

# Blind LGBT Pride International

## The "Inside Out" Newsletter

December, 2013

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*The Inside Out newsletter is the quarterly magazine of Blind LGBT Pride International (BPI), a special-interest Affiliate of the American Council of the Blind. BPI is dedicated to facilitating the free exchange of ideas, opinions and information relative to matters of concern to blind people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender. Visit BPI Online at: <http://www.blind-lgbt-pride.org/>*

Editor's Note: The Inside Out Newsletter is now available by phone! BPI's quarterly publication is available in an audio version by phone. To listen to the latest edition call 773 -572-7846 and follow the prompts. (Check with your provider to determine if toll charges apply). You may also download this and past issues online by visiting <http://blindlgbtpride.org/newsletter/> and entering the password for members.

Want to get through the contents of the newsletter with ease? Using your screen reader, simply hit the "H" key to scroll through the various articles. You may also jump to a specific article by clicking on the article name in the table of contents.

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**From the President’s Desk**

*Submitted by: Guillermo Robles*

*Season’s Greetings from Los Angeles! Can you believe it? It’s already time to ring in the holiday season and bid farewell to 2013! It seems like yesterday we were all meeting up and cutting it up in Columbus. It has been great to see past members coming out of the woodwork.*

*The past few months have been spent on continuing to come up with ways to revitalize the infrastructure of BPI as a whole. One of the most visible and integral parts of this process is our web presence. The Public Relations committee has been hard at work improving the administration of our site. To accomplish this, we were able to switch to a much more effective web content management system allowing for more versatility with the day-to-day administration and design. Given the intricacies of this project, BPI employed the services of Vota IT – Print, Web, Media. Blind LGBT Pride International extends its thanks to Ted Rodifer, Chief Design Coordinator, and his staff, for ensuring that all areas of our website are fully compatible with adaptive screen reading software, while giving our site a fresher look. Also, huge thanks to Vice President and Public Relations Chair Will Burley for his work on site improvement and seeing this project through to the end.*

*With regard to our conference and convention in Las Vegas in 2014, Blind Pride has decided on a new approach in the planning process. For the first time, both the Programs and Fundraising committees are working jointly in planning for next year’s convention. As always,*

*stay tuned to the discussion list for more details and to find out how you may be able to take part in the planning process.*

*By the time this reaches you, you may have already received a gentle reminder from our Membership Chair, Caitlin Hernandez, to pay your annual dues. I would like to encourage you to do this as soon as possible. To borrow a cliché that is often used in the churches now, in addition to your dues, if you would be so kind as to include a love offering of any amount, it would be greatly appreciated. Doing so will help us to better plan for future programming for BPI. You can renew your membership by visiting <http://blindlgbtpride.org/joinrenew-membership/> or make a donation by visiting <http://blindlgbtpride.org/donate/> .*

*Finally, as we bring this year to a close, let us remember that BPI is and will continue to be a member- driven organization. There is so much in store for this organization next year and in years to come, but we need you to make it happen. As always, your input is very much appreciated. Here's wishing you a joyous holiday season, and the very best in 2014.*

*With much pride,*

*Guillermo Robles  
President, Blind LGBT Pride International*

### **Baby, Let's Cruise...**

*Submitted by: Don Brown & Mickey Wiseman*

The BPI Programs Committee is currently exploring offering cruise options for November 2014. We are writing to gage your level of interest.

Below are two 7 night options. Which of the two would you be more likely to choose if you were to participate in this activity and why? Please send responses to: [programs@blind-lgbt-pride.org](mailto:programs@blind-lgbt-pride.org)

Thanks for your time.

Best regards,

BPI Programs Committee

### **Cruise OPTION #1: The Mexican Riviera (November 30, 2014)**

Itinerary

Depart: Sunday, Nov. 30 – Los Angeles – 4:00 p.m.

Check out the scene at Venice Beach. Spot a celebrity or two on Rodeo Drive. Take a walk down the Hollywood Walk of Fame. Explore the La Brea Tar Pits or Getty Center. Or spend the day at one of L.A.'s world-famous theme parks.

Monday, Dec. 1 – At Sea

Tuesday, Dec. 2 - Cabo San Lucas, Mexico- Noon – 7 p.m.

