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**HALLOWEEN COSTUME PARTY**  
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Saturday & Sunday 9am to 2am  
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# Great Expectations

The extra baggage of gay travel

**W**e slide into the same side of restaurant booths with our sweeties, and the wait staff gives us a smile. We have no problem answering together about our cuddly stay-at-home evening plans to the inquiring New Seasons checker. The hospitals "get" that we're family, and the loan officers don't bat an eye. We're here and queer in Portland, and we'd like to take that sentiment everywhere we go. Some of us, however, might find travel outside our bubble of relative openness to be a slap in the face.



**Out of My Mind**  
BY MALKA GEFFEN

When I brought the wife (then new girlfriend) to meet my family, I wanted her to experience the wonder I felt at all the fabulous offerings of my hometown. The place had changed a lot during the years I'd been away, but there were still some features I could point out with expectancy of her appreciation. On this first trip, I took her to Downtown Saturday Night—a once-a-month evening street fair. Vendors, musicians, punks and freaks would fill up Ronstadt Plaza (yes, as in the Goddess Linda), and as teens we would hang out and

time to take a small but romantic weekend vacation that didn't involve visiting family or friends. Just us. Up north to the land of the free-to-get-married-and-have-health-care. We set our sights on Vancouver, British Columbia, because of the overwhelming good press and word of mouth the city has received lately. So we packed and drove straight to the border, where we learned, while sitting motionless in our car (yes, a Subaru Forester) for



Something for everybody in Vancouver, British Columbia.

hours, that we're not the only ones with this idea. Once at the border patrol station, we handed over our passports and proudly announced the nature of our relationship. The agent didn't give us a second look.

ride the buzz of our heightened self-consciousness. I realized the event marked a coming-of-age thing for me, but I hadn't anticipated the drastic changes that took hold in my absence. The blessed punks and freaks of my youth had transformed into threatening thugs and addicts. Walking down the street together, the girlfriend and I got a vicious, "Fucking dykes!" hurled at us from a passing vehicle.

The penny-pincher that I am, I thought we should stay in a cheap place outside town. But when the magazines rate Vancouver as "the best city to live in," they don't necessarily mean Burnaby—a strip-mall suburb 30 minutes from downtown. The woman who owned the "bed and breakfast" (i.e., her basement apartment) didn't expect two women. She also didn't understand why we had a problem with sleeping on two twin beds (the double, we discovered, was as soft as a table). It was late, and so we made do by pulling the twin mattresses together onto the floor of the main room, where we romantically tried to avoid lying on the crack. By noon the next day, we were in a downtown hotel. That night we celebrated our second wedding anniversary at a world-renowned Indian restaurant. Our beautiful gay waiter—the kind of guy who naturally looks like he's wearing eyeliner—made us feel right at home.

Surely, I thought, taking our honeymoon in Hawaii a few years later, we could expect considerable comfort with our minority status in tow. After all, wasn't Hawaii the first U.S. state to delve into the ongoing experiment with legalizing same-sex marriage? But when we arrived at our hotel, the desk clerk seemed truly perplexed.

Traveling queer might mean having to come out over and over again—to every bellhop and maitre d'. The familiar English language, Walgreens and IHOPs of our travel destinations do not necessarily represent the acceptance and safety we might feel in the communities we build at home. But when we do find the right spots—the cafe with the rainbow window sticker or the diner with the flirty butch waitress—we can sit back and really be on vacation. ☐

"So, what are you two doing in Hawaii?" she asked in a nice bubbly voice.  
 "We're on our honeymoon!" we exclaimed.  
 She cocked her head and said, "Where are your husbands?"  
 No, we explained. It's *our* honeymoon.  
 "You mean you two got married!?"

Nice and bubbly left the building, and her ugly twin sister curt and awkward took her place. We weren't anticipating that kind of ignorance, which unfortunately set the tone for our subsequent encounters.

MALKA GEFFEN has plenty of room in her head. Fill it by e-mailing [malkageffen@gmail.com](mailto:malkageffen@gmail.com).

A few weeks ago, the wife and I decided it was