

SCRABBLE P₃U₁R₁G₂E₁

A "dyke" and a "faggot" are fine, but a "lezzie" and "pooftah" will be prohibited.

Not to worry - this isn't some strange new ballot initiative. The new rule is part of a purge of offensive Scrabble words to take place by the end of the year.

About 75 to 100 words will be eliminated from the next edition of the Official Scrabble Players Dictionary, according to John D. Williams, Jr., executive director of the National Scrabble Players Association.

The purge will affect only the 10,000-some Scrabble players who play in tournaments or clubs, said Williams. Casual players in the country can use any dictionary as long as it is agreed upon before the game begins.

The move was prompted by Anti-Defamation League complaints and a desire by the game's manufacturer to draw more young people to the game, said Williams. Scrabble, a crossword game, is manufactured by Milton Bradley and marketed to people ages eight and up.

Some of the offensive words to be deleted include racial and ethnic slurs such as "spic," "darkie," and "kike;" terms for body parts such as "cunt;" and derogatory references to Gays, according to Williams. Gay-related words that Williams said will be deleted include "faggotry," "faggoty," versions of the "poof" (a British word for a male homosexual), "lez," and "lezzie." Words such as "gay" and "lesbian" will remain.

The National Scrabble Players Association, based in Greenport, NY, had heard more complaints about the "offensive" words from parents and ministers than from Gays, said Williams.

STONEWALL: IN SPIRIT AND FLESH

by Bee Bell

Twenty-five years ago, lesbians and gay men were beginning the first of the five nights of rebellions against police harassment that inaugurated the national gay and lesbian liberation movement. What many queers do not recognize

is that it was trans-gender men and women - people who cross-dressed and in other ways disobeyed their assigned gender - who kicked off our movement. Many or most were people of color. As the Village Voice described it at the time, a lesbian (a big bulldyke, according to legend) was being dragged to a patrol car by the cops: "She put up a struggle, from car to door to car again." Drag queens had till this moment been striking major poses and blowing kisses, but now "the scene became explosive. Limp wrists were forgotten. Beer cans and bottles were heaved at the windows and a rain of coins descended on the cops."

To remind the world that we owe our movement to the drag queens who threw the attitude and the bulldagger who threw the first punch, Dennis Ferrante and I got together to dish about drag in the spirit of Stonewall.

DIESEL DYKE DOES DRAG QUEEN

B: Okay, let's get personal. Have you ever wanted to be a girl?

F: When I was a kid. I think any gay man who said they didn't, or hadn't ever had

a feeling that they'd want to be in the shoes of the opposite sex, would be a liar. I remember a couple incidences...when I was 6 years old at a stoplight with my mom and my aunt, I saw a woman over at a mailbox.



photo by Annette Dragon

I noticed all these people paying attention to her, both men and women; she was really decked out. I thought, what a neat thing. I said "Mom, I want to be a girl." She was so classy - she had people looking back over their shoulders. She must have been not from around here, too.

B: So being a girl wasn't your big thing?

F: I guess I learned at an early age that it would be difficult. Being gay and female is even harder than being a gay man. It was more

of a fantasy and an escape. Of course, I knew that if I were a woman I would be gorgeous and glamorous and incredible just like I always am when I dress up.

It wasn't something that I really dwelt on, because I thought, how could I afford to do that—money-wise and life-wise - and while I enjoy being around [transsexual people] in Portland, I think anyone who went through that would have to move. (Sorry, Jennifer.) Sexually, I think I would turn into a lesbian.

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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Phoenix Press is a collectively run organization whose purpose is to build and empower our community by providing positive lesbian/gay images. We will be a forum for the exchange of ideas through debate and discussion. The collective will work to reflect the political and social diversity of our community.

SUBMISSIONS

All submissions should be typed and double-spaced if at all possible. Please include your name and phone number in case we have any questions. Your name will be withheld at your request, but any material received without a contact name or number will not be published. If your submission has appeared or will appear in any other publication, we must be notified. Submissions *must* be received by the 20th of each month. Thank you for your contributions.

