

The Express Gay News, Inc.
1595 Northeast 26th St.
Wilton Manors, Fl. 33305
Phone: 954.568.1880
Fax: 954.568.5110

www.ExpressGayNews.com

Publisher

Norm Kent

Publisher@Expressgaynews.com

Art & Design Director

Kevin Hopper

KHopper@Expressgaynews.com

Managing Editor

Michael James

Mjames@Expressgaynews.com

Account Executives

Craig Combs

CraigC@Expressgaynews.com

Joe Green

JGreen@Expressgaynews.com

National Sales Representatives

Rivendell Marketing

(212) 242-6863

News and Features

Jennifer Trovato Greg Scott

Gregg Lasky Mary Damiano

Robin Richards Bill Hawkins

Arts, Entertainment and Dining

Elliot Joseph Yale Alexander

Joan Nicholson Solace Pryde

Local Columnists

Scott Colton John Templeton

National Columnists

Mike Alvear Randy Siegel

Mubarak Dahir Paula Martinac

Lee Lynch Kirk Read

Patricia Nell Warren

Health and Fitness

Stephen Fallon Eston Dunn

Lee Strausberg

Advice & Counseling

Mark Rutherford

'Woody' Miller

Simon Sheppard

Stargazer

Charlene Lichtenstein

Graphic Designers

Anthony Rodriguez

Richard Zendarski

Web Designs

Jeffery Palmer

Network Administrator

Andrew Middleton

Photographic Journalists

Steve Shires Josh Humble

Photographer

'Pompano' Bill

Distribution

Terry Najouks Charlie Braun

Nathan Hemby Chris Gnagi

Office Assistant

Tiago Campos

Copyright © 2001 • Express Gay News, Inc.

The Express is published bi-weekly on Mondays.

The views or opinions expressed within this publication, in bylined columns, stories and letters to the editor are those of the writer and do not necessarily represent the opinions of Express Gay News, Inc. The appearance of names or pictorial representations in The Express does not necessarily indicate the sexual orientation of that named person or persons.

All material in The Express is protected by federal copyright law and may not be reproduced without the written consent of Express Gay News.

The Express reserves the right to enforce its own judgments regarding the suitability of advertising copy, illustrations and/or photographs. Unsolicited manuscripts are accepted and handled with due caution. We cannot, however, guarantee their safe return.

"This Above All... To Thine Own Self Be True. And it must follow, as the night the day, thou canst not then be false to any man."

• Shakespeare / Hamlet / I / III

Michael Alvear



"Let's Just Be Friends"

It's the ugliest phrase in the language of love. We've all uttered it; we've all heard it uttered. It's like a gun, that phrase. The trigger goes off and something dies.

I had the misfortune of having someone pull the trigger recently. And since I live in the south where indirectness is a way of life, the gun had a silencer on it. It took me a while to realize that the sharp pain I felt was the bullet lodged in my heart.

How you respond to the death of nascent hope reveals the essence of character. It's always nascent, too, the hope. It's only in the first few months of a budding romance that the phrase is uttered.

