



## Inside

# GAYS on the Internet

by Bill Meunier

The Information Super Highway is perhaps an overused term. It actually isn't a highway, it's an electronic information network and it has a growing Gay presence. After all, many Gays are still in the closet and others live in areas where picking up a Gay publication such as this one, or making contact with other Gay and Lesbians, is more than a little difficult.

Thanks to the Internet, Gays from all over the world can communicate with each other, get information, order LGBT specific products, make dates, have cyber sex, play games, send letters, and develop friendships - all from the privacy of their own homes. What used to be something used only by "computer geeks" is now being looked at as a cutting edge means to enhance every users quality of life.

There has been an explosion of Gay specific sites. There is even a book - now in it's 3rd Edition - Gay and Lesbian Online (Alyson Publications) that lists thousands of them.

One site with a good mix of activities is Gaynet, which can be found at [www.gaynet.com](http://www.gaynet.com). Andy Cramer is the President and founder of Gaynet and he told *Wisconsin Light* that the Internet's growing popularity in the LGBT community is "Because the Internet is a way for Gay men to connect all over the world and without geographic boundaries."

While Cramer talks about the ability of the Internet to reach across boundaries he also says that he recognizes the need for people to be connected locally. "Local connections are the way to go right now," says Cramer. That philosophy has manifested itself as Gaynet has added pages for various cities around the country, including Chicago. When asked if Milwaukee or Madison will be getting a page soon, Cramer replies "We will get there."



### Changes On the Net

About the only thing that remains constant on the Internet is that it changes on a constant basis. More and more companies are turning to the Internet to help drum up business and to easily provide information about themselves and their products.

New technology also drives much of the change on the Internet. Things that were impossible to do just a year or two ago are now commonplace. For example, thanks to what is known as real audio, it is now possible for radio stations to use the Internet for their broadcasts.

This allows Gay radio programs to be heard in areas that otherwise could not be reached. Two sites for LGBT radio broadcasts are at [www.planetout.com](http://www.planetout.com) and [www.gay.com](http://www.gay.com).

Similarly, it is now possible to hear cuts from the latest CD, watch clips from a newly released movie, and even

watch news as it happens. You can play games either against a computer or with other players from around the world. You can look up information on potential travel destinations, book an airline flight, reserve hotel rooms, get recipes and much more.

Someday we may even vote via the Internet. The possibilities are nearly endless.

### E-mail

E-mail is short for electronic mail. Simply put, e-mail is a typed message that is sent electronically, over phone lines, to a receiving computer. You can also attach files or pictures to the message. Of course, the recipient must have an Internet and e-mail account.

The biggest advantage of e-mail is its speed, usually delivered within 5 minutes or so. Also, there is no cost, other than your regular monthly Internet access fee, usually \$15-\$20. Another

continued on page 4



NGLTF

Creating Change  
Conference  
Page 5



What's Love Got  
To Do With It  
Page 17



New CD Review  
Column  
Page 14