

COUNSELING STAFF
DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The Gay Center has been busy as usual this month with phone calls and drop-ins. An increasing number of contacts are being made in the afternoon from 1 to 5 PM. Because of this shift, some of the counselors will be working in the afternoons to help ease the burden on the coordinator, George Wetzel. In addition, another counselor training program will begin in May. Like the training program last fall, this will involve meetings for discussion of basic counseling skills and working each week at the Gay Center with one of the experienced staff members. We are particularly interested in finding people who have afternoons free, to help with the above mentioned post-lunch crunch. The initial training meeting will be Sunday, May 9, 7:30-9:30 PM. If you are interested in joining the counseling staff, please, call and leave your name and phone number at the Gay Center.

So far our program of gay support groups has been very successful. A fourth group is still in the forming, and a fifth special interest group is now being started. This will be directed toward married men. Many of the men who contact us at the Gay Center are or have been married, and are finding it difficult

to deal with their gay feelings because of their current lifestyles. Although this will be the central focus of the group participation will not be restricted to married men. As a minority within a minority, and even more invisible, such group contact can be very supportive in helping individuals find their own solutions to personal problems. If you are interested in joining either the married men's or general support group, leave your name and phone number at the Gay Center. The groups will start as soon as enough people have signed up.

The Gay Center has just received the Spring-Summer '76 issue of the Gayellow Pages, a directory to Gay organizations and establishments in the United States (plus a small listing from Canada). Information from this and other directories is available by calling or stopping by the Gay Center during office hours: 1-5, 7-10 PM, Monday-Friday, (608) 257-7575, 1001 University Avenue.

Bob Andrews
Counseling
Staff Director

RENAISSANCE
NEWSLETTER

MADISON, WI. /

APRIL 1976

SPEAKERS' BUREAU

In April, speakers from the Gay Center will be participating in seven panels, all of them outside of Madison. Because of increasing demands, the speakers' bureau has reorganized to handle the additional load. And, we expect even more requests with the release of the joint statement with The University of Wisconsin in this issue of the newsletter.

The Gay Center provides speakers and panelists for presentations and discussions on various aspects of being gay. Our past engagements have included classes on human sexuality and sociology, both in colleges and high schools, and conferences on counseling, sexuality, and student government. We have also worked with training programs for para-professionals and professionals such as physicians, nurses, and counselors. Most of our speaking engagements are coordinated with the Lesbian Switchboard. The presentations are separate or joint depending on

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"WHAT ELSE DID YOU EXPECT?"

Of all the reactions to the recent Supreme Court decision upholding a state's right to legislate against homosexuality, **none** strikes me as so disconcerting, so insufficient. Perhaps it comes in agreement with Gore Vidal's contention that America is about evenly divided between conservatives and reactionaries. Perhaps it is simply the expression of well founded contempt. Or perhaps it signals the sort of attitude we fall back on when we are stunned into disbelief.

The reasons do not really matter, however, for the fact is that many of us did expect something more from the supposed guardians of our Constitution. Something more than a one word ruling--"Affirmed." Something more than a precedent making case without hearings or witnesses. Something more than a one year prison sentence for one consenting adult having sex with another consenting adult in the privacy of a home. Living under the threat of such judgments is, of course,

nothing new to homosexuals. And it is true that the statutes which were upheld remain quantitatively the same. But those laws now possess a Federal sanction which qualitatively changes them for the worse. As homosexuals, we are free to be but not to do. That is tantamount not only to making us felons of a unique kind

--for we are both the criminal and the victim in a sexual encounter--but also to relegating us to the status of non-persons. No, we did have a right to expect better. There are indeed issues on which honest men may disagree. But this is not one of them.

Looking toward the horizon, the Canadian frontier once again seems less distant and more inviting than our own capital. In Canada, the most recent struggle of gays concerned lowering the homosexual age of consent to match its heterosexual counterpart. That it seems an almost ludicrous dispute is, by contrast, a convincing gauge of American injustice. Yet the fact that the Canadian government recognizes and protects the rights of homosexuals does not distinguish it. On the contrary, it is the United States which is the exception, the only major Western nation that still refuses to accept homosexuals as citizens with constitutionally guaranteed civil liberties. It is hard not to read the

Supreme Court ruling as a final omen of timely flight.

