

— and so it was —

1975 — Portland's first Gay Fair was in June on the waterfront; Portland Town Council (PTC) and Larry Copeland organized it. About 200 people showed up; 7 organizations gave out information. "Really small and really fun." (Larry Copeland).

- Such a success an 'Octoberfest' is planned for the fall.

1976 — Small again; "two tents — I mean camping tents" (Jerry Weller).

- "Do you sing, dance, or play music? Do you want to sell arts, crafts, baked goods, whatever? Do you want to advertise your organization, hand out literature, give things away? Do you want to have a good time? Come on down to the waterfront on June 26." (*Gay Rights Report*, PTC newsletter)

1977 — "'77 was the peak of everything" (Susie Shepherd). Mayor Neil Goldschmidt issues Portland's first Gay Week Proclamation. The Shepherds (Susie, Anne, and Bill) appear on the front page of the evening *Oregon Journal*: "Our Daughter is Gay."

- Anita Bryant's threat begins to be felt.
- Massachusetts Representative Elaine Nobel speaks.

1978 — First year with a march. The Eugene Referendum had just been lost, Anita Bryant was in full tilt. MCC provides monitors, more hostility is felt. "A defiant

mood." (Susie Shepherd.)

- Supervisor Harvey Milk is slated to be the keynote speaker, but cancels due to emergency surrounding California's Proposition 13.

1979 — Ten year anniversary of Stonewall: Gretchen Kafoury speaks.

- Larger and larger rallies. Two marches are held, one in June, a second in October to parallel gay rights march in Washington.

1980 — Gay fair theme is "Gay Artists."

- Gay Men's Chorus gives their first concert in conjunction with L/GP.
- "The issue became whether PTC should keep control of the event, or involve the community in the organizing." (Mary Forst)

1981 — PTC decides to let Gay Pride Activities Committee, "a group of businessmen" (*Cascade Voice*) do the organizing. A group of lesbians, gay people of color, and Radical Women (a political organization) demand input into what they perceive as a "bar-controlled event" (E. Ann Hinds). Gay Pride Activities Committee withdraws support for rally. Amid rumors that there will be no rally, PTC steps in and organizes the celebration in two weeks.

- Boycotts declared on all sides.
- TKO ("Lesbians and gay men working together" [*Cascade Voice*]) form in aftermath.

1982 — TKO-inspired groups organize Lesbian/Gay Pride. The involvement of "Lesbians, black gay men and lesbians, feminists of both sexes and white 'grassroots' people . . . a generation of activists who believe that mainstream politics does not address their needs" make LG Pride "much more than a march and rally" (Jay Brown, September, 1982, *Cascade Voice*).

- Dispute over including "lesbian" in gay pride name.
- The beer truck, contracted from woman-owned Other Side of Midnight, never shows up.
- Celebration vs. politics becomes an issue: "seething, unrepresented males" vs. "disgusting political feminist, separatist [sic] lesbian womyn." Excerpts from *NW Fountain*, July '82 editorial by Raunchy Robert Dunn: "Real Women are non-sexist gays, not hell-bent-for-disruption lesbian womyn . . . Frankly most guys I know are tired of dealing with the radical, cut-off-your-balls separatists [sic]. Perhaps we've been too diplomatic in our handling of these irresponsible, selfish feminists . . . To the womyn and their yesboys — thanks for raining on our celebration."

1983 — It rained.

- "People on the left and on the right were so burned out from the year before that it was easy to organize" (Daniel Dallabrida).
- Dispute over including "lesbian" in gay pride name.
- Aunt Jemima episode. A white man in

blackface and Aunt Jemima costume took part in the march. He was confronted by a black woman at the rally. Sides formed as to whether the costume was "fun" or racist. Aunt Jemima was asked to leave.

- Some women objected to graphic nature of Walt Curtis' poetry, read as part of program.
- Cablesystems' Ken Darling filmed the event.
- And it rained.

1984 — Pat Bond speaks.

- Largest gay rally in Portland history.
- Dispute over including "lesbian" in gay pride name
- After rally, Oregon Community Pride ("representing business and professionals" [Jerry Deas] form "to make gay pride a year round activity" (J.D.) alleging L/GP steering committee has no community support.

1985 — Armistead Maupin speaks, Valerie Terrigno doesn't, having caught "bronchitis" from a bottle of gin the night previous in San Francisco, (Jerry Deas).

- Two steering committees, one with political correctness, one with the liquor license and bank account.
- Dispute over including "lesbian" in gay pride name.
- Confusion over time of police escort leaves march and rally without police protection.

pride, shame and identity

by Sandra Pinches, Ph.D.

