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velopment of ministries to the gay community. The Conference also passed a resolution in support of human and civil rights for all persons regardless of sexual orientation.

The Wisconsin Conference soundly defeated proposals condemning homosexuality and calling upon homosexuals to "change through the redeeming power of Jesus Christ." The Conference chose rather to endorse with modest revision the recommendations of a Task Force on the Church and the Gay Liberation Movement which has been the source of controversy since its establishment at the 1974 Wisconsin Conference. The Task Force drew fire from self-styled "evangelicals" who charged that a series of six workshops on homosexuality held throughout the state in the last year-and-a-half had been "a persuasive campaign to promote the acceptance of homosexual practices." When asked to document this charge in Conference debate, the Rev. Wallace Gable, of Racine, leader of the "evangelicals", admitted to his and his followers' embarrassment that he had no such documentation.

At the denomination-wide General Conference, held in early May in Portland, Oregon, the Wisconsin delegation was very outspoken in support of progressive proposals which were eventually defeated by the Southern dominated body. Dr. Leigh Roberts, University of

Wisconsin-Madison professor of Psychiatry and Wisconsin Delegate, charged in floor debate that the General Conference had given into "anti-sexuality" and a "distorted reality" surrounding the meaning of homosexuality. Recalling the era of fellow Wisconsinite, Joe McCarthy, Dr. Roberts compared the atmosphere of fear at the '76 General Conference with a similar hysteria at the 1952 General Conference generated by "that specter of Communism."

Bishop Jesse DeWitt, who currently presides over the Wisconsin Annual Conference, was one of five prominent United Methodists to speak in a worship service sponsored by the United Methodist Gay Caucus at the Portland Conference. The Caucus' worship was heavily attended by General Conference delegates who heard Bishop DeWitt and others speak of personal experiences of rejection and alienation. Though the Bishop did not state his personal opinion on the gay issue, his participation in the gay sponsored and planned worship was widely interpreted as support for the Gay Caucus.

The United Methodist Gay Caucus is gearing up for a protracted struggle to change the United Methodist Church, the third largest Christian denomination in the United States. A national gathering is being planned for a retreat center in Colorado in August. Information on the U.M. Gay Caucus is available from Keith Spare, #2 Jannsen Place, Kansas City, Missouri.

Steven Earl Webster



HI
THERE
SAILOR!



RENAISSANCE NEWSLETTER

Editor: J. M. Lindert

MADISON, WI. /

JUNE 1976

SYMPOSIUM ON GAYS AND THE LAW

On Saturday, June 19, and Sunday, June 20, the Madison Committee for Gay Rights and the UW Gay Law Students Association will co-sponsor a Symposium on Gays and the Law. The primary focus of the Symposium will be a discussion of the laws in Wisconsin and the Nation, how they affect Gay people and how they can be changed to provide fairer treatment of Gays.

The secondary focus of the Symposium will be the Media. It is clear that the Media, both electronic and printed, shape public opinion in this country,

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WISCONSIN METHODISTS MOVE FORWARD ON GAY ISSUE

On June 5, the Wisconsin Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church took several actions that put Wisconsin Methodists far ahead of the denomination's General (church-wide) Conference which met just one month earlier in Portland, Oregon. Though the General Conference which meets quadrennially refused to adopt even a moderate proposal for a study of human sexuality, the Wisconsin Conference mandated an official study of ordination of open gays, local church studies of human sexuality, and the de-

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GAY THEATER

M.G.C.T.: Madison Gay Community Theater will be having an organizational meeting, Sunday, June 20, 7:00 PM in the Rec Room of St. Francis Church, 1001 University Ave.

There are many gay plays with universal themes. Everyone, experienced or not, is invited and urged to attend this meeting. Although there is a small poster campaign, we all know word spreads fastest in the gay community by friends telling friends, so tell your friends.

Officers will be elected, prospective shows will be dis-

cussed, and general policies will be initiated to guarantee the creation of a year-round gay theater in Madison, much like community theaters everywhere, except it will have many shows in repertory at any one time.

Since there is so much to do at this first meeting, show your commitment by being there and observing the first rule of serious theater: be on time, or better still be early. M.G.C.T. has a box at the Gay Center, if you have any questions or observations.

and it will be necessary to have media support in the fight for Gay Rights.

Speakers at the Symposium will be Ginny Vida, Media Director of the National Gay Task Force, and Bruce Voeller, Executive Director of NGTF. Both speakers will be flying in from New York for the Symposium. Discussions on a variety of topics will be held in a series of workshops. Topics to be discussed include: Gays and the Law, Legislative Lobbying, Media Lobbying, Dealing with the Media, Setting up Local Groups, Religion, the Moral Basis of Our Laws, Administrative Lobbying, and Gay Survival.

Registration for the Conference will take place between 7 P.M. and 10 P.M. on Friday, June 18, at the Gay Center, 1001 University Ave., and at 9 A.M., Saturday, June 19, in the Memorial Union. See Today at the Union for exact place. The Conference itself will be held in the Memorial Union, 800 Langdon Street, and is scheduled to begin at 9:30 A.M.