Most of us will stay, however, whether out of conviction, necessity, or habit. But one of the first tests of what we have to learn if we are to survive, let alone prevail, will be the way in which we assess and respond to the significance of the Supreme Court decision. If the interpretations and answers of the past week are any indication, a healthy dose of realistic cynicism is in order.

Some hope for a legal rematch. But to what avail, since the justices are young as justices go (and if only they would!) and can be removed only by impeachment, voluntary retirement, or death.

Some have correctly remarked that approximately 85% of Americans are affected by the ruling since the statutes in question usually prohibit oral and anal heterosexual sex. Yet that is hardly a compelling argument for homosexuals to feel less oppressed. Job security and familial estrangement are rarely, if ever, of concern to those homosexuals who practice fellatio, cunnilingus, and sodomy.

Some entertain thoughts of a massive campaign in which gays and straights would deluge law enforcement agencies with admissions of criminal behavior, overtaking their ability to respond. How-

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time constraints and the subject of discussion.

Part of the additional "lavender tape" is the provision for speaker evaluation and audience feedback. The evaluation forms also serve as a means by which observers may make further contact with Renaissance for questions they did not get to ask (or did not feel comfortable asking) and initiating individual contact with staff members. It has been my experience that at least one person comes out to us personally after most speaking engagements.

Training for speakers involves attending various panels and eventually working with experienced speakers. If you are interested in working with the speakers' bureau, please, call the Gay Center and leave your name and phone number. You will be contacted as panels are organized to participate as an observer.

If you wish to have us speak for your class or organization, please, give us at least 2 weeks notice (more if several panelists are desired). We ask that mileage be paid for (15¢/mile) as well as any materials distributed. We also appreciate any stipend over and above expenses. Remember, Renaissance is supported only by donations from the community. The speakers'

bureau is a very important facet of Renaissance of Madison. The best way to break through old myths and stereotypes about gay people is through direct exposure to members of the "invisible minority."

Bob Andrews

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For if the words of that ruling still seem too remote to matter or too abstract to move you from apathy to activism, then you'd better consider the possibility that the next voice you hear may be that of a policeman at your front door--informing you of his rights, not yours.

Jacob Stockinger

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Midwest Gay Pride Conference '76 is being held in Iowa City April 30, May 1 & 2. Check at the Gay Center for details on registering.

The Madison Committee for Gay Rights is planning a state wide meeting on gay politics and civil rights June 19 & 20. For details contact the Committee at P.O. Box 324, Madison, WI. 53701, phone (608) 256-4448 or Harvey Darnell at (608) 244-6739.

\$

FINANCIAL STATEMENT
RENAISSANCE OF MADISON, INC.

\$

Balance on July 31, 1975	\$ 417.52
August 1, 1975-March 31, 1976	
<u>Receipts</u>	
Pledges and Donations	3,653.34
Stipends	50.00
Blue Bus	82.00
Misc.	46.81
Laugh Cassette/Friends of Cardinal	92.00
	<u>\$3,924.15</u>
<u>Disbursements</u>	
Salary	\$1,736.51
Employer's Soc. Sec. Tax	101.58
Unemployment Tax	55.57
Insurance	27.00
Telephone	249.11
Printing	707.56
Postage	332.20
Blue Bus	60.00
Fund Raising	177.96
Loan Repayment	650.00
Misc. (Books and Office Supplies)	289.76
	<u>\$4,387.25</u>
<u>Balance on March 31, 1976</u>	(\$ 45.58)

Note: Not reflected in the above is a balance of \$1470 due on the loan from St. Francis House.