The city of Cabo San Lucas is comprised of three distinct districts at Baja California's southernmost tip. These include the main city of Cabo San Lucas, The Corridor, and San Jose. The city is the hub for numerous venues including cruise ships, handicraft vendors, nightlife seekers, sport fishermen, and water sport aficionados. Cabo is renowned for its numerous golf courses, resorts, and world class dining options.

Wednesday, Dec. 3 - Mazatlan, Mexico- 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Combine a first-class beach resort with a city with an illustrious, colonial past and you've got Mazatlan. Sip on some Margaritas and enjoy the authentic Mexican cuisine. Take a drive along the foothills of the Sierra Madre Mountains. Then visit the many shops offering local crafts.

Thursday, Dec.4 - Puerto Vallarta, Mexico- 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

This Mexican Riviera resort town sits on the Bahía de Banderas and is the state of Jalisco's 6th largest city with a population of nearly 256,000 residents. The area is known for its beautiful and pristine beaches, its many lush jungles, and sparkling waterfalls. Aside from its numerous adventure opportunities, Puerto Vallarta has an abundant choice of 5-star resorts, gourmet restaurants, and world class shopping venues.

Friday, Dec. 5 – At Sea

Saturday, Dec. 6 – At Sea

Sunday, Dec. 7 – Los Angeles CA – 8:00 a.m.

PRICING: (Installment payment arrangements are available)

Below are per person prices based on double occupancy.

Inside cabin = \$549.00

Ocenview = \$599.00

Balcony = \$849.00

Suite = \$1049.00

ABOUT THE SHIP: NCL's Norwegian Star

Cabins aboard the Norwegian Star are finished in rich cherry wood and outfitted with tea and coffee makers and larger bathrooms. Innovative and eye-catching are the ultra-luxurious garden villas -- multi-room accommodations featuring panoramic ocean views, private sun terraces and whirlpools. Dining options are wide and varied with 12 restaurants on board, including Pacific Rim, Japanese, French, Spanish, Hawaiian and Italian restaurants, as well as the main dining room serving the traditional six-course Continental menus. Also available are an indoor/outdoor buffet, grill, food court and other casual eateries. With all these tempting culinary choices -- plus 24-hour room service -- it's nice to have access to a 24-hour fitness center, plus a sports deck with an outdoor jogging track, and sports court. Relax at the Barong Spa, with rejuvenating treatments utilizing both Eastern and Western techniques. The 1,150-seat Stardust Theatre, cinema, karaoke rooms, and 14 different lounges and bars offer an entertaining nightlife. This ship is particularly family-friendly with a recreation center just for younger passengers; a child-sized serving counter, tables and chairs in the buffet restaurant; computer rooms; an arcade; and entertainment with Kid's Crew.

## ***Cruise Option #2 Western Caribbean***

Round trip from Miami

November 30, 2014- December 07, 2014 (

Itinerary:

Sun Miami (EMBARK) --- 4:00 pm

Miami Miami's amazing medley of cultures and flashy urban settings makes it a scene to be seen. Visit trendy Art Deco district of South Beach, Calle Ocho in Little Havana, the super-upscale neighborhoods of Coconut Grove and Coral Gables and the unique ecosystem of the Everglades.

Mon at Sea --- ---

Tue at Sea --- ---

Wed Ocho Rios, Jamaica 8:00 am 5:00 pm

Ocho Rios, Jamaica the golden beaches, swaying palm trees and fragrant air are just a prelude to what surrounds this beautiful city. Within the nearby jungle-covered mountains are the magnificent Dunn's River Falls, the foliage of Fern Gully and the untouched beauty of the White River. Current shopping maps available onboard.)

Thu George Town, Grand Cayman 8:00 am 4:00 pm

George Town, Grand Cayman The largest of the Cayman Islands, Grand Cayman is famous for its Seven Mile Beach, the popular Stingray City and its excellent diving. Both nature and history are preserved underwater with a collection of easily viewed shipwrecks,

Fri Cozumel, Mexico 10:00 am 6:00 pm

Cozumel, Mexico The island of Cozumel off the tip of the Yucatan Peninsula continues to be known for its fantastic fishing, snorkeling and diving opportunities. And despite the growth of tourism in recent years, the island and its only town, San Miguel, retain much of their original warmth and charm. Guide (Current shopping maps available onboard.)

