

JOIN RENAISSANCE

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: peer-group counseling and information service, the free gay VD clinic, and the speaker's bureau. The Gay Center is open on weekdays, 1-5 p.m. and 7-10 p.m. for phone or drop-in. Counselors are also available by appointment. 1001 University Avenue, (608) 257-7575.

Our membership program encompasses everyone's ability to contribute and support. For his/her contribution each member will 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 to:

RENAISSANCE OF MADISON, INC.
BOX 687
MADISON, WISCONSIN 53715

Yearly Membership Contribution

Name _____
Address _____

- _____ \$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.



RENAISSANCE NEWSLETTER

MADISON, WI. /

MAY 1976

RENAISSANCE BOARD MEETING

The Board of Directors met April 20 and accepted George Wetzel's resignation as Coordinator of the Gay Center.

The Gay Center's office will continue to be open weekday afternoons and will be staffed by members of the counseling staff.

An ad is being placed in several gay publications by the Search and Screen Committee in its continuing search for a coordinator for next year.

GAY STEREOTYPES

The Milwaukee Sentinel carried its version of the incident in a prominently displayed box under the headline, "Capital Straight Man." The article told about Wisconsin Congressman Robert Kastenmeier, who was "playing it straight" when he sought to recognize a citizen at a recent town meeting in the capital.

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SEXUAL MINORITIES TO BE COVERED IN MADISON HISTORY FORUM

The Madison History forum will be held at the UW Humanities Building, 455 N. Park Street (Park St. at the State Street Mall) on May 15 and 16.

On May 15 (Sat.) at 9:30 AM the Forum will begin with general assembly in 3650 Humanities. Following that gathering, the group will break up into the commissions of their choice.

Of special interest to gay people will be the

Commission of Sexual Minorities. This will cover issues such as "the definition of sexual minorities, stigmas and stereotypes of sexual minorities, the effect of revolutionary change on sexual minorities, academia's broken promises to sexual minorities, 'high' history's blindness to issues of sexuality, harmful splits in the sexual minority community, and the role of social in-

stitutions in sexual repression.

Other commissions will cover prisons, farm/rural, views of development, Native Americans, anti-war movement, working class movements, women, media/film, professionalism, national minorities, Third World history, and history in the public schools.

All commissions will be open to the public, and all interested people are urged to attend. The Commissions will run continuously during the Forum Days.



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"The lady at the center microphone," Kastenmeier said.

"The gentleman," came the response from the center aisle.

"Oh, the gentleman, I'm sorry. I should be wearing my glasses."

"Boy, what an introduction," the witness said. "I represent the Madison Committee for Gay Rights."

With varying treatment, the incident was repeated in the leading Wisconsin newspapers. It was not a story a reporter was likely to suppress. In some cases, it completely overshadowed the reporting of why the gay spokesman had come to testify--to urge congressional support of gay rights legislation.

The mass media thrive on perpetuating the dominant myths of our society. They find it amazingly profitable, and

face it, the No. 1 function of the mass media is to make money. Catering to the myths a society cherishes--regardless of how outworn, dated or devoid of any real substance these myths may be--is a lucrative venture.

Ask any astute reporter. There are certain kinds of stories that are sure-fire sellers. The cancer victim whose last dying wish is fulfilled. The woman in a traditionally male job who is good at her work, but is no "women's libber." The black man who makes it on his own, still believes in the American dream and feels black militants are needlessly dissident. The refugee from behind the Iron Curtain who escapes to freedom in the West. The politician, particularly the more highly placed one, who is caught in a shady deal or with his fingers in the till.

The common denominator of these stories is their foundation in some dominant societal myth--the Cinderella myth, the myth that women need not organize politically to obtain equal rights, the myth that America is still a land of opportunity to oppressed minorities, the myth that life in Communist countries is a totalitarian nightmare everyone wants to escape from, the myth that all politicians are crooked.

Gay people are victimized in the media chiefly through two pervasive myths. One: that all homosexuals

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then discover my own sexuality.

It is important to know what we are capable of. Each of us has: capacity to love ourselves, to love persons of the other sex, to love persons of his or her own sex, to love God, to love in a nonpossessive way... to express love physically, to communicate tender and warm feelings... capacity for genital love, capacity to distinguish sexual desire and sexual love, capacity to integrate sexual desire into a love relationship.

