

# HUGS EAST

MAY/JUNE 2001

Volume 3, Issue 3

## Become a Bigot Basher

(part two)

### COMING-OUT-TO-BIGOTS TIPS

1. You don't have to change them — just don't let them change you.
2. Don't let them get to you by reacting to anger with anger.
3. Be out by being yourself. They're the ones that make the big deal about it.
4. Practice coming out to bigots on-line in CompuServe on Rush Limbaugh's forum or in Christianity On-line in America Online or in the many Internet sites. When on-line you can even eavesdrop without them knowing you are there. From listening you can get a really good idea of how these people think—or rather, don't think. When you feel ready, jump in. It's safe and fun, and because most chat lines use nicknames, it's totally anonymous.

On CompuServe I entered the room where these dittoheads were gay bashing and announced that “there is a lesbian amongst you.” They hit me pretty hard with their hostile rhetoric, but there was one person who, although holding similar antigay views, felt embarrassed by how hostile and harsh the “boys” were being to me. We began a private E-mail communication that lasted several months, and he actually came to believe that antigay sentiment was “inhuman and un-Christian.”

### BIGOT-BASHING COMEBACKS

- ▲ **Homosexuals are a cult. They'll just suck you in!**  
- “Duh! That's why I joined.” —Texas comic Vickie Shaw
- ▲ **They should take all homosexuals and put them on an island.**  
- “They did, and they call it Manhattan.” —Comic Robin Tyler
- ▲ **God make penises and vaginas. It's impossible to be born homosexual. There's no such thing.**  
- “God made brains too ... and there are still stupid people.”

Hugs - Hope \* Understanding \* Giving \* Support  
To the Gay & Lesbian Community of Lake, Geauga, and Ash-  
tabula Counties.

- ▲ **You shouldn't hang around those kind of people. They will convert you before you convert them.**  
- “The only thing that was convertible in the gay pride parade was the Mustang!”
- ▲ **You shouldn't hang around them because you might catch it.**  
- “Well, it was either that or leprosy, and it would upset my boyfriend if my d - k fell off.”
- ▲ **If you were really spiritual, the feelings for the opposite sex would just come from the Holy Spirit.**  
- “If you were really spiritual, love and compassion would just come from the Holy Spirit. Funny how that works!”
- ▲ **God is perfect. Why would he make such a big mistake ten percent of the time?**  
- “Maybe because it's not a mistake. And it's more like twenty-five percent!”
- ▲ **So—with this homosexuality, do you think you are fornicating?**  
- “Well, with this heterosexuality, do you think you are judging? ‘Judge not lest ye be judged.’”
- ▲ **I love the sinner. I just hate the sin.**  
- “Do you really love me? Then don't fire me from my job, don't take away my constitutional rights, don't take my children away from me, don't murder me... That is ... if you love me.”
- ▲ **All homosexuals are going to hell.**  
- “heaven is going to be on big drag with people like you in it. And I bet the music will suck.”  
“If there aren't going to be gays in heaven, I'd like to know where you are going to get your hair done. Heaven is going to be one bad hair day after the next!” “So, people like Michelangelo; Leonardo da Vinci; James I of England, who commissioned the King James translation of the Bible; Mary queen of Scotland, England, and Ireland; and my homosexual brothers and sisters with the gifts of compassion, faith, love, and understanding are going to hell. And people who judge, hate, kill, and despise are going to heaven. Help me on this one ... where do I want to go?”

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## Contacting Hugs East

HUGS EAST  
P.O. Box 253  
Mentor, OH 44061-0253  
(440) 974-8909  
[HTTP://HUGSEAST.TRIPOD.COM](http://HUGSEAST.TRIPOD.COM)

**E-mail your questions or comments to:**  
[HUGSEAST@HOTMAIL.COM](mailto:HUGSEAST@HOTMAIL.COM)

# Calendar of Events

## May, 2001

- 05/03 Lambda Update. — Brenda
- 05/10 Movie "I Think I Do". — Mark
- 05/17 Terry's Shenanigans. — Terry
- 05/24 Find out about PFLAG. — Charil
- 05/31 Fund Raising Ideas. — Brenda