Details

Sat At Sea --- ---

Sun Miami (DISEMBARK) 8:00 am

Pricing information:

Inside cabin \$716.89 per person double occupancy

Balcony \$946.89 per person double occupancy

Studio \$1,066.89 \*\* This option is for single cruisers, no double occupancy\*\*

Ship information: Norwegian Epic

Welcome to Norwegian Epic, voted "Best Cruise Ship" by Travel Weekly in 2011 & 2012; Norwegian Epic is the ship of choice for those sailing to the Caribbean and Europe. In fact, we have literally changed the face of cruise line entertainment with the introduction of Blue Man Group at sea, and that's just the beginning. Norwegian Epic is offering world-class performers and a new wave of accommodations - from Studios, designed and priced for the solo traveler, to

the private Haven. Add more than 20 different dining options and you'll understand why this is Freestyle Cruising on a truly grand scale.

Norwegian Epic Highlights

The best entertainment at sea with Blue Man Group, Cirque Dreams & Dinner, and more

Experience more than 20 extraordinary culinary dining options. [Learn More](#)

A New Wave of completely unique accommodations. Find your perfect stateroom

What's Included?

7 complimentary dining options, from three-course dining to endless buffets with action stations.

Entertainment day & night. Blue Man Group, Legends in Concert, live comedy, jazz club, dueling piano bar, and a wealth of clubs and lounges.

Fitness center, sports court, climbing and rappelling wall, aqua park, pools, and hot tubs.

Youth programs for children ages 3-17.

Attentive room steward and complimentary room service.

## ***My Thoughts on Inspiration***

*Submitted by: Tiffany Taylor, BPI Advocacy Co-Chair*

*I have been told several times throughout my life that I am an inspiration. When this happens I usually shake my head and think "why me? What did I do that's so wonderful, exceptional, or out of the ordinary?" I don't wake up every day and think to myself "well I'm going to be an inspiration today." for me it's just my life and I do what makes me happy.*

*I think more often than not that people say this because they have such low expectations of me or what people with disabilities can do. So if I do anything that a "normal" person would do then it is unbelievable or "inspirational". Society sends such large messages that people with disabilities are less or less able, which is simply not the case. We also therefore have such low standards expected of us that when we walk down the street it's amazing. Also people tend to have a very hard time stepping in someone else's shoes or seeing things objectively or from other perspectives. I think being in at least two minorities gives me unique innate perspectives. Coupled with this is the belief that it is somehow wrong to ask questions because we are so worried of offending someone or saying the wrong thing. It amazes me all the time how kids are so accepting and curious. We tell kids to ask questions and learn but then we stifle them when they try to ask something half the time or blurt something out. I am not offended by much and I would much rather have people ask me questions so I can give them the answer that is fitting for me. It is my job to educate and if I don't do it who will? I don't mind if a child's question is a little blunt or seen as "rude" or whatever, as*

*long as they are asking and want to know, unlike their parents who just awkwardly stare or freak out. To grow as educated people we must learn, and to learn we must ask and be open to new ideas and views. And if one person wants to know something chances are so do many other people. How can we make progress and better ourselves as individuals and as a society and world if we are not inquisitive? So when someone does ask me a question I will answer the best way I can and hope it will help them.*

*Sometimes it can certainly be frustrating when I'm going about my day and someone wants to play 50 questions but at the end of the day if it will help them then I'm glad to do it. There is a time and a place however and a way of asking questions politely that I wish people would employ. In thinking more of inspiration and pondering it's meaning, I come across things like "to stimulate the mind, emotions and feelings, often creatively." or to "open people's minds to a higher awareness". And there certainly is nothing wrong or demeaning about that is there? So how many people get lucky enough in their daily lives to be called such a thing? I truly want to educate and help people and I am glad to do it. So I am very thankful that I am given this gift. I also have people approach me desperate for my insight on what to do when relating to another blind person (usually a child or parent). Sometimes it's annoying and I just want to hand them a pamphlet or something, but I am glad they are comfortable enough to approach me and ask. I only wish there was a better venue in which to do so. (Rather than on the street or the middle of the mall). I just want so much to get in their heads and those of the blind or lgbt people and tell them that they can do it and you can live a normal life. But if I can at least help that one person a tiny bit then that's a job well done. so I am trying to better myself when I hear the word inspiration to look at it positively, not in the context of "you're inspirational because you have a disability" or with the unspoken self doubts that people could be projecting on me from observing their own lives. But with the gratitude that I am able to help these people achieve a higher or wider sense of themselves and what is possible in their own lives and hopefully help them achieve their dreams and open the door to endless possibilities.*

