

a queer-specific tract at its Family Matters Conference, where Miller and John J. Weltman, president of Circle Surrogacy, were presenters in San Francisco in February. This was the first year the conference was held on the West Coast.

Silver and Schudde, 38-year-old gay men, chose to have biological children. Their first two children, William, 4, and Bryn, 2, were born using Silver's DNA and a surrogate through Growing Generations.

Silver, who has a graduate degree in family and children counseling and is retired, said he chose to use reproductive technologies because it "felt comforting to have my genetic history involved."

Schudde, a former genetic administrator and now a stay-at-home dad, is attempting to have a child using his DNA and a surrogate.

While reproductive technologies are an emerging option for gay family planning, it's expensive, and infertility issues can enter the picture.

"I wanted to be pregnant for as long as I could remember," said Shanon Adamson-John, who was diagnosed with unidentified infertility. "My life without a child wasn't an option."

She and Carrie looked into adoption through Open Adoption & Family Services, and within three weeks, they adopted a son. The Adamson-Johns were unusually lucky.

Trish Calvin had difficulty conceiving when she attempted to have a second child. She and Jan, a couple of 19 years, not only added Alison, 4, to their family, but they also acquired two gay godfathers and a godson in the process.

Ed Lazzara, 48, and Kurt Garcia-Ottens, 45, were already in Open Adoption & Family Services' adoption pool when they met the Calvins, who were exploring adoption. At the men's suggestion, the Calvins joined the pool and adopted Alison before Lazzara and Garcia-Ottens adopted their son, Leo, 3.

"It was a blessing," said Trish, recalling that Alison became Lazzara's and Garcia-Ottens'



From left, Dakotah, Carrie and Shanon Adamson-John are a family with the help of Open Adoption & Family Services.

"practice child, because they really had no clue how to change a diaper."

Lazzara and Garcia-Ottens, a couple of 17 years, explored family planning options and decided adoption felt right for them.

Christian Hetchinson, 40, and his partner of 19 years, Timothy Kirchner, 42, weren't quite ready to adopt, so they opted to become foster parents as a "beginning step" into parenthood.

Hetchinson said they weren't sure if they would even be allowed to be foster parents, but with the help of a private child service organization, they have been foster parents to three boys between 12 and 15 years old for the past eight months.

"We thought it would be fun being foster parents, and it's been much more fun than we ever expected it to be," said Hetchinson, who is now a full-time foster parent while Kirchner manages a retail store.

Other than spoiling the boys, Hetchinson, who plans on having a "steady flow of kids coming through our house," said the best part of being a foster parent is something significant: "We are able to give back to these kids something that maybe they didn't have in their homes or their personal history." ©

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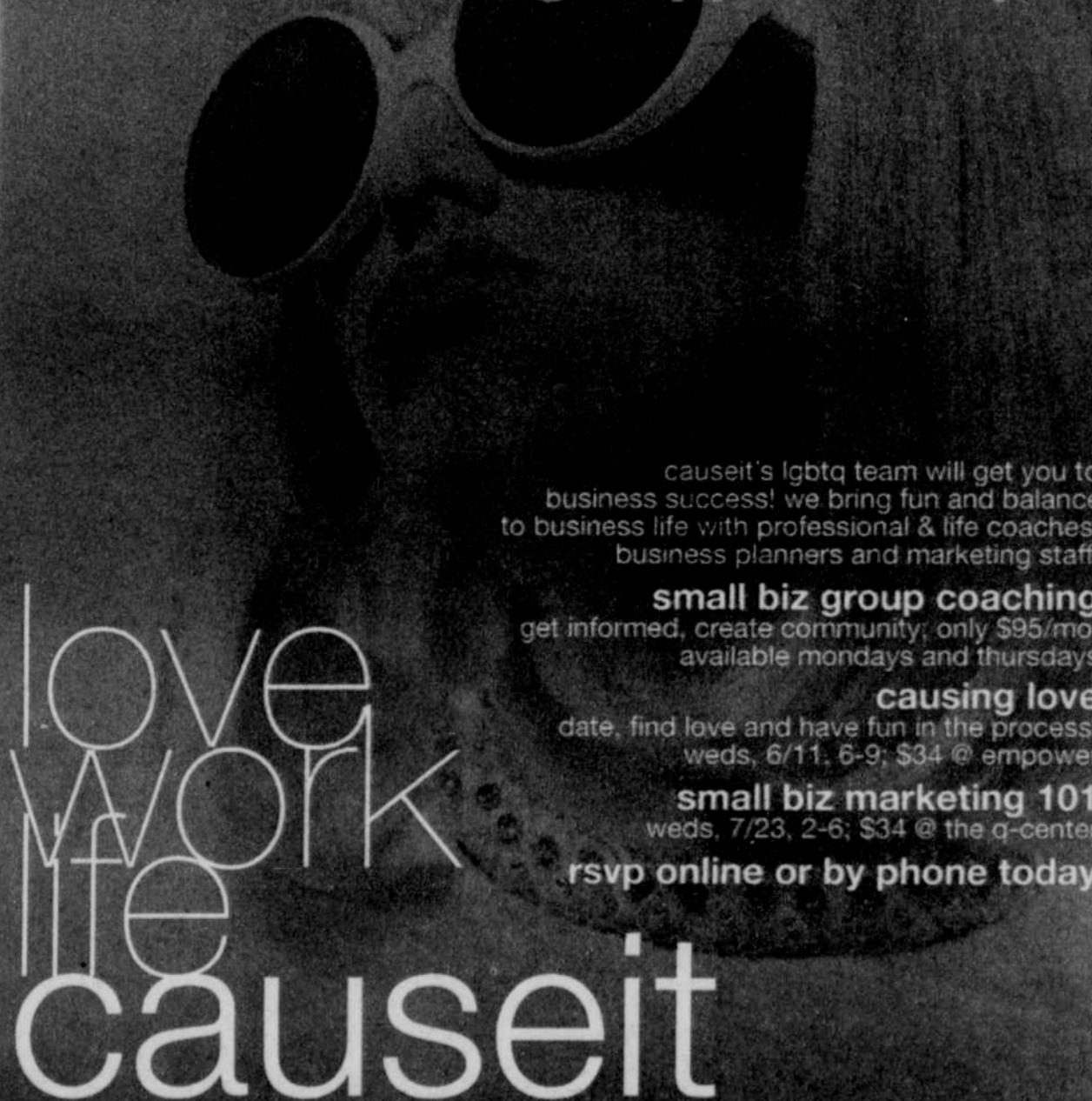
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