## June, 2001

- 06/07 Movie "Billy Jean King". — Terry
- 06/14 Pride Pep Rally. — Rhonda
- 06/21 Planning Meeting & Open Rap. — Mary
- 06/28 Board Game "Three for All". — Mark

## Hugs Social Activities for May & June

- 05/19 6:00 PM Dinner at Aladdin's Eatery.  
775 SOM Center, Mayfield Village, OH  
Corner of Route 91 (SOM) and Wilson Mills Road

## Other Activities for May & June

- 06/16 Cleveland Pride Parade and Festival, parade steps off from Cleveland State University, festival is at Voinovich Park; for info call (216) 371-0214 or visit <http://www.clevelandpride.org> on the web.
- 06/23 "Our Time." North Coast Men's Chorus concert, 8 pm, Waetjen Auditorium, Cleveland State Univ., 2001 Euclid Ave., Cleveland, OH (800) 766-6048

For more details regarding any social event or meeting topic please call the information line at (440) 974-8909.

The Thursday evening meeting begins at 7:00 PM and is located at: 8521 East Ave., Mentor, OH 44060

## HUGS WEB SITE

The HUGS web site has moved to  
**[hugseast.tripod.com](http://hugseast.tripod.com)**

## HUGS Flea Market

On June 2, 2001 (rain date of June 9, 2001) HUGS will hold a flea market fund raiser at the Lake County Fairgrounds. If you would like to donate items to the flea market, please have the items priced and drop them off Saturday, June 2, 2001 around 8:30 AM at the fairgrounds. If you are unable to drop off your items Saturday morning you may drop them off Thursday, May 31, 2001 at the HUGS meeting (8521 East Ave., Mentor, OH 44060, between 7 PM and 9 PM).

Volunteers are needed to man the table. Please stop by HUGS some Thursday evening or call the information line ((440) 974-8909) to sign up for a time to man the table.

All unsold items will be donated to Goodwill.

The Fairgrounds are located at 1301 Mentor Ave., Painesville Township, OH 44070.

## Forbes House Spring Cleanup

Once again HUGS has volunteered to help Forbes House (battered women's shelter) cleanup their yard after the long winter. If you would like to help with the cleanup, meet us at the Painesville McDonalds on May 5, 2001 at 7:30 AM. After eating breakfast we will head over to the house and begin the cleanup. It shouldn't take longer than a couple hours to complete the task.

The Painesville McDonalds is located at 95 Richmond Road, Painesville, OH 44077

## BOOK REVIEW

### The Books of the Last Herald-Mage by Mercedes Lackey

Magic's Pawn: Book 1  
Magic's Promise: Book 2  
Magic's Price: Book 3

If you like Science Fiction/Fantasy, you will like these books. The stories take place in an alternate universe where magic is common. Valdemar, a peaceful kingdom protected by the magic of its Herald-Mages, is the center of the stories. The main character is a young man by the name of Vanyl, who not only discovers he has the power of magic but that he is gay. The stories are very well written especially the parts that address Vanyl's homosexuality. The author tends to spend a lot of time introducing the characters so the beginning of each book (esp. the 1<sup>st</sup> book) seems to drag, but once they get going the books are full of action and really quite exciting.

By Brenda

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- ▲ **The Bible says, “If a man lies with a man as one lies with a women. . . He must be put to death” —Leviticus 20:13.**  
- “Yes, but what a way to go.”

“Yes, and that’s why I’m a lesbian.”

It also says in the Bible that “he who touches a pig must be put to death,” and also that “he who wears clothing woven of two materials shall be put to death.” So if you want to be literal, no more NFL (touching pigskin = death) and no more poly-cotton blends. And it wasn’t us gays who invented polyester!”

- ▲ **Gays recruit children.**

- “I’d worry more about all the straight people who molest them.” “Since both my parents are straight, it seems as if heteros are doing all the recruiting.”

- ▲ **We have to do something about the gay agenda.**

- “Do you have a copy of it, because when I signed up for being gay, I didn’t get a copy. My recruiter said it was in the mail, but I never got it!”