I speak of myself as becoming aware and questioning the attitude of the Church...we...I...have taken as regards a gay person in society today. I feel I have been responsible for the injustices which have hindered my gay sister and brother from truly being a member of a seemingly loving

community known as the Church...As a co-member with the gays, as a minister in this community, I continue to question what is my response, what roads, actions, or attitudes must I continue to acquire in order to make it an open Community of love? I share this challenge with you today...I choose to share it I hope, in a gentle but firm way... I share it as a fellow minister who knows that we have a vital ministry that must be aware and alive and open if we are to remain viable to our society today.

WANT AD: TYPIST

Urgently needed a typist with electric typewriter to type material for the Renaissance Newsletter. Contact John Lindert thru the Gay Center.

ABOUT THE TOWN

GAY VD CLINIC
913 Spring Street
(Blue Bus)

PHONE: 257-7575
Open 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. Tuesdays
information, free screening and treatment.

MADISON COMMITTEE FOR
GAY RIGHTS (MCGR)
P.O. Box 324
Madison, Wisconsin

PHONE: (608) 244-6739
deals with political activities
relating to lobbying for the repeal
of sodomy and anti-gay laws.

GAY NUN SPEAKS

An Address by Sister
Barbara Ferraro, SND

(Reprinted from Dignity,
abbreviated with our apolo-
gies)

I feel very privileged in being able to share with all of you this morning. I was excited to know that a group of men in ministry were opened to discovery...to discover about an issue which I feel is very vital to a renewal called for over 2,000 years ago by a man we all claim to be following.

From my experience here in the Boston area, I have come to realize the impact of a disease that seems to be prevalent among many people and the sad realization that, for the most part, they are not aware that they are carriers of this sickness...what I speak of is something that a contemporary psychologist Dr. Weinberg states, "...is the real illness in our culture today," and that is HOMOPHOBIA.

I'd like to share part of my journey of life with you...a journey that moved from a state of homophobia to discovery...to an openness and comfortableness and finally to a continual awareness of my own humanness and sexuality.

This journey started some 17 years ago as I shopped in Filene's basement with my mother and was horrified to see men made up as women...As I stood gawking,

I was pulled away with no explanation...moving to religious life where particular friendships were no-no's...being told I would be asked to leave if I continued to get too close to another novice...having all my sense of touch and affection knocked out of me...where I experienced situations I didn't understand and was afraid to confront within myself...Two I share with you. One where two sisters that I loved very much exhibited signs of affection I tried to blind myself to; the other where a member of our community of six was discovering a love relationship with a person outside of our community and none of us could reach out and help, but stood back in fear which ended in criticism and inability to help our sister grow in her discovery of self...and we thought we were right in our judgments. How narrow our views were...

In this last example I always will see my homophobia as a turning away from my sister, a sin of injustice. I lived with this sin until about three years ago when by accident I was invited by a friend to attend a Dignity meeting in Boston.

My discovery began. With discovery...awareness and knowledge came a comfortableness with my involvement and work with the gay community...and probably the most beautiful thing that happened through this journey was the ability to

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are men who secretly desire to be women. The other: that all homosexuals are sex-craved perverts whose unnatural desires frequently culminate in some bizarre death.

The incident at the town meeting, the gay man being mistaken for a woman, is a variation on the former myth. The myth reaches its high point in press portrayals of transsexuals, such as Christine Jorgensen. Straight society feels good about itself when it finds its beliefs about homosexuals substantiated through news accounts of homosexuals who feel they are women trapped in men's bodies.

The latter category probably receives more attention by the press than any other. Most recently, the press gave us the as yet unsolved strangulation death of a fashionable interior decorator--an "acknowledged homosexual," as the press said--in Washington D.C. Before that, we had the slaying of the gay Italian film director Pasolini at the hands of a hustler in Rome; the murder of a young scion of the Knight publishing family in Philadelphia; the mass murders of several young men in Texas at the hands of one Dean Corll, the Charlie Manson of homosexuals.

This is not to say the press never writes anything good about gay

people. The stories about Air Force Sgt. Leonard Matlovich's struggles to remain in the service despite his open life style have been creditably done. The Washington Star series on gay persons in professional sports was, by and large, excellent and received fairly broad coverage. The coming out of Dave Kopy, running back and special teams player for six National Football League teams, was admirably reported by the Associated Press.

But the press knows its bread-and-butter stories and the ones that propagate the stereotypes America clings to so obsessively. As H.L. Mencken, I believe it was, once observed, you can never go broke underestimating the intelligence of the average American.



