



RENAISSANCE OF MADISON, INC

COORDINATOR'S NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 1975

Wow, another very active month here in Mad City! The statistics have not been tallied yet but business here at the Center seems to be at an all-time high. I have just completed a Gestalt class and am radiating responsibility and reveling in the options that have opened up for me.

One project I am glad to report off the drawing boards is the Support Groups. Not only have we got one but there was an overflow crowd interested and a second was formed. Each group of eight is meeting on Sunday evenings and each is deciding their own agendas. I am acting as facilitator/member of Group I and Greg Sakal is performing that job for Group II. We will gladly add new names to a list and form Group III, etc., when we have enough interested people and an available facilitator. Both groups are "closed" for the duration of their contract — the end of November.

Something is bugging me! And I have devised a tongue-in-cheek solution. It does seem to be fairly well grounded in reality. Check it out and see if it makes sense in describing people you know.

The Wetzel Scale



Wetzel devised a scale to describe the spectrum of human involvement:

0. Exclusively verbally (fantasy) oriented toward involvement (work)
1. Predominantly fantasy oriented and only incidentally involvement (work) oriented
2. Predominantly verbally oriented but more than incidentally involvement (work) oriented
3. Equally verbally oriented and involvement (work) oriented
4. Predominantly involvement (work) oriented but more than incidentally verbally oriented
5. Predominantly involvement (work) oriented and only incidentally verbally oriented
6. Exclusively involvement (work) oriented

This scale was devised to help explain why many people seem so incapable of solving their problems. I fluctuate from 3 to 6 most

(608) 257-7575
P.O. Box 687 Madison, Wis. 53701

of the time and prefer to fantasize and work with people in this range. I've had it with the far left end, whose major exercise, as I see it, is jaw flapping.

Renaissance Annual Meeting

Thursday, October the 2nd, the Renaissance Board met for their annual meeting. I gave a State of the Center report basically outlining our ongoing activities with special reference to the counseling staff and the Gay VD Clinic.

Chuck LePard has agreed to take over the post of Treasurer for Mark Lutz. The Vice-Presidency is being held open until the next meeting on Tuesday, November the 11th, when some new Directors will be announced. All are welcome to attend, 7:30 p.m. at St. Francis House.

The present officers of Renaissance include:

President: John Lindert

Vice President: (open)

Treasurer: Chuck LePard

Secretary: Tom Kohl

Directors: Harvey Darnell Mark Frankel
 Bill Handy Bill Landram
 Mark Lutz Ron McCrea
 Les Mieske Jacob Stockinger

Ex officio: George Wetzol, Coordinator
 Bob Andrews, Director of Counseling Staff
 James Witalison, Director of VD Clinic

Prison Pen Pals

We periodically get inquiries from gay men in prison situations. If you are interested in correspondence with them please feel free to write. I have their original letters here in the office.

Richard A. Brown, Sr. 35830-A	Howard Wilson, 40608
Box C	Box 711
Waupun, Wi. 53963	Menard, Ill. 62259

Ronald Ray Williams, 41960	Earl Robinson, 38761
Box 711	Box 711
Menard, Il. 62259	Menard, Ill. 62259

If you have time to write to them — put yourself in their place — please do so.

The Handbook

Wow, a terrific resource for only 35¢. This gives a lot of right-on answers to questions most asked about homosexuality and definitely sets us within the spectrum of human sexuality. Besides the questions and answers there are several excellent interviews with single and coupled gay women and men. Check it out at the Center or write for your own copy:

Operation Socrates
University of Waterloo
Waterloo, Ontario Canada N2L 3G1

Gay Bibliography

This terrific resource has been made even better! Expanded to eight pages from four, this issue was just printed this summer. Copies are available for purchase at the Center for 25¢. This could be a handy tool for expanded reading on your own to help yourself and others understand what it means to be gay in 1975.

Rights of Gay People

This paperback book is just off the press and available at most bookstores. The Madison Book Co-op carries it and we have a copy at the Center. Prepared by the American Civil Liberties Union, it spells out in question and answer format a thorough and basic guide to a gay person's rights.

