

Leather Scene

Going Online

by Cain Berlinger

It's the time of year to reassess and examine the choices that will carry us into the next millennium. It's another year and a whole caseload of new scenarios. There's something about moving into another century that makes you feel just a little more circumspect in the choices that you're going to make for the next few hundred days.

1998 saw a lot of turmoil regarding civil rights, sexual rights, redefining situations, strategies, and some of our most prestigious institutions went through radical change, isolating and gaining new supporters. These changes will affect us into the next century and beyond. This is going to be the time to leave antiquated emotions and ideals behind and grasp the diversity concept that our communities are giving so much attention to.

Hate crimes aren't going to stop until we demand legislation and take action. Hate crimes are not just against gays or minorities but these are crimes against humanity. The only way we are going to implement these changes is by total involvement/commitment. We are no longer going to leave our lives in the hands of Washington and activists no matter how well intentioned. We must all become activists now because our legacy as victims of the 20th century is at stake and the way we are going to march into the 21st century is up to us.

We have the knowledge, numbers and the power, politically and socially to make our voices heard. Use your pens, typewriters, computers as bullets into the hearts of those that are pushing their



own agenda and using us as scapegoats and sacrificial lambs.

It's up to you to make sure that the advances of the 20th century aren't lost and the embarrassments and oppression of the last 100 years aren't buried under an avalanche of change and personal heroism.

The diversity within our communities isn't just about being a minority but working and recognizing the minorities within the minorities. Nobody is entitled to make the decision about who's got the Blacker sensibilities or who is the better gay magazine/calendar role model or whether or not a skin color dictates a more active sexual prowess than another.

I'd like to think that much of the in-fighting over the last few years between groups, clubs and minorities was just growing pains. It's time for us to enter the next millennium as grown ups working together. Most important is that we take our anointed leaders and activists to task making sure that it's our agenda they are promoting and not just their own.

Last Thanksgiving I gave thanks for so much besides being with friends and loved ones and having emerged from a bad relationship. The death statistics from AIDS dropped a whopping 47%. It didn't make the loss of so many friends easier but it did make me grateful for the new friends I have made who have

a better chance at life.

Recently I've had the honor of sitting on boards and councils with more POC present than ever. As an old man of the Stonewall era, I applaud the changes watching the seeds of 70's activism finally come to full fruition in time for the new millennium.

E-mail [REDACTED]

THY CUP RUNNETH OVER

Am I A Feminist?

by Lynnell

Stephanie Long

"If I am a feminist, so be it. All I know is that I'm Black, I'm female and I'm starting to like it that way." — beja [REDACTED]

Every so often I receive e-mail from people asking me questions about my column. Some of the questions I received are answered in a not-so-direct way. Meaning, some of my articles are formed from questions I've received. Someone once asked me, "What's the difference between a Transsexual and an Intersexual?" I would like to believe I answered that person's question in my article "Intersexual."

Recently I received an e-mail from a reader who says she's been reading my column for over a year. To prove her point, she mentioned some topics that I have discussed in the past. Her question was to the point, "Are you a Feminist?"

At first I didn't know how to reply to such a question. What did this person really mean? What did she expect to learn about me from my response? After considering this question for a few days, I wrote her this reply: Am I a feminist?

I'm not sure, for I'm not sure what a feminist is anymore. Is a feminist a lesbian that preaches separatism?



Does a "true" feminist have to be a natal female? The dictionary defines a feminist as a person whose beliefs and behavior are based on feminism. Feminism is defined as a belief in the social, political, and economic equality of the sexes.

Someone once asked me, why did I become Lynnell, when it's easier to be a man in this society? The only answer I could think of was, because I'm not a man, and it's not worth pretending anymore.

Today as I answer your question I think of that question. Every minute of every day, I am Lynnell. There is no other life for me. Contrary to some people's belief, I do not have the privileges of a male. I work as Lynnell, a woman. When I interview for jobs, I notice I am treated differently because I am a woman. On the job, I too am faced with sexual harassment and discrimination because I am a woman. Women are treated as if they are fragile creatures. Men open doors for me, and call me sweetie, hon & babe. Once someone finds out that I am a lesbian, I am treated even worse.