MCGR QUESTIONS CANDIDATES

Madison Committee For Gay Rights had another busy month in April. With the presidential primary attracting the attention of Democrats Carter, Udall, Jackson and Wallace, Gay people were able to question 3 of the 4 major candidates. Udall's stand on Gay Rights was published in the February Newsletter. Carter, questioned on WHA-TV was fairly evasive in response to a question on private Gay sexual activity, although he did

say that Gays should not be harrassed. Jackson on the other hand gave a very homophobic response to a question on the Supreme Court decision on sex between consenting adults in private. Pledging up the tired cliches of Gays being sick, immoral and responsible for the breakup of the American family, Jackson told questioner David Carter, "I don't want your vote!" Fortunately these remarks were covered by the national media and the backlash against his insensitive attitude towards Gays has lead to a softening of his stand on Gay people.

On April 20, questioners from MCGR attended a town meeting with Wisconsin's Representatives in Congress. The Congress people were fairly non-committal in their public support for the issue of Gay rights. A number of them, most notably Kastenmeir and O'Connell, however did express a willingness to meet with Gays on the subject. All those questioned privately after the public forum indicated a lack of constituent support for Gay rights and would appreciate letters on the need for Gay rights legislation from their constituents. Those interested in writing such letters may contact MCGR, P.O. Box 324, Madison, Wisconsin 53701. Phone (608) 244-6739.

Continuing its focus on the presidential cam-

paign MCGR sent two representatives to the Democratic Party National Convention Platform Committee hearings in Kansas City on April 24. Five Gay people representing groups from Chicago, Kansas City, Joplin, Missouri, and including Harvey Darnell from MCGR presented testimony to the Committee. Although there was little press coverage of the hearings, our time was not wasted as we made several friends on the Committee. The Committee members indicated they will not include a "Gay Rights Plank" in the platform, but may mention sexual preference in a general Civil Rights Plank.

SEX BILL HEARING

A bill to legalize gay sex and to franchise gay marriages won strong support from witnesses at a legislative committee hearing on March 8.

The measure died in committee in the flurry of last-minute activity as the Wisc. Legislature ended its 1976 session March 26.

All bills not acted upon by the legislature before it adjourns automatically expire. The next legislative session begins in January, 1977.

The bill by Reps. Lloyd Barbee, D-Milwaukee and David Clarenbach, D-Madison, repeals the law making it a crime to commit "an abnormal act

of sexual gratification involving the sex organ of one person and the mouth or anus of another."

The proposal also legalizes gay marriages and drops the age of sexual consent from 18 to 14 years old.

Clarenbach said he felt the value of the bill this time around rested in its educational effect upon state lawmakers.

"Legislators are just beginning to realize that there is support in the community for gay rights," he said.

Clergymen joined spokesperson for the gay community at the Assembly Judiciary Committee hearing to urge passage of the measure.

"Homosexuals no less than heterosexuals are persons of sacred worth," the Rev. Myron Talcott of the United Methodist Church said. "When the rights of the minority are jeopardized, the rights of all are in jeopardy."

Harvey Darnell of the Madison Committee for Gay Rights said "laws regulating sexual conduct between consenting adults are not obeyed and cannot be enforced."

Karla Dobinski of the University of Wisconsin-Madison gay law students organization said "lovers who have shared everything for many years risk losing everything" under current inheritance tax laws.

Other statutes also discriminate against Gays, including the income tax and the right not to tes-

tify against one's mate, she said.

Louis Stimac said he is a gay man who counsels other homosexuals and "we who are gay have no desire to hurt anyone."

Miriam ben Shlom, honors student at UW-Milwaukee and mother of an 8 year old child, said the Army Reserve has initiated discharge proceedings against her because she is a lesbian.

The measure's only opponent was a Middleton woman who worked with a Masons' program for girls. She said reducing the age of consent to 14 years old was unwise, because 14 year olds are not at the stage for mature decisions.

■ ■ WANT AD: ■ ■
 ■ ■ COORDINATOR ■ ■

Wanted a person with ability in community organizing and fundraising for half-time position as coordinator of the Gay Center (Renaissance of Madison, Inc.). A sliding pay scale is based on the Center's income, for the last year and a half the salary has averaged \$200 per month.

The Center operates a peer-group counseling service, a V.D. Clinic, a speakers bureau, and a community newsletter and is a voluntary organization supported by community donations.

Direct inquiries to: John Lindert, President Renaissance of Madison Box 687 Madison, Wi., 53701