Know A "Problem Drinker"?

You might check out the Madison General Hospital Alcohol Program and Education Center for a confidential interview and/or further information. Write or call Ken C. at Madison General Hospital at 267-6291.

Need Money?

Earn \$12.00 per week, if you are in good health, not too disturbed by needles, and have two slots approximately two hours long in your week. Bio-Resources (8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.) every day but Sunday is a plasma collecting center and they give back your red blood cells. Stop by at 212 N. Bassett or call 251-3213 and check it out.

Wheat and Chaff

This UW campus resource book would be of invaluable use to anyone who wants to know more about the available resources of Madison. Published by Campus Assistance Center, 420 N. Lake St., it is free for the asking. Check it out.

For People Who Make Love

This "doctor's guide to sexual health" by John J. Secondi, M.D. provides sound medical advice on how to recognize the symptoms of the various diseases typically transmitted through sexual activity. He underlines the need for being prompt and frank in seeking medical help. He also explains with refreshing directness the appropriate courses of treatment to be followed in obtaining a cure. \$7.95. Taplinger Publishing Company, New York, 1975.

"Grass Roots Action" by Wayne Jefferson

Excerpts from this excellent essay are reprinted in this issue. To a great extent it sums up a great many possibilities for the "gay movement" in this country/state/city. Many talk about wanting to do something and here is someone challenging us to do something.

Excerpts from Grass Roots Action by Wayne Jefferson
(reprinted with permission from GPU News, Box 90530, Milwaukee, Wi.)

In this corner we have "gay lib" — which often seems like a closed system, a busy but segregated little cadre of folks living in the enclave of a ghetto, taking in each other's emotional laundry. They seem far removed from the society at large, which they touch only through the groupy parades and lectures distasteful to some, even some of us. Gay lib — who needs it? Well, then in the other corner we have Straight Society herself — massive, monolithic, and —yes, Virginia— still utterly unaware of the "invisible minority" lurking in her clean midst.

And yet since 1969 gay lib has done so much — legally, politically, socially, personally. It must keep on consolidating past gains, breaking groundwork for new ones, and building bulwarks against possible future backlash. But how? A closer look reveals a host of things that each individual can do, anywhere, every day! You certainly don't have to be an ideologue or "radical" or "liberationist" politically; even those gays who disagree with the up-front, high-profile types can work quietly at their own level. You don't have to wait for some grand occasion; these are things you can do continually, every day.

This grass-roots action involves every area, but before getting into them, a note on the rationale behind all this. It assumes that: (1) "liberation" needs not only law-changes, etc., but also attitude-changes among non-gays; that (2) homophobia ("queer-fear") is very real, but that change there is very possible through education; but that (3) liberalization of attitude on the gay issue will not come spontaneously but must be the work of gays themselves; but that (4) while the formal work of organized gay groups is necessary, it is not sufficient; we also need individual person-to-person gay/straight interchange; and that (5) social change is slow, and often all we can do is simply keep the banner of "gay presence" everywhere, not victorious, but invincible.

Much can be done behind the scenes, semi-anonymously or face-to-face unidentified. If you have to sign a letter anonymously make that a political action — point out the reasons you have to stay anonymous for now. Also, while guilt by association is still possible, there are various covers which can be used, such as concern for a family member, educational or professional need-to-know, or intellectual curiosity. It goes without saying that you should be well prepared with factual data, plus rebuttals to standard anti-queer arguments.

Here are a few suggestions as to how everyone can replace the invisibility of homosexuality with more public awareness. There are two ways to call attention: the "watchdog" approach, whereby we respond directly to an evident mistreatment or to blatant bigotry or omission; there is also the "inspector" approach whereby we search, screen, check out, and monitor how institutions are dealing with us, how they are fair, efficient, and sufficient. And (since, to be honest, a prime motivation of people is "self-interest" and the "pleasure principle") they are also enjoyable to do, a definite

step in one's personal growth, too.