## **American Community Survey Statistics Help You Learn about People with Disabilities in Your Community**

By Guest Blogger: Matthew W. Brault, Statistician, U.S. Census Bureau  
Syndicated from [www.disability.gov](http://www.disability.gov)

Are you writing a grant proposal and need to know how many people have a disability in your area? Are you planning a local job fair and need to know what percentage of

people with hearing impairments in the metropolitan area are unemployed? Or maybe you're just curious how many people in your community have a similar disability as you? Do you need to know how many people with disabilities in your county are living below the poverty line?

The American Community Survey can help answer these questions and many others. As the leading source for timely, detailed information about local areas, the American Community Survey provides policymakers, small businesses, and the public at large with the statistics they need to make informed decisions.

In September, the Census Bureau released 2012 American Community Survey statistics for more than 40 topics – including disability – for states, counties and other geographic areas with populations of 65,000 people or more. On Thursday, multi-year statistics combining three years of data will be released with similar information for all communities in the United States. In December, these statistics will be released combining five years of data. This means that you can find out about the characteristics of people with disabilities in every county in the U.S.

Among the wealth of information released are tables such as S1810 – Disability Characteristics, which summarizes the number and percent of people with disabilities by age, sex, race and Hispanic origin. For economic information, you can check out C18120 – Employment Status by Disability Status and B18140 – Median Earnings in the Past 12 Months by Disability Status By Sex. For the first time, all of these tables will be available for the American Community Survey five-year data set (2008-2012) when it is released in December, allowing you to find this information for every neighborhood in the U.S.

Finding this information and more is easy with the Census Bureau's website. With the "Guided Search" option, the website will walk you through various options for selecting the topic and geography to present the available statistics. Once you become more familiar with the website, you can skip the step-by-step instructions and go directly to the data using the "Advanced Search" option.



Of course, if you have trouble finding what you're looking for, you can contact the Census Bureau's help line at 1-800-923-8282. TTY users can contact the Census Bureau using the Federal Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339.

*Matthew W. Brault is a statistician with the Health and Disability Statistics Branch in the Social, Economic and Housing Statistics Division of the U.S. Census Bureau. For the past seven years, he has studied the social and economic characteristics of people with disabilities in the United States, including the prevalence of disability across geographies and population subgroups. He has written several reports and papers about this population — including the recently released “Americans With Disabilities: 2010” — using data from the Survey of Income and Program Participation and the American Community Survey. Mr. Brault received a bachelor's degree in sociology from George Washington University and holds a master's degree in public policy from Georgetown University.*

### **FCC Announces New Procedures for Communications Accessibility Informal Complaints**

Syndicated from the FCC at <http://www.fcc.gov/complaints>

*The FCC released a Public Notice noting that October 8, 2013 marked the third anniversary of the Twenty-First Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act (CVAA) and the start of new procedures for consumers to file requests for dispute assistance and informal complaints about the accessibility of the following technologies used for communication:*

- \* Advanced communications services and equipment (such as cellphones, smartphones, computers, laptops, and tablets used for text messaging, e-mail, or instant messaging);*
- \* Internet web browsers built into mobile phones; and*
- \* Telecommunications services and equipment (such as telephones).*

*An overview of the new communications accessibility informal complaint procedures is also available at*  
<<http://www.fcc.gov/accessibility-complaints-255-716-718-action-options>>  
<http://www.fcc.gov/accessibility-complaints-255-716-718-action-options>.