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More STONEWALL from page 1

I couldn't see myself playing that straight role, because I would feel...

B: Displaced from gay culture?

F: Yes. And when I'm in drag the last thing I think about would be sleeping with a man. Usually I'm around other women and drag queens. When I've done drag I do really erotic things with women on stage and I really get into it! (Thanks, Phoebe and Jen. [Simone, you're like a sistah.]) It's like I'm so gay that I couldn't be straight.

It sort of scares me because I can see how women are read the wrong way and harrassed all the time. One time, I ended up having to push this guy up against a wall and tell him to lay off because he kept thinking I was out for sex because of how I was dressed up.

B: So dressing up isn't about sex so much?

F: It's about power. It's a rebel side of myself. It's about being unstoppable - as long as you don't do 3 hits of Ecstasy and mix it with K.

Two Tactical Police Force men chase a gay guy down a side street. Gay bystanders start running with their brothers. Before long a large group is running. A man at the head of the group suddenly holds out his arms and yells, "Stop!" The group stops. "There's two pigs and how many of us?" A moment of meaningful silence. The two cops stop also, are looking at one another and then at the crowd. The group leader grins. "Get the bastards!" About face. The cops are now running at full gallop, a lynch mob on their heels. "Catch 'em! Fuck 'em!" - *A report of the second night of Stonewall*

B: But don't men have more power?

F: I don't really see it that way. Men do, because they are told they do. Women have manipulative power that they don't act on. I've seen women being victimized since I was a kid. It always pissed me off. So I want to show people that I can do anything in that form.

Women are more victimized than anyone - anyone else or anything else on this planet. So men do have more power. But I can look good dressed up, get good feedback from it. I can go out and be wild and have fun, whereas women sometimes are more restricted. This doesn't make sense to me. Why does a man get to walk around in a tight t-shirt with his crotch hanging out all over? What's wrong with a woman wearing a skimpy skirt? Why can men walk around with their shirts off - it's so uncomfortable to lay out with a bra on - I'd rather see any woman walk by than a guy with his gut hangin' out and hair all over his back. They say it's because breasts are a "sexual part," or because breasts are sacred since a woman is [here on earth] for being a mother. But that's not why. And the whole body should be a sexual part.

B: Do you have life experiences that made you see early on how women get shat on?

F: I do have formative experiences, yes, I think everybody does. But I see the impact more in TV and magazines.

B: I've seen you do Marlene Dietrich a lot. I really like that because Marlene is so butch, she knew what she was doing and she was so drag herself. How'd you pick her?

More STONEWALL ➡ *page 6*

apex \ˈā-peks\ *n.* 1 **a:** the uppermost point: VERTEX (the ~ of a mountain) **b:** the narrowed or pointed end: TIP (the ~ of the tongue) 2: the highest or culminating point (the ~ of her career) **syn** see SUMMIT.

The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the views of the collective.

More **STONEWALL** from page 2

F: I have my own persona who I've put together from independent, powerful women: Marlene Dietrich, Marilyn Monroe - who people say was such a victim, but who was able to manipulate everything she wanted, though she had to put out a lot for it - Joan Crawford, Bette Davis. I studied their makeup and their characteristics, and formulated them into a character I was comfortable with. I used my own creative visualization to put together a personality.

B: A different personality?

F: Yes, but it's a part of me. I have to express it - that anger and energy - or else I'd probably be one of these macho guys with too much testosterone. I'd probably be really butch if I didn't express that. (Everyone's gonna say yeah, right.)

B: I've noticed that you use a lot of mouth action to convey character.

F: Jay Melvin - who just passed away, he died of AIDS - he and I would videotape Marilyn, freeze it, and practice mouth moves. That's a real gift I got from him - how to distinguish yourself by doing theatrical facial expressions.

B: Do you think of yourself as he or she?

F: One reason I dropped my first name [for performing] is that Ferrante is more androgynous. She was blessed with a good last name. I guess I think of myself as male, then female when I'm in drag: but an illusion. I'm not totally there.