1) LIBRARIES Check out your library, rap with the librarians. If they doubt whether the subject is vital, refer them to Library Journal, February 15th, 1972, which explains the American Library Association's rationale on its Task Force on Gay Liberation. If the librarian pleads budget, point out that a complete library would include Peter Fisher's The Gay Mystique, Martin & Lyon's Lesbian/Woman, Dr. George Weinberg's Society and the Healthy Homosexual, and the New York Gay Activist Alliance pamphlet 20 Questions About Homosexuality, all in paperback. Remember that librarians have a long standing record for defending the community's right to read, to read on all sides of a controversial topic.

2) COMMUNITY SOCIAL SERVICES Check out how your community handles the gay life. Ring up the local hotline or counseling or mental health service. Was the counselor sympathetic? Did they direct you to a gay group as follow-up?

3) MEDIA Monitor radio, TV, newspapers, and magazines for slurs, abuses, or blackouts. Send them the National Gay Task Force statement to the media. Phone into a talk show and get a discussion going on gay issues.

4) RELIGION Get ahold of pro-gay material from the Council on Religion and the Homosexual. Even better, get your own denomination's stand on the issue as well as the gay caucus within your denomination (see the current GAYELLOW PAGES). The goal is not to convert the Bible-thumpers, but to neutralize their devilish effect on those minds, innocent of oppression, which can be saved.

5) LEGAL-POLITICAL-GOVERNMENTAL Eight states and seventeen cities have gay civil-rights laws. Be prepared to rebut the same, tired old arguments. If sex-law or civil-rights legislation is pending in your area, move. Write to your elected officials; support the rights of "all consenting adults", distinct from relations with minors or characterized by force or fraud. Write supporting H.R. 166, Bella Abzug's bill. Get in touch with local offices of national figures; work for the candidates and educate them.

6) EDUCATION You can request gay speakers to visit any course. Think in terms of adding gay courses and even a Gay Studies Department. Screen textbooks for bias or omissions.

7) TIMED EVENTS Look for conferences on such relevant topics as the "minority experience", "sexuality today", "alternative lifestyles", and the like.

8) THE GAY WORLD; GROUPS AND COMMUNITY A good resource is the small handful of competent and committed openly gay people. Ask for their aid. Visit their group and alert them to causes. Help gays come to self-awareness; help them find jobs; patronize gay businesses. Help build a feeling of community among gays. Time, money, energy are all needed. Get older well-off gays to help out financially and otherwise think community.

9) PERSONAL LIFE-STYLE Take a halfway stance: if you don't choose to be openly gay, still don't lie. If it's not cool to say "My lover John and I ..." at least it stinks of hypocrisy to say "My girlfriend Jane and I ..." People will understand as much as they either can, or have to, but one thing is even clearer than queer-fear, and that's that people respect genuine calm-strong

integrity above all else. "Have to hand it to that guy —" who is thus probably strong enough to survive if society doesn't hand it to him.

Let's do it. This grass-roots action is neither too risky nor ineffective and is personally fulfilling as well as socially useful. It's integrity, uniting thought and action, it's quietly living liberation.

Counseling Staff Director's Report

For those of you unfamiliar with the Gay Center Counseling Staff, I would like to give a brief summary of our goals and services. We provide free peer group alternative counseling services. The staff is volunteer, non-professional, and has received training from members of the local professional counseling community. Our services span a wide spectrum, from disseminating information on events and activities in the gay community to crisis intervention. We offer counseling to individuals and couples as well as groups (see item on gay support groups). A housing and transportation bulletin board is also available at the Gay Center. If you need an apartment, roommates, a ride, riders, &c., give us a call and we'll tell you what's available or post a notice for you. The Gay Center is staffed weekdays from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. by the Center Coordinator (George is also on the counseling staff) and 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. by rotating members of the staff. The phone is also staffed after 10p.m. for emergency calls and on weekends.

