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Letters to the editor should be limited to 500 words. **Deadline for submissions** to the editorial department and for the **Calendar** is the Thursday before the first and third Friday for the next issue. Views expressed in letters to the editor, columns and features are not necessarily those of the publisher.

The display advertising deadline is the Monday after the first and third Friday for the next issue.

Classified ads must be received at the **just out** office by 3 pm the Monday after the first and third Friday for the next issue, along with payment. Ads may be accepted by telephone with VISA or MasterCard payment.

Ad policy. No sexually exploitative advertising will be accepted. Compensation for errors in, or cancellation of, advertising will be made with credit toward future advertising.

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A copy of **just out** is available for \$2. Advertising rates are available on request.

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steppin' out



PHOTO BY LINDA KLEWER

guest editorial

Leaves of crass

*'Tis the season of catalogs, whose glossy pages
make promises that won't deliver*

by Bob Roehr

It's that time of year again, when catalogs fall through the mail slot even faster than leaves from the trees. They dazzle and seduce, photos gleaming from their shiny pages. Spend money, they whisper. With us, they implore with faux friendliness. You will be sexy and have washboard abs if you just wear our underwear, they coo. People will love you if you give them our products, they intimate.

It all began quite simply. A friend once sent me a thank-you gift of English muffins for hosting him and his lover over the weekend. Mom indulged me with a particular sweater. And I subscribe to several gay magazines. From those small mail-order seeds has grown an effluence that multiplies like gerbils in heat.

Now I can deck the halls from L.L. Bean to Land's End, selecting tasteful wreaths, button-down shirts and duck boots. The big news this year is in turtlenecks. There's a new color—persimmon—to add to the rainbow of existing hues. But I'll probably stick to my traditional anguish: choosing between white and oatmeal.

"Uncut." Yes, that italicized headline caught my eye. I'm being offered *The Complete Arabian Nights*, "Uncut, uncensored." And in leather too. Not "bonded" leather, but "genuine leather," accented with 22kt gold. Each of the 17 monthly installments is only \$49.75. Now *that's* a fantasy.

Perhaps my favorite catalog is the one schlepping a Christmas tree ornament. It's purported to be of Dorothy and Toto, in scintillating brown and beige. The bauble is only \$44. Such a deal. And \$5 is donated to the Gay and Lesbian Alliance

Against Discrimination. Now that's the spirit of Christmas, forced philanthropy. I love it when people make decisions for me so that they can feel good about themselves.

These products are made in a number of countries, including China. That's a place where the leaders don't believe they have gay people. And they don't allow the deluded ones who think they are lesbian or gay to meet in public. And they are likely to ship many such poor souls off for "re-education."

Maybe "Dorothy" was produced by child laborers making sub-minimum wages, or maybe in one of those Red Army prison camps. You know, the ones where people who are about to be executed have their organs "harvested" for sale on the international transplant market. No, we aren't in Kansas anymore, though a kidney or a cornea may well be.

Personally, I can't think of a token more expressive of the season or more representative of ending anti-gay discrimination and violence than this ornament.

Because I'm a reporter somebody thinks I want a T-shirt saying, "Will write for food." Silly direct marketer, that's poets and novelists. Journalists write for beer or booze, and in the old days, cigarettes.

Then there is the fruit-of-the-month club. Being a single gay man I have another type of fruit in mind, and judging from my recent sex life, once a month would be a vast improvement from the status quo. But alas, what I'm craving does not seem to be among the mass of dead printed and stapled trees before me. And if such a catalog should appear I probably couldn't afford the shipping and handling, let alone the purchase price.

I think I'll go rake leaves.

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