I recently got into a lengthy discussion with someone as to why I am a lesbian. Her only argument was, a woman needs a man. I told her if she needed dick that bad to go buy her one. Needless to say I wasn't at that job too long. I've learned not to talk about certain things to certain people. It's obvious some women were taught to depend on

Turn to page 29

LYNNELL from 26

men, and to think that the man is supposed to be the bread winner. It appears to me they focus so much energy on the typical family, and crave for that white house with a picket fence, a husband and 2.5 kids. I'm not talking against heterosexuals —to each their own. All I'm saying is I've learned that some women have grown accustom to being the inferior sex.

If you ask me, which you did, I think feminism has its place in this society. But is feminism just for natal females? I hope not. Like I said, I live 24-7 as a woman, and I would like to get the pay I deserve. Although I don't think feminism is just about equal pay. I think it's about respect too. We live in a society where women are called bitches, whores and other names, and it's acceptable. The word "bitch" can now be heard on television.

Television is teaching the younger generation that it's OK to call a woman a bitch. Excuse me, but my momma didn't raise any bitches.

Am I a feminist? Yes I am! I know how difficult it is to be a woman. I know what it's like to live in a world where women are treated less than men. But if feminism is to work it should be for all women, including Trans & Intersex women. I pray that someday we are all treated with respect, dignity and equality. But before we can expect society to treat us this way, we must learn to treat ourselves and other women with respect, dignity and equality.

"... It's in the arch of my back, the sun of my smile, the ride of my breasts, the grace of my style. I'm a woman phenomenally. Phenomenal woman, that's me."

— Maya Angelou.

E-mail [redacted]

SPECIAL HONOREES OF THE 1999 BAYARD RUSTIN AWARDS

The Board of Directors of the Greater Chicago Committee is pleased to announce the special honorees that will receive special awards during the Fifth Annual Bayard Rustin Awards, scheduled for Friday, Feb. 19, 1999 at the DuSable Museum of African-American History.

Receiving the President's Award (Business) will be Lora Branch; the Black Kettle Award (Arts/Journalism), Sanford Gaylord; the Board of Directors Award (Health), Illinois State Representative Constance L. Howard and 27th Ward Alderman Walter Burnett, Jr.; and receiving the Founder's Award, Illinois Secretary of State-Elect, Jesse White.

Additional Bayard Rustin Awards are given to the members and supporters of the African-American lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender community. Balloting for 1999 Rustin Awards began Dec. 1, 1998 and will end Jan. 5, 1999. Ballots are available to members, supporters, etc. Ballots will then be tabulated, with the top three vote receivers being announced as 1999 Rustin Award Nominees, with the actual winners being announced the night of the awards.

The theme for the 1999 Bayard Rustin Awards is "Many Faces ... One Voice" and will include a reception, entertainment and the presentation of the awards. Tickets are \$35 and are available in advance.

For more information regarding the 1999 Bayard Rustin Awards or the Greater Chicago Committee, write P.O. Box 146642, Chicago, Illinois, 60614. Or call 312/670-9660.