I have been busy these past two weeks compiling the numerical data on counseling staff contacts for the past few months. The following are some statistics from the months of July and August, 1975. Although summer is usually a slack period, we had 264 contacts for a total of 56 hours; 170 of the contacts were during George's office hours and 71 were on weekday evenings; 206 were phone calls; 140 were for information and 56 were for counseling (some overlap), and 19 were harassment; there were 26 new counseling contacts, the majority of them being gay men dealing with coming out; most new contacts found out about us through the phone book, and six people were referred to us from other agencies.

Next month I will report on September and October. After that I hope to report each month on the preceding month.

Bob Andrews

Treasurer's Report

Renaissance is a service organization for the Madison community. In addition to maintaining and staffing the Gay Center, Renaissance sponsors peer group counseling services, a gay VD clinic, a speakers' bureau for community agencies and university classes wanting to learn more about gay lifestyles, and this monthly newsletter. Most of these services are provided by volunteers, but there are costs associated with many of the activities, and Renaissance depends on the generosity of the Madison gay community for their support.

It currently costs about \$400 a month to staff the Gay Center and maintain other services. Of this, approximately \$200 a month goes toward the Coordinator's salary. Another \$100 a month goes toward repayment of a loan from St. Francis House. Telephone, printing, postage, and employment taxes make up the rest. Contributions to Renaissance in the past six months have been falling short of \$400, forcing us to draw on a very meager reserve. In addition, the contributions we receive come from a group of about forty individuals. (More than two hundred receive this newsletter!)

If Renaissance is to remain active, it needs your support. If you're already a contributor we thank you for your generosity and hope you'll continue to lend us your support. If you're not yet a contributor, won't you consider becoming one? A pledge of \$10 per month would almost cover our costs to the Blue Bus for the Gay VD Clinic. Five dollars a month for three months would pay for a subscription to the ADVOCATE or other materials for our library. A couple dollars a month (sent anonymously if you wish) would be very helpful.

Return envelopes are sent each month with this newsletter to remind you of your pledge or encourage your donation. Use it to mail in your suggestions with your donation if you can't come personally to the Board meeting on November 11th.

Thank you for helping.

Chuck LePard

P.S. Checks can be made payable to Renaissance of Madison or the Church of St. Francis (the latter if you wish your contribution to be tax deductible).

Gay VD Flyer

In this issue you will find a copy of the latest Renaissance publication on gay VD. We are interested in getting this publication into the hands of as many gay people as possible. We were financially assisted in this effort by the Blue Bus, and special thanks to Gay Community Services Center of Los Angeles. We will have the flyer available at the Blue Bus, at Lesbian Switchboard, here at the Gay Center, and through other interested outlets.

Gay Center Ads

In November we will be beginning a series of daily ads in the two Madison newspapers. Appearing in the personals section, they will notify readers of our services and our hours and phone number. This particular outreach is being sponsored by the Back Door as part of their ongoing contribution to the Gay Center. Many, many thanks, Rodney Sheel.

Speakers

There is a possibility that we may have access to some funding to bring notable speakers to the UW campus. Among several names, Leonard Matlovich, Laura Hobson, Tennessee Williams, Elaine Noble, and others have been discussed. If you have any specific suggestions or ideas, do include them when you mail in your donation envelope. Or, come to the open Renaissance Board meeting on Tuesday, November the 11th, at 7:30 p.m., at St Francis House.

New Director of Counseling Staff

Bob Andrews has taken over the directorship of the Counseling Staff from Bill Handy. The support groups and statistics are two areas that he has plunged into right off the bat. Possibilities for assertiveness training, more active communications with other counseling services and possibilities of working with Midwest Sexual Counseling Center on an outreach to gay prisoners in Wisconsin are on the drawing boards.

New Labels

This issue of Check It Out comes to you on mailing labels and in envelopes contributed to the Center by Ken Chraca. Steven Webster typed the labels and continues his involvement with the Center. We can use long or short term volunteers at any time for typing, work projects, etc. Call the Center to volunteer.

George M. Wetzel,
Coordinator

P.S.

DEADLINE FOR THANKSGIVING/
CHRISTMAS NEWSLETTER WED.,
NOV. 19!

GMW/tjfk