This information is also available through the FCC complaints system at <http://www.fcc.gov/complaints>

## **Op-ed: The Pitfalls of Dating and Mating With Social Media**

By: TYLER CURRY

Syndicated from <http://www.advocate.com/commentary/tyler-curry/2013/11/22/op-ed-pitfalls-dating-and-mating-social-media>

*How social media has ruined the allure of dating.*

*At the beginning of any romance, both parties usually attempt to place their best foot forward. The effort to dazzle a dinner mate often leads to witty banter, talk about dreams of a family, or sharing excellent taste in music. This all works if the blossoming relationship exists inside a vacuum. But in the era of drunken status updates, unwanted photo tags, and check-ins at the trashy bar you claim never to frequent, your best foot forward might already be covered in social media shit.*

*Admit it. If you didn't already Facebook-stalk the man you're meeting for Friday night plans, you most definitely will afterward. The updates he posts, the photos he takes, and the statuses he likes have become equally as important as the words out of his mouth. During dinner, one of you may even sporadically reference an application on your iPhone to illustrate a story you're telling or to give a visual of your best friend, who is just too fabulous to describe in words. At face value, social media may seem like merely another tool to get to know a person. In reality, Facebook and Instagram portray a distorted, disjointed, and altogether imaginary version of ourselves.*

*There are many social media offenses that can lead your senses astray when evaluating a potential mate. Maybe your new man has perfected the art of portraying himself as a lover of travel or has taken multiple pictures carrying the cutest kids you've ever seen on his shoulders. It would be hard for anyone not to fall in love with this catalog husband on your computer screen.*

*Before you even sit down to dinner, the vision of your perfect children and exotic honeymoon to Bora Bora is already swimming around your brain. The problem with falling in love with someone's two-dimensional depiction of their profile is that you never know what lies beyond their sparkling smile in front of the Taj Mahal. After all, his photos might just be the most exciting thing about him. And why is he always traveling by himself?*

*Then there are rare occasions when you meet someone using an archaic style of interaction — in person. He made you laugh, he was charming, and you left dinner a little intrigued. But you just couldn't wait until he returned from his work trip, so you decided to perform a harmless Internet search. Some guys are just not very photogenic. Suddenly you're questioning the real connection you had because you are having trouble picturing your wedding photos together. Or maybe his statuses leave a little to be desired. Forget being witty in person; his interests utterly bore you. So, even though your first impression of him was solid, your date with his social media profile left you unsure if you'll accept the next dinner invitation.*

*These are just a few examples of how social media has hijacked so many would-be relationships — online profiles, new “friends,” and unwanted notifications can also cause problems once a relationship has begun. We have all been guilty of going through our current flavor du jour's photos only to see old pictures of a former flame. Suddenly you have burbling feelings of jealousy all because of some stale images of times long ago. You are his present, but social media has you living in his past.*

*The truth is, the content and character of a possible love should be revealed in layers. The development of a fruitful relationship takes effort, and it is impossible to reach a level of depth with a person by meticulously piecing apart their Facebook caricature.*

*The Cliff's Notes of a person's life will never give you an accurate representation. We create the image we want to convey through our online media addictions. It's much easier to convey the reality we want to portray on the Internet than to live it in real life.*

*My own Facebook portrays a character, but the real thing is surely more complex. It would be easy to choose our boyfriends and husband based on our social media compatibility. Unfortunately, the longevity of such matchmaking would be about as good as your iPhone battery life.*

*Sure, social media profiles can be used as supplemental reading when studying a person's qualifications as a potential plus one. But you are wasting your time if you use things like Facebook and Instagram to learn about content required to answer all the right questions.*

*When it comes to dating and mating, sometimes it helps to unplug in order to connect.*

*TYLER CURRY created the Needle Prick Project as an editorial and visual campaign to elicit a candid and open conversation on what it means to be HIV-positive today. To learn more about the Needle Prick Project, visit [www.facebook.com/getpricked](http://www.facebook.com/getpricked) or follow Tyler Curry on Facebook or Twitter at @iamtylercurry.*

### **From the Author Ken Smith**

Submitted by: Ken Smith

*Ken Smith is the author of a series of erotic novels with nautical themes. He resides in the United Kingdom.*

While contemplating where I should donate my batch of the new Brad audiobook, the answer seemed obvious, blind gays would benefit the most. Popping 'blind gay' into Google it came back with Blind LGBT Pride International. There was a Facebook page so I went to it and asked about donating some copies. They suggested I contact the main website. I'm pleased that I was met with a positive response and am happy to donate copies of Brad to Blind LGBT Pride International, with the possibility of other of my novels if and when they become audio.

My websites

<http://kensmithauthor.webs.com/>  
<http://cowboyscanfly.webs.com/>

Current Project

My novel Cowboys Can Fly is being made into a film and is currently with scriptwriter Dom Carver. The project is with Sean Langton.