B: What's the money situation for performing in the bars? Do you get lower pay because you're dressed like a woman and that's what happens to women?

F: In general, in this city, in this state, really even north of New York, go-go boys have always made more money than drag queens. People don't realize the time you put in - promoting shows comes with the territory, for example. You don't see go-go boys out there on the street saying "Come to this show." Kaos actually has been featuring drag queens, so other clubs have been following suit. It's forced them into realizing what goes into [drag performing]. If I was to compare go-go boys to drag queens: it's great to see a go-go boy with a nice body dancing, but when they get too muscular they

can't move - and all they're wearing is cut-offs, a thong, a shirt or not; limited clothing. Then you have a drag performer that has to take 1 to 2 hours

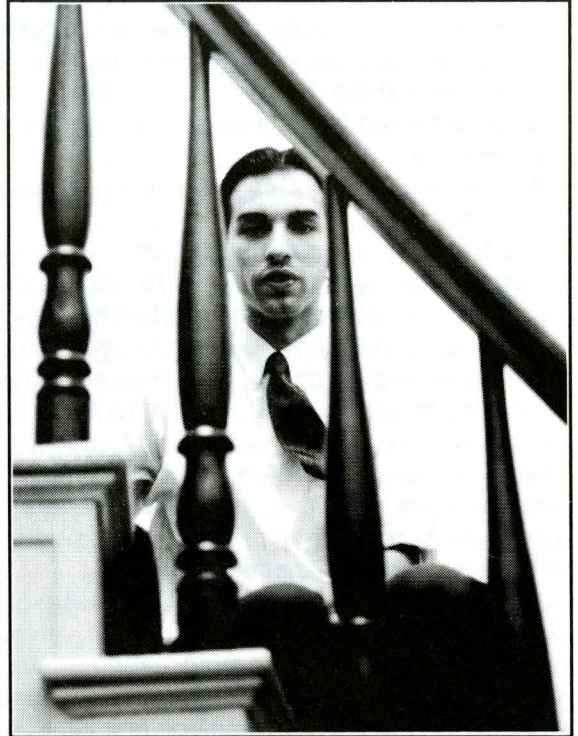


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to get ready, including the psychological part, which will show if you're







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uncomfortable. It cost lots of money for clothes and makeup, hair, etc. And a drag queen is in character the whole night, promoting all night. A go-go

Now I'm a drag queen and I have a dick. At least in New York they make sure they're equipped with that sort of thing (sorry, Boston).



photo by Annette Dragon

This proves to me that women are discriminated upon - with my hairdressing clients, the women need to spend a lot more money on jewelry, accessories, hair, and makeup for their jobs - and the men make more money. Then you see women get fired, and replaced by men who get paid more. It's a fact. Anyone who says it's not is wrong. Look who's running the country: huge men with bad hair.

And what's with a woman taking a man's name when they get married? This woman was crying to me about "I couldn't give him a son." It's his chromosomes. I said, "Honey, you're a nurse practitioner. Don't you realize it was him?"

B: What about drag kings in Portland?

boy changes and he's gone. And what's really sad is you get a go-go boy with a beautiful body and no dick.

F: I'm sure they're out there, but they may not know they're in a category. I'll see a man in drag - dressed really

wild but not quite all as a woman - not putting on makeup, breasts - it's a genderfuck. They're not sure where they are.

B: I mean women who do drag as men.

F: In Portland a lot of women tend to go for an androgynous look. It would be great [to see drag kings], but you don't see it.

B: Do you see yourself as part of the transgender movement?

F: I do it when I want to do it. There are people who do it 7 days a week, or even 1 or 2 days - and people who are transsexual and living in the middle of that, who would be more discriminated against.

B: You wanted to talk about the distinctions among different kinds of drag queens.

F: You have drag queens, who are like a campy version of a man being a woman. Visualize me trying to ultra-feminize you, for example.

An illusionist is someone who creates a persona or has a realistic vision of what they're trying to accomplish. An illusionist is also a kind of drag queen [or king].