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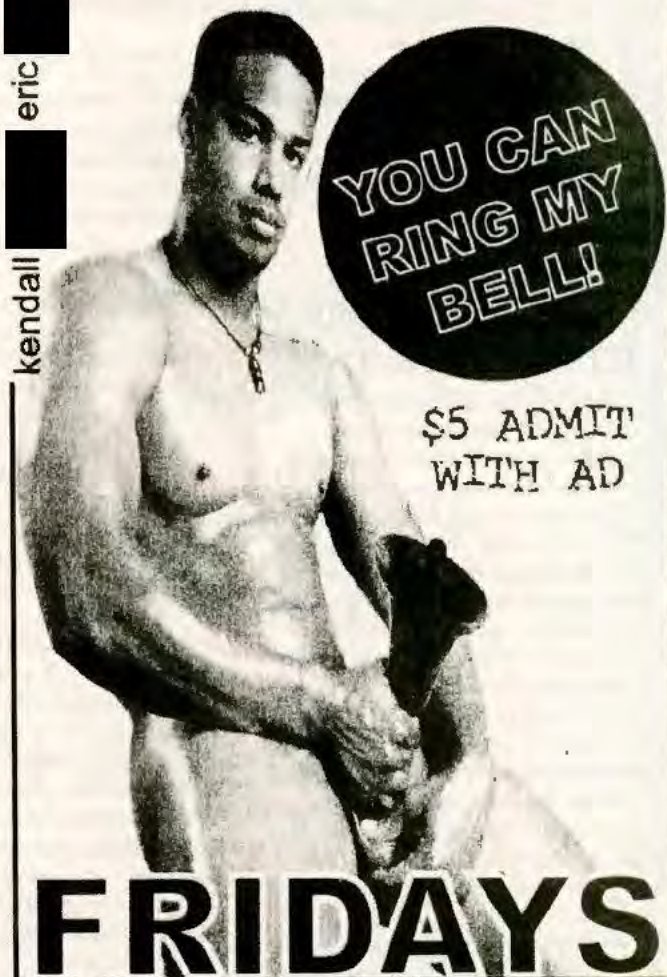
JANUARY 1, 1999
 DJ REG-E
 & STEVE MAESTRO

JANUARY 15, 1999
 MLK CELEBRATION
 DJ SPEN
 & DJ STEVE MAESTRO

eric & bernard

eric

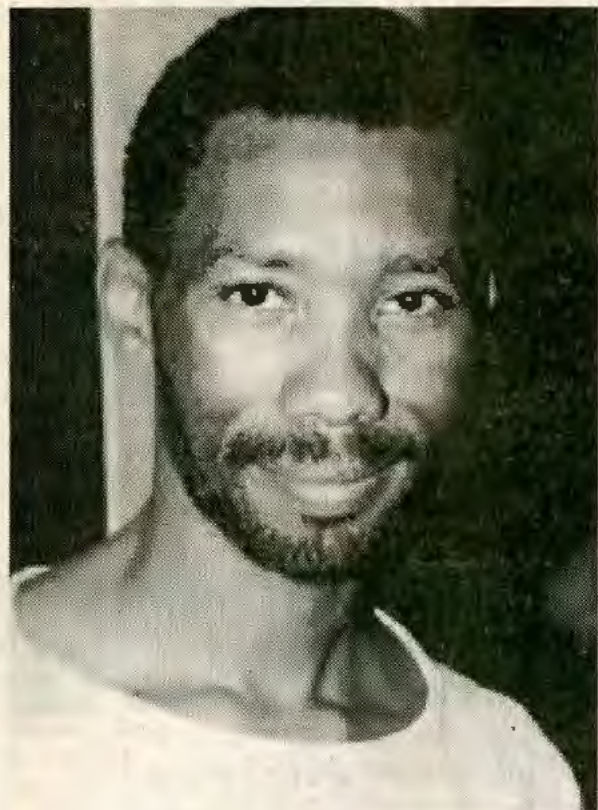
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BLACK

LINES

Jan. 1999, Vol. 3, No. 12 Free/\$2 outside Chicago EXPRESSIONS FROM BLACK GAY, LESBIAN, BISEXUAL & TRANSGENDERED LIFE



SIMON DIES

South Africa's most well-known gay activist is dead of AIDS. Simon Tseko Nkoli died Nov. 30 at Johannesburg General Hospital.

See page 6

INSIDE

**WOMEN'S BASKETBALL SHUT
DOWN—ABL FILES FOR
BANKRUPTCY, CHICAGO'S
CONDORS LOSE FLIGHT**

**PARIS BARCLAY ON 'IN THE LIFE'
CHICAGO LESBIANS HEAD TO
ATLANTA**

**VIEWS BY LESTER DAVIS, SANFORD
GAYLORD, VICKY NABORS & MORE**



Goodson is among the ABL players giving their all—but fighting the NBA's power.