



Dedicated to helping LGBT people build and strengthen their families.

artwork by Allison, age 14

What's It All About Larry?

"What's bathroom sex?" my almost eleven-year-old daughter asks as she picks up the local newspaper. Another of our gay-bashing keepers-of-what's-decent-and-straight-in-America is at it again. And newspapers are having a field day trying to outdo each other with cheeky headlines – one in particular provoking another question, "Poppy, what's a 'Men's Room Senator?'" What's an out and wanting-to-be-honest queer father to do?

"Now dear, some gay men do things they shouldn't in places they shouldn't," could be my answer, suggesting that I have only done things I should in places I should. Whatever that means. Better yet, I can stop allowing the hypothetical fallout for gay men – caused by media reports on the clandestine escapades of these Republican good old boys – make me feel so damn defensive. Gay men are not the sole progenitors of having sex in public spaces.

Having grown up in Queens, NY (no pun intended), I had spent much of my high-school summer vacations riding the trains to Rockaway Beach and soaking up rays on the patchwork of beach towels covering the sands from 98th to 116th Streets. "Under the boardwalk" was code for heterosexual Sodom and Gomorrah. Some of my straight friends didn't even bother seeking the shelter of the boardwalk.

I'd eat my peanut butter sandwich and drink my Yoo-Hoo soda while blasting the Supremes on my transistor radio. Unfortunately, transistor radios and the earphones at that time were no competition for the grunts and groans that surrounded me. This background cacophony gave "You Can't Hurry Love" new meaning.

Just in case I haven't dated myself enough, I'll recall the ultimate heterosexual Bacchanalia: Drive-in Movies. This was a time when boys were always required to pay for both movie tickets, but since most boys I knew were poor or cheap, a guy would smuggle his female date into a drive-in parking lot in the trunk of his, or, more likely, his parent's car.

continued on page 2

I was one of the youngest guys in my crowd – too young to drive. When I'd double date, either my date (female) and I would hide in the trunk, or the two girls would hide in the trunk. Of course I would have preferred to leave our dates where they were, but once the movie started and the coast was clear, trunks opened and closed like at some kind of covert boarder crossing, and midway through the movie, cars bounced and swayed, jiggling movie speakers from half opened car windows onto the gravel parking lot.

Beach and drive-in orgies may be dismissed as the sexual antics of straight or straight acting youth, but over the years I have also stumbled upon numerous heterosexual adults enjoying carnal delights in public spaces. I remember one night in particular, years ago at a KOA campground. Jack and I awoke to the screams of what we surely thought was a battle between a nocturnal predator and its prey. We checked outside of our tent and realized that the screams were coming from a neighboring tent and were punctuated with heavy breathing and impassioned affirmatives. The next morning we met our campground neighbors. They were very pleasant heterosexual newlyweds. They offered no apology for disturbing the woodland peace, nor did they appear at all embarrassed. Why should they? They were in love. And heterosexual!

Then there was the middle-aged straight couple I came across while I was hiking on a heavily traveled State Park trail. The man was literally caught with his fingers in the woman's...but I'll spare you further details, lest I begin to sound like a journalist from one of America's esteemed newspapers, reporting on the wide stance Senator Craig takes, positioning his feet while sitting on a toilet. I'll simply conclude my examples by reminding readers that it was a very powerful straight man who forever changed America's take on the Freudian adage, "Sometimes a cigar is just a cigar." I assume people don't usually urinate and defecate in the oval office of the White House, but I'd still consider it a public space.

continued on page 3

Okay! So Larry Craig got busted in an airport men's room, and newspapers are flexing their double entendres. But Craig's real crime is that much of his work as an elected official has been about trying to flush the lives of LGBT folks down the toilet. What else is new?

He's another in a long line of privileged and powerful men doing whatever they damn please in the shadows, but building comfortable lives and bogus reputations at the expense of out and honest queers. Larry, tap your foot twice when you decide to give my family our damn rights.

By the way, when my daughter asked about the Senator in the headlines, I answered, "The news is about an influential man who prevents gay folks and our families from getting equal rights, and he was caught trying to mess around with another man." Unfortunately, she's getting used to this scenario.

If you can stomach it, keep informed about privileged and powerful Republicans who uphold the heterosexist status quo, but enjoy their little same-sex trysts: <http://www.blogactive.com> or <http://www.pamspaulding.com>

Oh what a tangled web they weave,

Vince