Transsexuals are people going through an operation one way or another.

More STONEWALL page 11

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NOTICES

Out of this World with Sonia Johnson. Weekend workshops 9/23-25, 1994, Camp Kieve, Nobleboro, ME. \$265/per person (includes lodging and meals). FMI ☎ (207) 442-7061 or write Gloria Krellman, RR1, Box 1145, Woolwich, Maine 04579.

Equal Protection Maine/Bangor meets 1st Sun. each month. FMI contact EPM, POB 963, Bangor, ME 04402.

Planning for Symposium '95 has begun. Please send ideas and suggestions to Symposium '95, POB 990, Caribou, ME 04736 or call the Gay-Lesbian Phonenumber Wednesdays between 7-9pm (207) 498-2088.

CALLS FOR SUBMISSIONS

Manuscripts sought about violence in the home for a new anthology of essays, poems, and stories. FMI: SASE to Queen of Swords Press, POB 3646 Eugene, OR 97403.

Dancing in the Heart of Wonder: Women Exploring the Mind/Body Relationship is the tentative title of an anthology seeking personal stories. FMI: SASE to Stevens, 50 Pleasant St., 9E, Brookline, MA 02146.

Submissions sought for *Motherlies*, an anthology of stories, poems, essays, etc. by lesbians who have been sexually and/or physically abused by their mothers. Send SASE to Elizabeth Brook, 21 Valley View Dr., Amherst, MA 01002 for guidelines.

**More NEWS from page 1**

"Most Scrabble experts are unhappy about the changes," Williams said. "They understand the words are offensive but think that to deny the words exist is not great."

The Official Scrabble Players Dictionary is comprised of two to eight letter words from the four most popular dictionaries. Words are considered "game pieces," Williams said.

"I've seen Jews play "kike" and Gays play "faggot," Williams said. "...They put the word down because they had to make the play."

VERMONT WORKERS WIN HEALTH BENEFITS

New York Times - Vermont will extend health and dental coverage to the unmarried heterosexual and homosexual partners of its state workers, becoming the first state in the nation to do so, officials say.

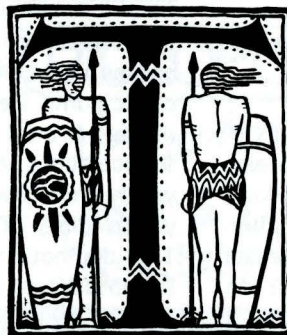
Under an agreement reached on Friday between the state and the union representing its workers, employees who sign affidavits affirming that they are in an "exclusive, enduring domestic relationship of at least six months" can obtain health benefits for their partners.

"A number of people have asked me if this is going to be a political hot potato, and I think the answer is no," Thomas Torti, the state's Commissioner of Personnel, said yesterday. "Vermont, traditionally, is a state which since the days of the aboli-

tionist movement has supported individual rights and fought discrimination. I don't think this is going to rub a lot of Vermonters the wrong way."

David Smith, a spokesman for the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force in Washington, said, "Vermont is definitely the first state to do this."

In 1992, the Vermont Legislature prohibited domestic partners from receiving state health benefits, but lawmakers in the same session amended the State Labor Relations Act to ban discrimination based on sexual orientation. Mr. Torti said the labor act took precedence over the conflicting law. ▼

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More STONEWALL from page 7

Transvestites I think of as closeted drag queens, or they are straight.

B: In fact, most transvestites are straight men.

F: Among illusionists, there are different kinds. Some act like a regular woman standing around talking (go, Michael).

B: I love dancing with Michael.

F: He's really good. He's not copying anything. He's very comfortable; he adds energy to the scene. He's the kind of person they'd tell to come on in for free at a New York club. What I do is more of a production, oriented around a stage and an audience. I'm loud and screaming. One's not better than the other - they're apples and oranges, totally different.

So we have a lot of all these categories in Portland. We have all of them and we have some drag kings. In New York, there are 20 different kinds of drag that are distinct. I just call it genderfuck. We have it. ▼

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