

culture

Frot with Choices

Controversial movement emphasizes masculinity, eschews anal sex

by Glenn Scofield Williams

There is no easy way to talk about Frot. The often misunderstood and controversial movement was founded by Bill Weintraub, whose writings on the origins and ideas behind Frot are vitriolic, didactic and sometimes violently exclusionary. His words have just as often turned people away from the movement as they have brought people to it.

"Sometimes you have to get the baseball bat out and hit a guy across the face in order to get his attention," says Frot Men Portland coordinator Lynn Jones, "and I think that's kind of what Bill's had to do." Either way, the Frot movement is here to stay and might be just what some gay, bisexual and straight men are looking for.

What is Frot? Frot is the term coined (and fiercely copyrighted) by Weintraub to describe a specific type of frottage. Normally defined as phallus-to-body rubbing, in this case Frot is "full-body, phallus-on-phallus sex." Citing origins in Greco-Roman warrior cultures, as well as other historical men's cultures, Weintraub birthed the Frot movement shortly after the onset of the AIDS epidemic and, in many respects, as a direct response to it. Frot doesn't involve the exchange of body fluids and is, therefore, one of the safest sexual practices men can enjoy.

The Frot movement is based on four rigid principles: the advocacy of Frot as the true form of man-to-man sex, a complete abstinence from anal penetration, an embrace of the masculine (and, thereby, a rejection of male effeminacy) and the promotion of partner fidelity. These four principles, followers insist, are inextricably linked and together form a more deeply satisfying and masculine form of homosexual love.

"The guys who talk about Frot," says Jones, 47, "they want a buddy. They don't want a floozy. They don't want to go to the [adult] bookstore. They want someone they can go hunting with, play football with, go golfing—the male bonding thing." He laughs, "And then every once in a while, you might just want to rub one out together."

Frot advocates believe that, through the natural rubbing of bodies during sport and play, boys learn a type of sexual bonding that often leads to real sexual and emotional relationships as young men. Many of these relationships devolve with

time, however, because of parental and societal pressures, and men who have these experiences in their youth often go on to live unfulfilling, strictly heterosexual lives.

"It's normal for guys to do this," explains Jones, who is gay. "It's a male thing." But as men let go of these emotional and sexual bonds, he says, they find "they miss that male bonding, that maleness that's not connected to promiscuity, that has nothing to do with anal sex. It's that male connection they miss, that feeling good together."

Frot followers welcome a return to this sort of masculine warrior play, which, they say, is fulfilling on a deep psychological level as well as a physical level.

The Frot lifestyle is not, however, to be entered into lightly. Masculinity, fidelity and the prohibition of anal penetration are taken very seriously. At times, the movement can seem less pro-Frot than it is anti-anal. Why is this? Honestly, most of that conversation revolves around that subject of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases.

"My brothers were being killed and were dying," Jones points out. "And they were being brainwashed into believing you had to be anally receptive. That's not true. Gay does not equal anal, does not equal AIDS."

Eric Zoerner, a gay software engineer from Portland, adds: "I've personally encountered a lot of pressure to engage in anal when I'm flirting with guys or meeting guys in a chat room or something. And then, I get a lot of attitude when I tell them I'm not really into that. Things like anal sex and effeminacy, which I didn't really identify with, was really a roadblock for me in my coming to terms with my own sexuality."

The movement sees anal sex between men as demeaning of one man's masculinity, essentially making one man submissive to the other. Frot, on the other hand, promotes equality and a truly masculine intimacy. "Frot is such an important alternative to anal because of the intimacy that men can actually have in that activity," says Zoerner, 42. "It's face to face, heart to heart, cock to cock."

Leon Hall, a bisexual customer service specialist from Portland, says the anti-anal message has more to do with butt sex being off-putting. "Girl-on-girl sexuality is, like, great and thought of, you know, as real-

ly sexy, and I think so, too. But guy-on-guy is so repulsive to so many people, and what's the reason for that? I think it's because you generally associate guy-on-guy with anal, and I think a lot of people are kind of turned off by that."

The movement encourages participation in sports and the martial arts "because it amplifies your masculinity and improves your self-confidence," Zoerner explains.

Jones adds that sports "actually moves you away from the effeminate. It goes to the male bonding thing and gives you a chance to be around other masculine men. A person will start imitating, start taking on the traits of the people they're around. So if you're uncertain and you start going down to Darcelle's all the time and hanging around all the queens, well, then you'll start shifting that way."

The masculine, anti-anal angle tends to encourage bisexual men into the folds of the Frot movement. "This movement tells me that bisexuals aren't insane," says Hall, 27. "There are a lot of men who exhibit bisexual behavior. But this movement makes all that a lot easier than any other sort of thing around. And I think it's really important because there are a lot of guys who feel the dual desires and don't know what to make of it, let alone how to explore it."

Zoerner adds: "I think this movement is especially important with respect to young men who are just coming of age and just beginning to know themselves and their sexuality, for those who feel an association with 'gay' and the 'gay culture' as a barrier to accepting that part of who they are. For those who don't identify with the effeminate."



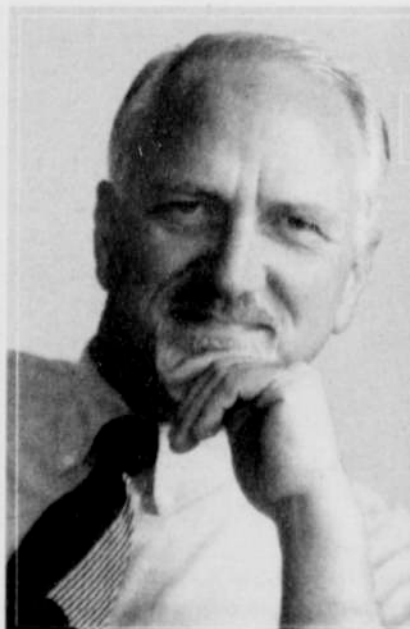
Frot Men Portland advocates a specific type of frottage involving "full-body, phallus-on-phallus sex."

For these men and thousands of others, Frot has become a lifestyle that is fulfilling and life-affirming. And Frot Men Portland is a group of like-minded men supporting that choice.

"It's for us," Jones ruminates, "a loosely concentric group of guys who can get together on a regular basis, do whatever, have a picnic, have a meal, go to a movie. But first of all, it's about support." jo

For more information about FROT MEN PORTLAND e-mail pdx-frot@mac.com or visit www.man2manalliance.org.

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