- ▲ **You can’t be gay and be a Christian**

- “I’m sorry, I must have a misprint in my Bible . . . I’ll have to take it back. It doesn’t say, ‘For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him, *except homosexuals*, should not perish but have everlasting life.’”

- ▲ **Homosexuals are already covered under the Constitution just like the rest of us. What they want are special rights. We oppose special rights for homosexuals.**

- “If *special* means the right to get and keep a job based on merit, equal access to housing, renting a hotel room and being served food in a restaurant . . . If *special* means the right to have and raise children without the state seizing them, and the right to walk down a street and not get attacked because of who you are and whom you love . . . then you’re right: I want the same special rights of all American citizens. And it looks as if you want the very special right to discriminate against those you hate. We call that ‘special righteousness.’”

- ▲ **Local ordinances for gay men and lesbians force the rest of us to live against our religious beliefs. We’re entitled to our rights too.**

- “You can still have a right to hate, but we are entitled to our right to love.”

- ▲ **Homosexuals have an abominable lifestyle. People who care about traditional family values must not encourage the open expression of sexual depravity.**

- “Since when are discrimination, hate, and bigotry traditional family values?” “Family values! You must be talking about the Manson family . . . and they were straight.” “The family values we uphold are support, love, understanding, and respect.”

But the bottom line to all of this is, “Big Bertha created me, so it can’t be wrong.”

## STOP YOURSELF FROM BECOMING A BIGOT

If we truly do stop and examine ourselves, we might be shocked to find our own bigotry. Most everyone thinks of themselves as kind, loving, and unjudging. But if you think about it, that person who treated you horribly in your last relationship still thinks of her— or himself as a wonderful person. Look at the personals ads. Are there really that many people who are “sincere, attractive, and have a great sense of humor”? If you’ve ever responded to a personal ad, you knew that people lie, lie, lie.

Guess what? The whole world is not living in self-deception except for you.

### TEST: EXAMINING YOUR BIGOTRY

Check the categories of people you believe to be oppressed in some way.

- ☐ African Americans
- ☐ Latinos
- ☐ women
- ☐ poor people
- ☐ children
- ☐ fat people
- ☐ single parents
- ☐ drag queens
- ☐ butch women
- ☐ others:

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How many of those people you’ve checked do you include in your life? How many do you let in? Or do you relax in your feeling of superiority? “Well, I might be gay, but I drive a BMW. I’m thin, young, and I’m not one of *them*.”

As long as you judge yourself better than someone else, you are not. As long as you need to suppress others to feel a sense of worth, you have become a part of the problem, and that doesn’t work. Even straights need your understanding, your empathy, your knowledge, and your love. Everyone will agree that the world needs love — that is, of course, if the other person makes the first move. Try going first.

## TAKE A BIGOT TO LUNCH

Throughout your coming-out process, you have asked people to tolerate you, accept you, love you in spite of your differences. Can you love someone who is different? Forget about love—how about lunch? This next stretch is

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## Gay Influence Felt at Polls

A new study has found that gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT) citizens are having a significant -- and growing -- impact on elections around the United States, not only by voting themselves but by raising awareness of GLBT issues among the general electorate. The Gill Foundation's "Out and Into the Voting Booth" study, released on February 16, largely confirms conventional wisdom about the 4 - 6 percent of U.S. voters who identify as queer, but for the first time it attempts to quantify that impact. The study found that 92 percent of GLBT respondents were registered to vote, with 52 percent claiming they voted in all elections and 34 percent saying they voted in most elections. If accurate, these numbers suggest that the "out" GLBT community is more politically active than the population at large. However, their voting political philosophy is not terribly different: 43 percent of GLBT voters identify as moderate compared to 40 percent of voters in the total population.

