“Dykes, Let’s Volt In!”

Whenever you walk past a fellow dyke, do you avert your gaze or do you somehow feel small or unsure of yourself? Do you ever wonder why we feel a sense of embarrassment, or even shame when we see each other on the street, at school, in the market or at the mall?

If you have never felt any kind of embarrassment upon seeing a fellow dyke in public, then congratulations, you’re one awesome dyke! But for those who experience this kind of shame, it’s about time that we examine what causes us to respond in this manner towards other dykes. You would think that since our shared identity and experiences bind us in so many different ways that we should gravitate naturally towards each other, but instead we feel shame when we should feel pride at seeing someone very much like ourselves, someone who is a potential friend and ally and someone who can help us understand and love ourselves the way nobody else can.

Have you heard of lesbophobia before? Lesbophobia is most accurately defined as society’s irrational fear and negative treatment of lesbians. Lesbophobia has different manifestations—intense or fierce hatred, disgust, disregard or violence against lesbians. All forms of lesbophobia are unwarranted and unjust for it is rooted in the false and unfounded belief that lesbians are sinful or immoral, reckless, and are of no use to society.

Lesbophobia causes much pain and suffering among lesbians. But it is certainly more painful when lesbophobia is self-inflicted. Some of us live in fear, disgust, and hatred of ourselves and often as a result, treat other lesbians or fellow dykes with the same fear, disgust, and hatred. This self-hatred that some lesbians feel is called “internalized lesbophobia.” How many times have we heard about lesbians mistreating other lesbians? On countless occasions, we suffer hateful and painful words, epithets, and slurs such as, “You’re useless!” or “You’ll burn in hell!” from our own parents, siblings, teachers or neighbors that make us believe that we are indeed worthless.

How are we going to change this? Where do we begin? Like any problem we are resolved to address or find a solution to, we begin by determining its cause. It is important to examine ourselves and assess the situation as honestly as possible. We’ll find that the hatred we feel for ourselves and other lesbians is caused by society’s mistreatment of lesbians; by its refusal to accept lesbians as human beings who are entitled to equal rights, as people who are just like everyone else who deserves love, kindness, and respect. And if we are determined to change our perception of ourselves and the way society perceives us, then it is time to act! Let’s follow the adventures of our valiant heroine Pamboy D’Tomboy in this second issue of Tatsulok Komiks as we help ourselves and fellow dykes to love and accept each other. Taking the cue from the battle cry of one of our favorite childhood cartoon series, Voltes V: “LET’S VOLT IN!”

AML

“What is GALANG Philippines?”

Galang is the Filipino word for respect. The word signifies respect for human rights and human diversity, which lies at the core of GALANG Philippines’ struggle for equality and justice.

GALANG Philippines is a lesbian-initiated, lesbian-run feminist human rights organization that works with urban poor lesbians, bisexual women, and trans men (LBTs) who struggle with the multiple oppressions of class, poverty, sex, gender identity/expression, and sexual orientation.

GALANG currently employs strategies aimed at building the capacities of urban poor LBTs to help or better themselves. Its initiatives include trainings, workshops, action researches, and the publication of popular education (PopEd) materials, such as Tatsulok Komiks.
IN THE FIRST ISSUE....

OUR HERO, PAMBOY IS FACED WITH THREE MAJOR PROBLEMS. FIRST: HER MOTHER AND TWO OLDER SISTERS, TESSIE AND SANDRA ARE FIERCELY OPPOSED TO HER BEING A DYKE.

HER BABY SISTER, GLENGDA IS THE ONLY ONE IN THE FAMILY WHO ACCEPTS PAMBOY.

SECOND: PAMBOY CAN'T GET A JOB. DESPITE HAVING A DEGREE AND A GOOD ACADEMIC RECORD, SHE HAS BEEN REJECTED COUNTLESS TIMES FOR BEING A DYKE.