About Me

I wrote the Brad trilogy first. It began as a story called The Intruder. This was published in Mister magazine. I then sent it to the US where it was again published. The editor thought it would make a good novella. He also thought some sex wouldn't go amiss. There was no sex in Intruder. And so began my journey into erotica. The first of the Brad trilogy novella was a hit. The other two soon followed.

I'd been discharged from the RN for being gay and there was nothing I could do about it. I then thought that maybe there was. I could write about gay sailors having lots of sex on ships. And boy would they have lots of sex. So, that is why Brad became a sailor. And the satisfying part, the RN could do nothing about it. Yes, sailors did have sex with each other and the Navy would have to live with it.

Next came *Virgin Sailors*, my first published novel. It did well very quickly and another was asked for. I hadn't anything to give and had not really thought about it. I could only think that the Brad trilogy would make a good novel and suggested this. Publisher agreed and so Brad was born. It still remains my bestselling novel and 13 years on still sells.

Writing a novel is hard work. Writing the next one is even harder. You just wonder if you can do it, if you really want to do it. A blank page is a very intimidating thing. A blank page every day, because that's what you start with, is even more so.

We all write in different ways. Some need to have a plan, right down to how many words and chapters, setting, all the characters and the rest. I, right from the start, have no idea what I am about to write. Yes, I might have an idea of an ending or the start, or something in the middle, and oddly even a title, but usually I've not a clue where the story will go. And so it was with *Going Down*.

I'd hitched a lot in the navy to save money, it was common back then, and thought there might be a story there. You meet a lot of weird and wonderful people if you are lucky when hitching. You meet some scary ones too if you are not. And so Luke stepped onto my blank page and set off down the road. I've always found it exciting wondering where I'd be taken and, just as in real life, which path will be taken when the mind creates a crossroad of ideas. Before I knew it he'd hitched from Scotland to Dorset and met some very interesting people on his journey.

I grew up in my beloved countryside and only ever spent a year of my childhood living in a dreadful town. Not quite true because I was born in London's East End and lived there until I was three. Thankfully, I recall little of it. Because of this my novels are set between on board ship and countryside romps. Another constant in my writing is humour. If my story has not made you laugh then I've only done half the job. Fun and laughter is the lifeblood of a ship's crew. When you have two hundred sailors living in the same tin can for months you will understand why. The other constant is sex. One of my favourite reviews was a guy who said he'd never laughed so much while sporting a boner and didn't know it was possible.

With three novels selling well, I began to believe I might have the makings of a writer. I was certainly enjoying writing and amazed myself that I could write about sex so readily. And write about it I did in *Riding the Big One*, when I sent Sandy to sea. Wall to wall, or bulkhead to bulkhead, sex, it has been called the hottest gay novel ever. Not sure about that but I did have to stop a few times when writing it.

BRAD had done a couple of reprints and was selling well. He has always been special to me. I decided he needed another adventure. I would do a sequel. I called it *Run Naked, Run Free*. I brought Brad home and away from sailor buddies. He soon found himself in the company of his favourite sexy farmhand, Liam. What Brad did not know, love was just around the corner by way of a delightful boy band singer. Before he knew it, he was smitten and in love once more.

I've often been asked if I have done all the things in my books. A good deal of them, is the truthful answer. It's good to have hands-on knowledge if you are going to write about something

I always think. I was lucky to find plenty of sailors to help me with my research.

Names are important in my books. It might not seem so but I think hard about names. A writer has to live with the names when he's telling the story. If a name doesn't feel right each time you hear it, then it must be wrong and has to go.

Taddy was the name I gave my next sailor. I sent him off to a training base in Skin. Skin is the term used to describe pretty sailors. Loosely based on the notorious HMS Ganges base for trainee sailors., there would be plenty of 'skin' for Taddy to admire there. A sailor's life is not all fun and frolics Taddy was soon to discover.

I knew from an early age I was destined to become a sailor. I had no idea I was to be a writer, too. In three years I'd written six novels and now had 'followers' who liked my writing. Things were just great, especially after having my life turned upside down after getting tossed out of the navy. But my Navy life had taught me one good lesson - when things are going really well and life is just wonderful, be on your guard, be very much on your guard. As sure as eggs is eggs, the day approacheth when your legs will be swept from under you.