### Non-Gays Who Know Gays Affected

In November, the Gill Foundation released findings from its study of gays' influence on non-gay voters (see [www. PlanetOut.com](http://www.PlanetOut.com) News of November 1, 2000). Of a sample of 2,001 non-gay likely U.S. voters, 82 percent acknowledged knowing a gay, lesbian, or bisexual -- and those who did showed substantially more gay-supportive attitudes than the rest on several key issues. Of those familiar with GLBT people, 37 percent said their personal relationships had increased their knowledge of queer issues. "Public policy makers must realize that the percentage of self-identified LGBT voters will continue to increase," concludes the Gill Foundation in its introduction to the study. "As it does, the impact these voters have on family, friends, and colleagues will also grow. Thus, the number of voters interested in equal rights for LGBT people is not limited only to LGBT voters, but is also inclusive of a much larger, and growing, segment of the population." Silence Not Golden However, the study also revealed that insularity, lack of interest in public policy, and high numbers of GLBT people who remain in the closet all dampen their impact at the polls. Just less than half of respondents said they rarely discuss public policy issues with anyone. Seventy-two percent said they speak with gay and lesbian friends about issues, while just 51 percent say they discuss the same issues with non-gay friends. Half of the respondents said they considered themselves to be very open about their sexual orientation, while a third said they were not open at all. "The closet is our adversary in empowering LGBT voters, as well as their families, friends and coworkers," said Michael Colby of the gay National Stonewall Democrats in a statement. "When we are in the closet, when we are not talking about our issues in our personal relationships, we are not educating the people around us. Of course we can engage in politics without discussing intimate details about us. Yet, by shedding the closet and being out and open, we are influencing the minds and the voting behavior of people around us." The study can be

accessed on-line at The Gill Foundation Web Site.  
<http://www.gillfoundation.org/gotv2000/index.htm>

## VOTE! VOTE! VOTE!

NewsPlanet Staff, "Gay Influence Felt at Polls." PlanetOut News. 17 Feb. 2001: Online. Available: <http://www.planetout.com/pno/news>

## CLEVELAND OUT & ABOUT

### What is Cleveland Out & About (COA)?

COA is an all-volunteer outdoor recreational group serving Northeast Ohio. Although primarily a gay and lesbian organization, the group welcomes all to participate in its activities.

### Mission Statement

COA organizes the best and most fun outdoor recreational activities available to gays and lesbians in Northeast Ohio. The group also strives to foster an appreciation for the natural environment and its preservation and serves to promote a positive image of gays and lesbians overall.

### Background Information

Cleveland Out and About is a gay outdoors group formed in the greater Cleveland area in 1999.

This all volunteer group will organize a variety of recreational activities such as hiking, biking, canoeing, kayaking, tennis, skating, rock climbing, cross country and downhill skiing, snowshoeing, backpacking, camping and sailing.

In the future, the group may be a forum to educate ourselves and respond to current environmental issues in our communities. This startup group is incorporating and associates itself with International Gay and Lesbian Outdoor Organizations (IGLOO) -- a worldwide network of lesbian, gay and bisexual outdoor organizations to provide members with access to other member groups and their activities such as skiing in Vermont and scuba diving in the Caribbean. For further information and directions on where to meet, please call the Cleveland Out and About information line at 216-556-4832 or e-mail: [clevelandoutdrs@aol.com](mailto:clevelandoutdrs@aol.com)

### Past Events

- ▲ March 4 O'Neil Woods (CVNP) 7.5 miles.
- ▲ March 18 Old Carriage Trail (CVNP) 5 miles.
- ▲ April 1 Boston to Red Lock (CVNP) 9 miles. (Towpath Trail)

All hikes start at 1:00 and last 2-3 hours rain or shine. We have a new, full year planned. Look for biking, a raft/ river adventure trip, and a weekend of backpacking. Also, check out our website at [www.akronhome.com/outdoors/](http://www.akronhome.com/outdoors/).

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an eight-step process to resolve conflict. Try it.

### **Step 1: Acknowledge Who It Is You Dislike**

Find someone who really gets to you. They might be someone who is ignorant, fat, different. They might be that homophobic redneck who lives next door. Perhaps it is someone you have a major conflict or disagreement with. Write down some names here.

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### **Step 2: Admit Your Own Prejudices**

Pick one person from the above list and write down all your annoyances about that person or about certain aspects of that person. What about him or her really bugs you? What are your judgments about that person? What are your limiting beliefs? Don't worry here about being politically incorrect. "I can't stand to look at someone so fat." "He is such a fag." "This guy is so stupid." "I don't want anyone to see me with them." "He's a hopeless homophobe." Let it all out.