THIRD: HER MOTHER, IDA, HATES HER FRIENDS* AND FORBIDS HER TO HANG OUT WITH THEM.

FOOTNOTE

*Apart from Berta, who's gay, Pamboy's friends are lesbians too and her mother is convinced that they are a bad influence on Pamboy.
Among her friends are the lesbian couple, Jack and Jill, whose relationship was made tenuous by Jack's atrocious behavior towards Jill.

Pamboy and her friends helped the couple reconcile with Jack promising to change.*

Footnote
In the first issue, Pamboy, Brad, Miles, Jinky, and Berta rallied their support for Jill when Jack walked out on her. They're also making sure that Jack keeps her promise.

Then there's the couple Brad and Miles. We have yet to learn about their relationship.

And of course, we have Jinky, a single lesbian, and Jolly Berta, the only gay man in the gang.

Now, let's go back to our main character, Pamboy. She has a knack for helping people. Melody, a nursing student being one of them. She's been eyeing her for a while now.

Pamboy's absolutely crazy about Melody.

Footnote
Pamboy rescued Melody from being harassed by drunkards one evening as Melody was walking home.
PAMBOY AND MELODY HAVE ONLY KNOWN EACH OTHER FOR A FEW MONTHS BUT THEY SEEM LIKE THEY'VE KNOWN EACH OTHER ALL THEIR LIVES.

What are those two always giggling about?

Mom, you should be glad to see Ate Pam so happy.
Don't be silly, I'll be glad when she gets a job!

Hi-hi-hi-hi!

I better get going and stop wasting your time.

Nah. For some reason, time seems to stop when I'm with you.

Ooooh, I had no idea Ate Pam was such a sweet-talker!

As Pamboy and Melody were saying goodbye, they notice an alarming pillar of smoke coming from a nearby neighborhood.

Whoa, I think that's a fire! We should call for help!
FIRE!

HELP!

EEEE!

CALL THE FIRE STATION!

FI....IRE!

We should help!

Let's go!
Hey, Pamboy, Glenda, where are you kids going?

People need our help, Mom!

It's dangerous out there! Come back!

Mom, if we were in the same situation you'd want people to help us too!

You're right....

Oh, all right! But please be careful! You kids are so stubborn!

Pamboy, Melody, and Glenda, followed by the rest of the gang sprint to the affected area.
MELODY IMMEDIATELY COMES TO THE AID OF A LITTLE GIRL.

Mama! I can't find my mom. Come with me.

This is the fiery scene that awaits Pamboy and the gang.

Jack, Jill, Miles, and Brad help a family save some of their belongings.

Jinky and Berta help carry an old woman to safety.

More homes are engulfed in flames, the residents scramble to save their few precious belongings. The firefighters are nowhere to be found.
WHEN THEY FINALLY ARRIVE, THEY ARE STALLED BY THE ALREADY NARROW STREETS CHOKED BY DISTRESSED RESIDENTS.

LOOTERS SEE THIS TRAGEDY AS AN OPPORTUNITY.

Stop, thief! That's my stuff!

Bring those back, filthy crooks!

Give those back or I'll smash your face in!

I'm shocked! I didn't know you had such a manly voice, Berta.

Certain situations bring it out in me.
BEING A NURSING STUDENT, MELODY IS ABLE TO SAVE A WOMAN FROM SUFROCATION.

We can’t thank you enough!
We did it!
It’s nothing!
No sweat!

THE FIRE’S SPREADING TOO QUICKLY. THE FIREFIGHTERS ARE UNABLE TO CONTAIN THE BLAZE....

EVERYONE, CLEAR OUT! WE’RE CALLING ON NEARBY NEIGHBORHOODS TO START EVACUATING!

IT QUICKLY DAWNS ON PAMBOY AND THE GANG THAT THEIR FAMILIES AND HOMES MIGHT SOON BE IN DANGER TOO.