I was just toying with ideas of my next novel when out of the blue Prowler told me they were pulling out of publishing and no more copies of my books would be printed. I was stunned, It took almost two years to get the publishing rights back. I did own the copyright. All attempts to find a publisher failed. I had thought that the US publisher would snap them up but they were only into short story anthologies It seemed all was lost. I was sure my books still had plenty of life in them.

Then one day a glimmer of hope, I discovered a thing called ebooks. Not knowing anything about websites, or the internet, and never having been online, I bought a modem, got online and began to look into this amazing world of ebooks. I did have one bit of good fortune, Prowler agreed to me using the covers of my novels.

Slowly, I began to build a website in preparation to start again, but with me as author/publisher this time. The Phoenix rises!

### ***A Must Read: The Absolutist – a Novel***

Author: John Boyne

DB [75271](#)

It is September 1919: twenty-one-year-old Tristan Sadler takes a train from London to Norwich to deliver a package of letters to the sister of Will Bancroft, the man he fought alongside during the Great War.

But the letters are not the real reason for Tristan's visit. He can no longer keep a secret and has finally found the courage to unburden himself of it. As Tristan recounts the horrific details of what to him became a senseless war, he also speaks

of his friendship with Will - from their first meeting on the training grounds at Aldershot to their farewell in the trenches of northern France. The intensity of their bond brought Tristan happiness and self-discovery as well as confusion and unbearable pain.

*The Absolutist* is a masterful tale of passion, jealousy, heroism, and betrayal set in one of the most gruesome trenches of France during World War I. This novel will keep readers on the edge of their seats until its most extraordinary and unexpected conclusion, and will stay with them long after they've turned the last page.

### **Ask Dottie**

Dear Dottie:

I met a man through the telepersonals and we have been conversing for the past month. During this time, I have not mentioned my blindness, thinking it would come up at some point. Lately, he has been rather persistent regarding our meeting face to face. The more persistent he becomes, the less I know how to raise the subject of my vision impairment.

How do I broach the subject without appearing to have been dishonest by omitting this essential piece of information?

Blind Sided in Birmingham

Dear blind sided,

You have to decide just how much of your blindness figures into the whole of the rest of your personality and character. There are arguments to be made on both sides of the fence, of course, and Dottie has heard and used them all. There is risk involved no matter what course you take. On the one hand there are those potential dates who would reject you out of hand the minute they know you are "blind." So, one might think to withhold the information, a bit, prolong it, in order to achieve a foot in the door, might be the better way to go. Conversely, some of us feel we have to put our visual status right out there, right away; be done with the nasty job. "They can take us or leave us." Others of us try to get some sort of rapport going before we detonate the bomb--all the time praying the matter will come up gracefully.

Blindness is the third most feared thing in the U.S. after AIDS and Cancer. Odds are that the average able-bodied person is going to have a strong reaction to it whenever they hear it: sooner or later.

It's not a bad idea to let a person know something about your personality, sense of humor, interests, etc. before you let them in on your dark secret. It all depends on you're own "Chi."-- you're own level of comfort and honesty with yourself.

The question then becomes how long do you wait. I would say, in your case, the time is come for you to tell him, now. Do not go another day without unloading this burden. You are already feeling guilty of withholding information, and that guilt has already begun to impact on your relationship. You're a sensitive, warm person who has a lot of great stuff to contribute to a relationship, including blindness. Remember, though, Derling, always be graceful, and let Dottie know how it all turns out.

Dear Dottie:

Sara and I met on campus last semester and it was love at first sight, so to speak. Our relationship developed quickly and at this point we are all but inseparable. The holidays are nearing and with Sara's home within driving distance to the campus and mine in Mexico, she invited me to spend the holidays with she and her family. Based on the bits and pieces I've managed to gather, I understand that Sara's family is ultra conservative, and Sara is not out to them.

I am struggling with whether or not I should accept Sara's invitation. I do not relish the thought of being around a family, which would hardly be accepting of me as a person of color, a lesbian, and a person with a disability.

What should I do?