When I was a graduate student in Clinical Psychology, it was popular to classify people as being primarily preoccupied with shame or primarily preoccupied with guilt, depending upon how they were raised and disciplined as children. "Guilt-oriented" people direct self-criticism at their actions, judging them to be right or wrong, and feel guilt in the latter case. "Shame-oriented" people feel like something is inherently wrong with them, and that their basic lack of worth is revealed in their actions and words. Excessively guilty people supposedly have an easier way out of uncomfortable feelings because they can confess, repent or make amends for wrong behaviors. The proposed solution for shame-oriented people is more complex, and involves recalling and re-evaluating early experiences in which significant others rejected or criticized the person, who then concluded that she or he was worthless and unlovable. Recollection of these experiences is thought to give the person an opportunity to question

the actions and judgments of the significant others rather than his or her own worth.

While clinical psychologists were developing these theories, social psychologists were demonstrating that feelings of shame were not only associated with childhood experiences in rejecting, perfectionistic families, but also with the process of stigmatization, in which certain individuals or groups are perceived as being different from the mainstream in some important respect. Normal people are suspicious of differences, and tend to view them as bad, wrong or even dangerous. They go on from here to assume that a person who is different in one respect is probably different in many others as well, to the point where that person is assumed to be nothing like the self. The overall stigma of "deviance" thus becomes the defining attribute of the person's whole identity.

People who are so stigmatized tend to accept the attribution that much of their feelings, beliefs and behaviors are different from those of "normal" people, and are thus less valid. Experimental research has shown that people who come to accept a deviant identity are more likely than are others to accept external opinions about a situation. For example, when asked to estimate the length of a line, "deviant" experimental participants changed their correct estimates to match the obviously incorrect estimates of participants who were thought to be "normal." When simple perceptions of reality are called into question in this way, it isn't surprising that the complex,

subjective areas of values, emotions, ideas and relationships can become laden with confusion and uncertainty for the individual who deviates from the norm.

Some people in this predicament surrender their own judgement and depend on an external authority, but most people, aware of their vulnerability to manipulation, conceal their inner doubts and struggle privately to define what is real and right in many areas of life. When someone observes them committing an "error," or seems to call attention to their differentness, stigmatized people feel that they have been "caught" and are engulfed by feelings of exposure, fear and shame.

Once the stigmatizing process has damaged a person's self-esteem, the innocent self-acceptance of childhood is destroyed forever. Children express their true selves without questioning if they are different, right or good. A shamed person cannot return to this state, but can work to restore feelings of pride in who he or she is. Fortunately, a restored sense of pride is the better kind, because it has been tested and can be trusted to hold up under questioning.

The process of restoring one's identity can be compared with the reclamation of territory which was previously invaded and occupied by a foreign army. When people label us, they implicitly claim the right to judge and control us, just as invading armies plant a flag, rename a country in their own language, and set up rules for the native people to follow. If we accept the labels, and believe the judgments, we are like a surrendering nation, which gives over a part of itself to the invaders, to be disowned and occupied by the foreign army. Reclaiming these parts as our own identity brings them back under the con-

trol of our executive agent, the ego, but the new occupants and any other prospective invaders on the scene will resist this action.

In a more literal way, the reclaiming of what is ours means that we dare to be "ourselves" in an ever-widening space. Beginning with the freedom to think and feel what is really there, we move on to express our true selves when alone, then when in the company of intimates, in our workplace, and finally, in public. Each step is made by mustering courage, getting support when possible, making decisions, and taking action. At each step we encounter the resistance of others and of our internal army of occupation.

In addition to this psychological war of liberation, there is also a spiritual path by which self-affirmation is suddenly realized in a flash of insight (usually preceded and followed by a lot of hard work). Deeper than the ego-identity which we have been describing is the Self or Spirit. Like light, to which it is so often compared, the deeper Self cannot be invaded, fragmented, or blemished, as can the ego and the body. It continues to shine clear and perfect, even though it may be hidden from vision behind self-doubt and confusion. People who have experienced the presence of this light energy within themselves suddenly perceive differences between people, personal faults and psychological damage as superficial illusions with no lasting importance. Since the Self has been whole since the beginning, there is really no ultimate need to put oneself back together; the step by step reclamation of the ego is only a strategy for dealing with a problem which causes us to suffer because we take it too seriously. Through the experience of unconditional love which flows from the higher Self, both shame and pride lose their meaning as Self-affirmation transcends them both.

At this time of year, we celebrate the liberation struggle of lesbians and gay men. May we each contribute to this struggle the courage to claim what is rightfully ours, to step freely into the world, and to awaken to the reality that we are all already whole.