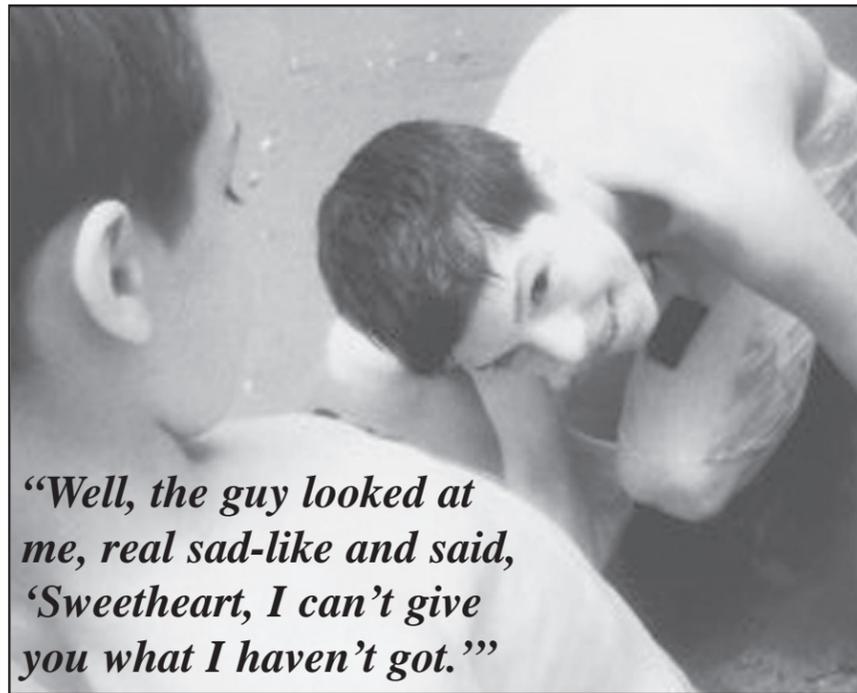
When I was younger my reactions were Old Testament: An eye for an eye. I was always so hurt, so heartbroken that the only option that made sense to me was to hurt back. And I always did.

When a guy took away his love, I took away my friendship. It was as simple as that. You take all of me or none of me. When you're in pain, you think hurting back is the right thing to do.

But the older I get, the more New Testament I get. Now, I turn the other cheek. Even when the sting feels like it won't go away.

At some point in my life I realized that if I was ever going to transcend pain, not just avoid it, endure it or defend against it, but to transcend it, that I had to experience it without lashing back.

Pain needs to find a way out and retribution is like a lock on all the exit doors. Creating more pain from the pain you received creates a vicious cycle of one-upmanship. What looks like a flanking maneuver ends up as self-immolation.



"Well, the guy looked at me, real sad-like and said, 'Sweetheart, I can't give you what I haven't got.'"

I had only seen this guy a few times. It wasn't like there was anything to break up. Still, there was something about him that made me feel, I don't know... hopeful?

When he pulled the trigger I wanted to pull mine too. Old habits die hard. When you've spent a lifetime hanging on to resentments and getting even with people who can't love you the way you want, it's hard to know what to do.

The thing that saved me, the thing that stopped from doing what I always do, was the memory of a story my grandmother liked to tell.

"I loved chocolate when I was a teenager," she used to say. "And one day I was standing in a long line at the ice cream parlor. I waited and waited for what seemed hours and when I finally

got to the front of the line, you know what the guy behind the counter said?"

"I'm all out of chocolate."

"Well, you can imagine my disappointment," she said. "He offered me vanilla instead, but I told him no, I didn't come in for vanilla, I came in for chocolate."

"Well, the guy looked at me, real sad-like and said, Sweetheart, I can't give you what I haven't got. I've got plenty of vanilla, though. Why don't you sit down and have some? It's on the house."

My grandmother thanked him just the same and took her leave. But just as she put her hand on the doorknob the guy behind the counter asked her something that made her pause:

"You know the only thing worse than not getting chocolate?" he asked her. "Not getting any ice cream at all."

And with that, my grandmother sat down and ate what she says to this day was the best vanilla ice cream she had ever tasted.

And so, one day I called my friend and asked him if he'd like to go out and get some ice cream. I promised him I wouldn't ask for chocolate.

He didn't understand, of course. But I did. And what I understood was the folly of giving up essence for preference. That even a child knows better than to pass up ice cream just because the parlor ran out of the flavor you came in for.

Michael Alvear lives with Zoey & Zack, his lesbian Labrador and girlie-boy Vizsla. He can be reached at mikealvear@aol.com



The Express Stylebook Policy

For the sake of readable newswriting, the word "gay" in The Express should, when relevant, be interpreted to be inclusive of gays, lesbians, bisexuals, transsexuals, transvestites, transgendered people, two-spirited people, intersexed people, men-who-have-sex-with-men, women-who-have-sex-with-women, queers, homosexuals, sexual minorities, and people who are unsure of their sexual orientation, but think they might be gay. Here is an example: "Toronto's gay-pride parade is bigger than Vancouver's."