We should head back!
Come on!
Let’s hurry!

THE GANG QUICKLY MAKES THEIR WAY BACK HOME.
GASPING FOR AIR, THE GANG GETS HOME IN TIME.... A LOCAL OFFICIAL IS BUSY ROUNDOING UP THE RESIDENTS.

I urge everyone to start evacuating! It's only a matter of time before the fire spreads to this area!

The Chairman's right! The firefighters can't contain the fire, we should get moving!

Get everybody out! Save what you can! Be sure to remain calm. See to the young and elderly.

THE RESIDENTS SPRING TO ACTION.

THE GANG QUICKLY HELPS PAMBOY PACK UP MOMMY IDA'S MERCHANDISE.

MOMMY IDA IS OVERWHELMED BY THE KINDNESS AND SELFLESSNESS OF PAMBOY'S FRIENDS. SHE'S OVERCOME BY A SUDDEN PANG OF GUILT.

The more help you get, the more quickly we can pack up the store.

We'll be done in no time. It's the least we can do for Pamboy.

Such good kids....

What about your homes?

We'll go as soon as we finish.
THE RESIDENTS EMPTY THEIR HOMES OF THEIR BELONGINGS AND DEPOSIT THEM ON THE STREET.

CLEAR THE STREET FOR THE FIRE TRUCKS!

THE FIREFIGHTERS BEGIN HOsing THE HOUSES DOWN TO PREVENT THEM FROM HEATING UP AND CATCHING FIRE.

We look like a shivering brood of wet chicks! It's a shame my phone doesn't have a camera. It'd be nice to capture this moment for posterity. He-he.

THE FIRE IS CONTAINED AND THE NEIGHBORHOOD IS SPARED.

LIFE GOES BACK TO NORMAL IN STA. ELENA A FEW DAYS AFTER THE FIRE.

AND THE GANG'S FRIENDSHIP IS AS STRONG AS EVER....
THEIR COMMUNITY SPIRIT EVEN STRONGER, THE GANG HELPS DISTRIBUTE RELIEF GOODS TO THE FIRE VICTIMS.

Thank goodness, there was no casualty!

They're a fire hazard.

Something needs to be done about the mess of tangled electric wires and cables.

What's up, Chairman?

Pamboy! Good thing I ran into you!

What should I write on the certificate?

Certificate?

I'm recommending that your group be cited for your heroic deeds.

Group?

Yes, we're presenting you with a certificate.

You displayed such amazing collective effort, so I assumed you were part of an organization.

THE GROUP HUDDLES FOR AN IMPROMPTU MEETING....

Wow, so they really thought we were working as an organization? Fancy that!

This must be a sign. We should really make it official.

So let's come up with a name for our group!
AFTER A LENGTHY DISCUSSION, THE GANG FINALLY DECIDES ON A NAME: "SAMAHANG WALANG PANGALAN" (NAMELESS SOCIETY).

AT THE AWARDING CEREMONY....

I am honored to present this certificate to "Samahang Walang Pangalan" for their valiant effort in assisting the fire victims. They serve as an outstanding model for community service.

AFTER THE PROGRAM....

Let’s celebrate!

Jack, you know how you are when you get drunk--

Huh? Hmm, he looks familiar.

I wanted to apologize....

What for?

I failed to contact you after your interview.

Oh, right! I did interview with you.

If you’re still interested, come by the office anytime you’re ready. You’re hired!

Wonderful!
PAMBOY CAN HARDLY BELIEVE THE POSITIVE TURN OF EVENTS. HER TROUBLED HOME LIFE HAS GREATLY IMPROVED. HER MOTHER HAS BECOME ACCEPTING OF HER FRIENDS. HER GROUP HAS EARNED THE RESPECT OF THEIR COMMUNITY. AND SHE AND MELODY HAVE GOTTEN MUCH CLOSER.