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### **Step 3: Create Possibility**

Write down some of the possibilities of your relationship. "We could be friendly toward each other." We could have understanding of each other."

Don't stick to reality. Imagine the most positive kind of relationship.

A friend of mine had huge conflict with her landlord, who was trying to evict her because she was gay. She couldn't imagine any possibility of resolving her conflict, other than in court. But when she was pushed to really imagine what some *positive* possibilities of their relationship could be, she came up with: "We could live together without conflict." "We could stop threatening each other." And the unimaginable: "This dyke and this bigot could become friends."

Of course she thought becoming friends was not only highly unlikely but very undesirable. But after she went through this eight-step procedure, that is exactly what happened.

Write the possibilities here.

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### **Step 4: Take Action**

Initiate a conversation with the person and share with him or her your vision of the possibilities of your relationship. "I want to talk to you because I think we can find things we have in common and become friends."

### **Step 5: Dig Out Their Concerns**

Ask them what their upsets are, and really listen.

### **Step 6: Re-create Their Concerns Without Judgment**

Mirror their concerns back to them without getting defensive. "So you think gay people are sinners? I get that." Once you repeat their concerns, dig out more. "Is there anything else?" This communication can sound like this . .

**Them:** I think that you are an unfit mother because you are gay.

**You:** So you think because I'm gay I am not a good mother?

**Them:** Yes

**You:** What else is upsetting you?

**Them:** I just don't like it. It makes me uncomfortable.

**You:** So me being gay makes you uncomfortable. I get that. Anything else?

**Them:** I think it's sick.

**You:** So you think I'm sick because I'm gay, right?

**Them:** Yes

**You:** I get that you think that. Anything else?

Get the idea? Don't react. Don't get hooked into their drama.

### **Step 7: Repeat Your Vision**

After you truly exhaust this person of all concerns and you've truly listened and re-created their concerns, transformation is possible. It is at this point that you can once again express your vision of a relationship with this person that is your vision of the world. "I still believe that despite our different beliefs, if we got to know each other, we could like each other."

### **Step 8: Open Yourself to Unimagined Possibilities**

Don't be surprised if the other person shares a possibility you haven't even thought of. If you give another person an opportunity to really express his or her grievances, and if that person feels truly received and heard, in many cases the grievances will vanish. For when you open the space for another to be heard, you open up the possibility of change.

Carter, J. (1996). The Homo Handbook. New York: Fireside Books.

# Be a part of HUGS EAST

## **BE A PART OF HUGS EAST**

Due to the increased cost of the mailing of our newsletter we can no longer afford to continue our current mailing to non-paying members. This will be the last to those not currently with paid dues or who do not mail their dues prior to the next newsletter mailing in March.

Please send your dues to Hugs East P.O. Box 253, Mentor, Ohio 44060. If you not currently paid and would like to remain on the mailing list, please submit your dues by the next scheduled newsletter. Current newsletters will still be available on Thursday nights at the Mentor site for those who are not on the mailing list.

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### **2001 HUGS EAST MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

NAME: _____	<u>Membership</u>	
ADDRESS: _____	Individual:	\$8.00
CITY & STATE _____	Student:	\$5.00
ZIP CODE: _____	Household:	\$10.00
PHONE #(optional) _____	Supporter:	\$25.00
EMAIL (optional) _____	Contributor:	\$50.00
	Benefactor:	\$100.00
AMOUNT ENCLOSED: _____		

\*Dues run from January thru December.

To update our membership list we ask that you complete the above information. Even if you were a current member, we would like to update our records to show current information. This will ensure your copy of the newsletter. Membership dues are suggested amounts. Please feel free to pay more if you can, less if you cannot. All members share the same privileges. Make check or money order payable to: HUGS EAST P.O. Box 253 Mentor, Ohio 44061-0253, or bring to the Mentor site any Thursday evening (7pm to 9pm).

\_\_\_\_\_ Do not send HUGS EAST newsletter to my home.

\*\*\$8.00-\$10.00 dues are not tax deductible; amounts paid over said dues are considered contributions and are tax deductible.