Dreading it in Detroit

Dear Dreading it:

Yes, Derling, we're saddled with the burden of two crosses. We are the defected, and the perverse. While, goddess knows, that can be onerous, it can also make us resilient. You might consider going home with Sara, if only to be around her, and for her. Yours is a young relationship; an adventure in discovery of selves. A tender, seedling exerts itself against the wind, in order to grow firm and supple.

Should you decide to accept Sara's invitation, remember, at an absolute minimum, be polite.

Dear Dottie:

I am a 43-year-old woman who, for the past 10 years, has struggled to come out of the closet. I work in a small town and live with my parents, both of which insist on viewing and treating me like a child. Among other things, they insist on buying my clothing (without any consideration as to my preferences), cleaning my bedroom, and cutting my food. Each time I get the nerve to come out to my parents a news story about gay marriage, gossip about the 2 men who live around the corner, or one of my father's homophobic jokes results in me losing my nerve.

How do I stay strong and stand up for myself?



Frustrated in Fargo

Dear Fargo:

The question is not how do you come out to your parents, but how do you come out of that house! The important thin here is not your parents knowing you're a lesbian, but you're getting out and breathing the air, tasting the freedom of choosing where you want to be and with whom and what to wear. Do you really think that your folks would even take your coming out the them wit any degree of credulity? They would probably insist on therapy, and you would be too meek to resist.

Get out of that house now while you still know you have preferences about the clothes you wear and the way you like your room.

And, really, derling, Fargo ... ? Begin making steps to extricate yourself from your current environment. Dottie wants to hear from you in 3 months, and by then she hopes that you'll have made significant progress toward that goal. In the mean time, tell Mom and dad what kind of flannel shirts you prefer. I mean, really, you know, a "meek dike" is, well, questionable at best.

Dear Dottie:

I want you to know that I came out last year as a Lesbian, and I've been very sad because I haven't had anyone to talk with about this. Since I broke up with my girlfriend last December, I have been feeling pretty bad about things and not having anybody to talk to certainly doesn't help matters.

I sometimes think there isn't another woman out there for me. I really need friends to help me, but I don't know any blind gay or lesbian people here in Houston Texas.  
do you know of any people here in Houston that I can talk to?  
If there are, please let me know I would love to hear from them.  
Please write back.

Holding on in Houston

Dearest Holding:

Firstly, a great big Dottie smooch and hug goes out to you for acknowledging and confirming your self-worth by coming out.

Unfortunately, as millions of single people across the country can attest to, there isn't a formula for meeting Ms or Mr. Right. Obviously, the more people you meet, the greater your chances are for meeting the woman of your dreams.

Familiarize yourself with the GLBT resources in your area. This information can often be found on the internet. If you are a person of faith, some denominations have programs that attract parishioners who are GLBT. Don't discount tele-personals or on-line dating, many individuals, both gay and straight, are finding this an effective means of outreaching to a large number of potential mates.

Derling, before you go rushing off and plastering your picture and God knows what all, over the internet, Dottie has a very important piece of advice for you. Use this time to get clear on the type of person you want to be with as well as developing your positive qualities that would attract your ideal mate to you.  
Smooches!

### ***BPI 2014 Convention – Vegas, Here We Come***

The 53rd Annual Conference & Convention of the American Council of the Blind, along with Blind LGBT Pride's 14th Annual Convention, will take place Friday, July 11th through Saturday, July 19th at the Riviera Hotel in Las Vegas, Nevada. Please note that the start and end days have gone back to that of previous years.

Start planning now to explore Las Vegas with Blind LGBT Pride in 2014. The conference and convention will be packed with workshops, seminars, programs, technology, tours and fun; be there.

The first tour will be on Friday, July 11; general sessions will begin on Sunday, July 13. The banquet will be on Friday, July 18, with the last tour on Saturday, July 19.

For reservations contact the Riviera at (800) 634-6753, make sure you mention that you are with the American Council of the Blind in order to receive our convention rate. You can also [make reservations online by clicking here](#).

As more information about the Convention becomes available we will post it here, so check back to keep informed and visit the website at <http://blindlgbtpride.org/convention/>.

We hope to see you in Las Vegas in 2014!

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## ***Notices***

### ***Donations***

Blind LGBT Pride International is a 501c(3) non-profit organization that depends upon the contribution of its members and friends. To make a tax deductible donation visit <http://blindlgbtpride.org/donate/>.

If you would prefer to send a check, write to:

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