PAMBOY SHINES ON HER FIRST DAY AT WORK. EVERYBODY'S IMPRESSED WITH HER HARD WORK AND HER POSITIVELY BEAMING ATTITUDE.

So nice to finally have work!

MEANWHILE, BACK IN STA. ENA, A COUPLE OF STREET BUMS HARASS MILES ABOUT HER RELATIONSHIP WITH BRAD.

So, tell us, what exactly do two females do in bed? I bet you haven't had a real man before!

Yeah, you're missing out! What you need is a real man!

Show some respect! Brad is my girlfriend and what we do in the bedroom is none of your business. And I DON'T need a man. I have Brad!
BRAD HEARS ABOUT THE INCIDENT AND RUSHES TO THE SCENE.

BRAD WANTED TO SAVE MILES FROM BEING HARASSED. AS SOON AS SHE SHOWS UP, THE MEN ATTACK DEFENSELESS BRAD. ONE STABS HER.

HELP! Someone, please help us!

BRAD IS RUSHED TO THE HOSPITAL.

How is she?
Please look after Miles for me.
We're so lucky to have you as friends.

We're here for each other.

If it weren't for your help, I wouldn't have enough to cover the hospital deposit. They would have thrown us out by now.

It's not going to be enough. We need to raise funds to cover the rest of the hospital bill.

We can sell tickets to a show! I'll be the main attraction—I can walk on a bed of broken glass! And eat fire!

There they are!

Yes, looks like everyone's here.

Ooof!

I'm so sorry, Miles. I can't even begin to imagine what you're going through.

But Brad's out of danger now, she's one tough cookie!

No doubt, Brad will fully recover in time to go Christmas caroling with us!
THE FRIENDS DISCUSS THE BUSINESS AT HAND: RAISING FUNDS FOR BRAD’S HOSPITAL BILLS.

I have an idea! We can sell used clothing! I know a supplier.

But we’ll need a store to do that.

Nah, we can sell door-to-door!

Let’s do it! I think I have a knack for selling.

All it takes is a bit of charm.

And hard work!

Well, I’m hardworking AND charming!

THE GANG GETS RIGHT TO WORK TO RAISE FUNDS FOR BRAD.
GLEenda puts her entrepreneurial skills to good use.

You won’t be needing that five peso change, will you?

Oh, all right, it’s for a good cause, after all.

We really admire how you look out for each other.

That was sweet of them.

They’re Brad and Miles’ mean neighbors.

Who would’ve thought? They used to always give us the stink eye.

Maybe they were moved by the Christmas spirit.

Let’s hope it’s not just the Christmas spirit that moves them because we’re celebrating two historic dates this season.

December 8, National Lesbian Day.*

December 10, Human Rights Day.*

I didn’t know that.

I just found out about it too.

Footnote
Please refer to pages 22 and 23 for details.
Someone from my school gave these fliers out.

MOMMY IDA REWARDS THE GROUP AFTER A DAY OF HARD WORK.

We prepared some refreshments. You must all be so tired and hungry.

Don't leave me out, Mom! I'm the group's baby.

Thanks, Mommy Ida!

My pleasure! You're such a good group of friends. Pamboy is lucky to have you.

You raised good daughters, Mommy Ida.

MEANWHILE, AT THE HOSPITAL, MILES IS BEING TERRORIZED BY BRAD'S RELATIVES.

This is your fault!

You're not family so you have no business being here! You have no right to decide for Brad!

We don't need you, Miles. Brad doesn't need you. We can take care of her.

Please do not make a scene here.
Miles leaves the hospital in tears. She knows there's only one place she can run to...

Mommy Ida's Store

Brad's family threw me out.

Mommy Ida's Store

How will the gang cope with the devastating news?

Find out next issue!
"What is the National Lesbian Day?"

