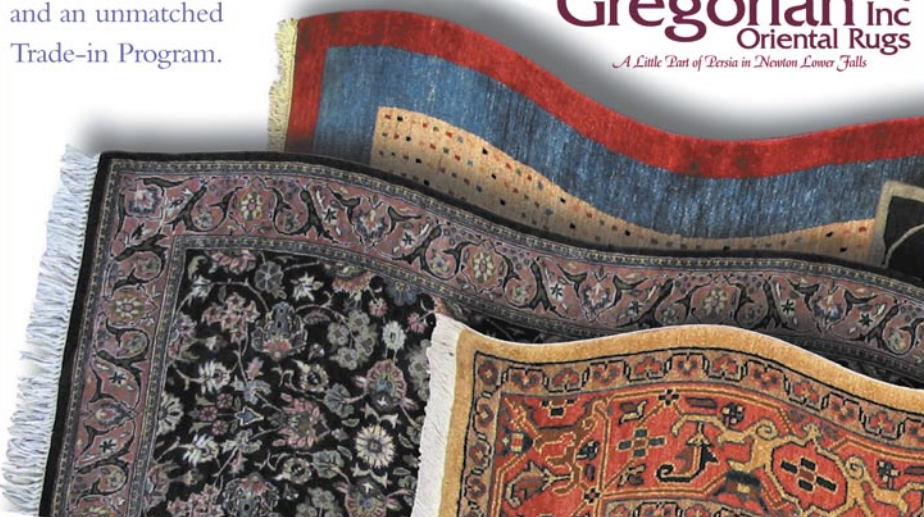
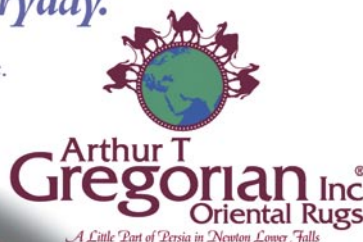
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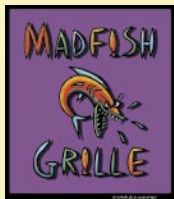
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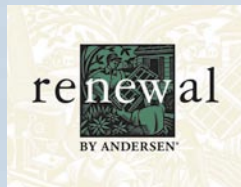
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