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Fund Raising Drive

This is the last free issue of the Renaissance Newsletter. We can no longer afford to mail it to those who have not contributed to the financial support of Renaissance and its services. If you have not recently made your donation, please re-read the letter on the preceding pages and consider your contribution. Thanks

The Fund Raising Committee

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ever appealing it may be, it is only fantasy. If a homosexual-heterosexual coalition were a real possibility, our situation would have changed long ago. Besides, martyrdom is not everyone's idea of a life calling. And even if such a movement were to materialize, the law would be--as it has always been--enforced selectively.

Some would even have us place our faith in the good will of those who govern. They cite the example of Milton Shapp's executive order--the only one of its kind--eliminating discrimination against homosexuals in Pennsylvania. But a quick look at the article in The Advocate (March 10, 1976, pages 13-15) on the positions of the presidential candidates toward gay rights and second thoughts about the Supreme Court decision should suffice to convince them that they are mistaking the cause for the cure.

Some believe that the efforts by gays on city and state levels will have to be renewed and intensified in the wake of Federal indifference. Theirs is the most sensible reaction, but what they are asking for will not be easy. It will mean going against the rhetorical currents of an election year. It will demand a greater visibility of gays in economic and social circumstances that make the risks of coming out publicly loom large. But, most difficult of all, it will require a self-criti-

cal examination of what seem, at first, to be unrelated problems.

The first is the almost mindless nostalgia that has permeated the American scene in recent years. Certainly there is nothing wrong with rediscovering the past. It is, in fact, a sign of cultural vitality. But there is something very wrong with a censored reviving of the past that seeks out pleasure at the expense of truth. To forget that the 1950's gave us the McCarthy terror as well as vintage rock and roll is to falsify the past, to see history as style without substance. The Supreme Court decision is a reminder what we jeopardize the future whenever we allow what is enjoyable in the past to divert our attention from what is intolerable in the present.

The other problem is the decline of activism. Somehow, we had consolidated our victories mentally and emotionally before we had really done so socially, politically, and legally. Gay bars may be thriving as never before, but throughout the country many gay activist organizations are all but defunct. The Supreme Court decision dramatizes the need to once again commit ourselves and our various resources to the local and national groups whose goal is to secure our most fundamental freedoms.

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Dear Friend,

Over the past five years Renaissance has established a foundation of valuable, permanent services for the Madison community. Renaissance is the corporate sponsor of the Gay Center and provides funds to operate its services and employ a half-time coordinator. The coordinator and volunteers operate the Center as an educational resource, maintain contacts with community agencies, handle telephone inquiries, and publish a monthly newsletter. In addition, the staff coordinates these important Renaissance activities and community services: the peer-group counseling and information service, the free gay VD clinic, and the speaker's bureau.

It is now a question of improving and maintaining these services and creating new ones. Currently Renaissance receives donations to support the Gay Center from fewer than 30 individuals! Renaissance must broaden its base of support and seek the financial assistance of all those members of the community whom it represents and serves.

Renaissance can no longer provide its various services (including the free distribution of the newsletter to over 500 individuals and agencies) without this broader base of support.

Consequently, for the first time Renaissance is establishing an annual membership program which encompasses everyone's ability to contribute and support. For his/her contribution each member will continue to receive the monthly newsletter and have the satisfaction and assurance that the Center's services will always be available to anyone who needs them. Even if you don't become directly involved in Renaissance activities or use any of the Center's services, please recognize the necessity of maintaining them for those who can benefit by making your membership contribution today.

We are asking you to support an organization which represents and actively works on behalf of gay people in Madison. If you are not already a contributor, please detach the section below and return it with your full or partial pledge in the envelope provided. Thank you.

The Fund Raising Committee

Yearly Membership Contribution

Name _____

_____ \$300 and up (\$25 per month) Benefactor Membership

_____ \$120 and up (\$10 per month) Sponsor Membership

_____ \$50 and up (\$4 per month) Sustaining Membership

_____ \$15 and up Couple or Household Membership

_____ \$10 and up Individual Membership

_____ \$5 Basic Membership (Covers cost of newsletter and postage only)

All contributions can be made on a monthly basis. Checks should be made payable to Renaissance of Madison, or, to be eligible to for a tax deduction, to the Church of St. Francis.