Fourteen years ago, the First National Lesbian Rights Conference (FNLRC) in the Philippines was held in Silang, Cavite on December 9, 1996. 75 lesbian group leaders representing 208 lesbians from various regions across the Philippines met and gathered. There were representatives from Davao, Baguio, Laoag, Cotabato, Olongapo, La Union, Cebu, Nueva Vizcaya, and Manila (there were also participants from the United States and Canada). The conference gave the participants the opportunity to share their experiences as Filipino lesbians.

For the very first time, lesbians from the labor sector, lesbian students, lesbian professionals, urban poor lesbians, lesbian farmers, and indigenous lesbians convened to pave the way towards securing equal rights for Filipino lesbians. They set aside divergent beliefs, religious practices, and overcame language barriers in order to formulate plans, solutions, and strategies to address and solve the problem of discrimination.

One of the agreements or treaties ratified at the FNLRC was the declaration of December 8 as National Lesbian Day. At present, December 8 is the day we commemorate and celebrate the integration of Filipino lesbians of different backgrounds and circumstances into a unified sector. National Lesbian Day is a momentous celebration of our pride in our identity and history!
Every 10th of December, the entire world commemorates Human Rights Day. On the very same day in the year 1948, the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) that encompasses the rights of all human beings across the globe, including lesbians, bisexuals, and transgenders (LBTs).

The Philippines is one of the first 44 nations to sign and proclaim its support for the UDHR after the end of the Second World War. Therefore, it is profoundly saddening and disturbing that the Philippines now has one of the highest rates of human rights violations in the world, a poignant example of which is the heinous election-related massacre of 58 unarmed civilians, 32 of whom were journalists, in Maguindanao in November 2009. This incident was documented as the world’s bloodiest act of violence against the media. Rape of LBTs, violence and abuse against LBTs, and depriving LBTs of employment opportunities constitute human rights violations in light of the UDHR which states that “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.”

People all over the world celebrate Human Rights Day in many different ways. Conferences, concerts, parades or marches, and other colorful and meaningful celebrations are held to commemorate this most historic day.
Pride March - a lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) march held annually to commemorate the first ever documented LGBT protest action in the world which took place in New York, USA.

In the early morning hours of June 28, 1969, LGBTs in New York mounted a series of spontaneous demonstrations to protest police brutality against LGBTs, particularly the violent police raid of Stonewall Inn, a popular gay bar. This series of demonstrations is commonly referred to as the “Stonewall Riots”, widely regarded to have sparked the beginning of the modern LGBT rights movement not only in the US but in the rest of the world.

Pride should not be confused with arrogance or conceit, it is a positive declaration used by sexual minorities to inspire acceptance and instill confidence in themselves. Pride means being proud of who you are. It is a call to action for LGBTs to fight oppression and persecution and to overcome the prevalent shame, violence, and hatred inflicted on them. So it’s fantastic to have a healthy measure of pride!
At present, Pride March is held annually in different areas in the Philippines, like Manila, Cebu, and Baguio in June and December. There are groups that choose to hold the Pride March in December to coincide with the celebration of the National Lesbian Day and Human Rights Day. But no matter what day or month, or wherever in the world Pride March is celebrated, the message remains the same: to secure equal rights for LGBTs and restore their dignity.

GALANG first joined the annual Manila Pride March in 2008 and the Baguio Pride March in 2009. On December 5, 2009, 31 lesbians from GALANG’s pilot community in Quezon City marched for the first time. It was a joyous and historic moment for GALANG and its community partners to take a stand in fighting for their human rights.
BUILDING COMMUNITY STRENGTH. FUELING COMMUNITY GROWTH.

Tatsulok Komiks is GALANG’s response to the need of urban poor lesbians, bisexuals, and transgenders (LBTs) for a popular or accessible medium of communication that can help broaden and deepen their understanding of their human rights. It is GALANG’s fervent hope that readers do learn and grow in understanding, as well as glean positive life lessons from it, the most important of which is treating everyone with respect and recognizing that every human being is deserving of respect and equal rights.

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