



Gay Buddhist Fellowship

The Gay Buddhist Fellowship supports Buddhist practice in the Gay men's community. It is a forum that brings together the diverse Buddhist traditions to address the spiritual concerns of Gay men in the Bay Area, the United States, and the world. GBF's mission includes cultivating a social environment that is inclusive and caring.

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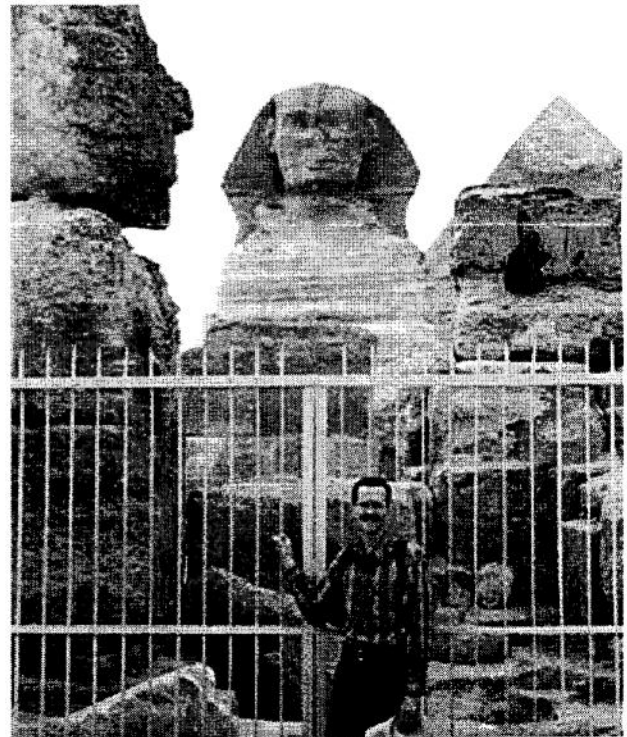
Register for the GBF
Fall Retreat, pg.6.

NOTES FROM CAIRO

July 2001

by Kevin Havener

Why on earth would a GBF member - a Buddhist, gay Euro-American male, age 45 - venture to Islamic Egypt to try to live for a year or more? I have asked myself the question many times. The original reasons seemed so simple: my love of archaeology and anthropology, of Middle Eastern men, of Middle Eastern music and culture, and above all a yearning for adventure. But of course, the realities of life in Cairo are more complicated than I imagined they would be; after five months here, I continue to find that the city defies my expectations.



At the sphinx, Giza

The information I present here is personal and therefore anecdotal. Some of it is superficial, but some of it is based on quality readings (see the end paragraph for book references), as well as extensive conversations with highly educated and not-so-educated Egyptians. Needless to say, the experience of any individual jumping into Cairo - a historical, cosmopolitan, fascinating megacity of 17 million sentient beings - is bound to be vivid and unique.

Currently I am living alone in Ma'adi, a treed, expatriate suburb south of downtown Cairo. I've taken a conversational Arabic class in a community center here. The French-designed Metro commuter trains, forming a giant "X"