Out of Town participants may request housing arrangements by notifying MCGR at Box 234, Madison WI 53701, or call Harvey Darnell at 608-244-6739. Residents of Madison who wish to house out of town participants may also contact the Committee at the above address.

GAY ISSUES AND THE SCHOOLS

The subject of homosexuality has never been easily breached within the confines of the public schools. Educators are extremely sensitive to controversy in any form, and particularly to any which might accompany classroom discussion of sexual deviancy. If that weren't enough, homosexuality has long been the object of a special

classroom taboo based on the homophobic notion that young and unsettled sexual identities may be further unsettled by the influence of a homosexual teacher, or even by a discussion of homosexuality. Such an attitude seems nearly as dominant today as it was over forty years ago when Willard Waller commented in his influential book, The Sociology of Teaching that "the homosexual teacher... may, by presenting himself(sic) as a love object to certain members of his own sex at a time when their sex attitudes have not been deeply canalized, develop in them attitudes similar to his own. For nothing seems more certain than that homosexuality is contagious."

Madison may be a progressive city in many respects, but its schools exhibit the common homophobia. In 1971, the high school council, composed of high school principals and a high school director, urged a ban on gay speakers before high school classes, after several Memorial High School teachers proposed that gay speakers be included in a family life studies course. Gay speakers had earlier appeared twice on panels at East High School, but a similar panel scheduled for West High School was canceled by the principal. The next year the Board of Education, under the urging of Superintendent Douglas Ritchie, backed up the high school council and officially changed district speaker policy. Where previously teachers were required only to "inform" their principals when controversial speakers were invited to their classes, principals were now given the power to ban such speakers.

In a recent interview with Dr. Jean McGrew, assistant superintendent of schools in Madison, the basic non-supportive

and is distinctly a function of severe fetishism or anti-fetishism (which?), and consequently of emotional disturbance." Dr. Ellis goes on to say that "most fixed homosexuals, I am now convinced are borderline psychotic or outrightly psychotic(!)" He also concocts a "homosexual personality type" similar to Bergler's.

Unfortunately, this kind of writing has not died out. Anyone who thinks it has should look at Herbert Hendin's The Age of Sensation, which appeared only last year.

The venting of personal prejudice; the substitution of idiosyncratic methods of study for real scientific research; the reliance on untestable hypotheses; the massive generalizations about large numbers of people; and the effort to place blame for the "problem" on the victims of the situation rather than on the oppressive bigoted majority, all of which characterize this literature, make it difficult to believe that so many people could for so many years accept it uncritically as a valid form of science, and not as a mere conservative ideology. I'll have more to say on this last point in the next issue of the Newsletter.

Ed Estes

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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.

cratic groups, are willing to listen and talk to almost anyone. But change is apt to be slow, and results only from long and persistent pressure. Administrators are still somewhat "gun shy" after the publicity and ill feelings which followed the gay speaker ban. According to McGrew, "Once you've made the issue public, the sides are drawn." Whether dialogue alone will improve the chances for fair treatment of gay people in the schools remains to be seen.

Dennis Carlson



RENAISSANCE OF MADISON, INC.
P.O. Box 687
Madison, WI 53701

policy of the school district was reaffirmed, although there was a suggestion of a new flexibility in the speaker policy. Some of the topics touched upon during the interview included:

SPEAKER POLICY

The school district's policy on "controversial" speakers remains the same as it was after the Board action of 1972. If a principal refuses a teacher's request for a speaker an appeals process is allowed, although in practice the principal's judgment is not likely to be overridden. However, this also means that if a principal goes along with a gay speaker, the central administration is likely to support such a stand.

While gay people may find principals unresponsive to requests for them to speak before regularly-scheduled classes, there may be more flexibility in policy for special classes, club meetings, and after school forums where attendance is voluntary. McGrew claims that "there is a great deal more latitude" for such activities and doubts that a principal would protest a gay speaker. All in all, the school district's policy is non-supportive and the language vague, but the door has been opened at least a crack.

PERSONNEL POLICY

The school district has never disavowed discrimination in hiring teachers on the basis of sexual orientation, although it is officially committed to hiring on merit. "But if you want the real line," McGrew commented, "I can tell you that an openly gay person wouldn't be hired." That is, the district would claim that a gay applicant was rejected on merit even if the real reason was his

or her sexual orientation. "Why bring on all this trouble by hiring an openly gay person," he said. "There are so many other qualified teachers... Frankly, when you're dealing with teacher qualifications, you're dealing with similarly qualified individuals, and it becomes a very subjective thing as to who you hire."

Currently practicing teachers who announce themselves gay present a somewhat different situation. In such a case, said McGrew, the teacher would not automatically be fired, but could face dismissal if it were shown that the teacher was "promoting" his or her gayness in the classroom, or had a "disruptive" influence. Generally, the openly gay teacher at the elementary level would face the greatest problems, whereas the same teacher at the second level would stand a better chance of successfully defending his or her position.

THE HUMAN RELATIONS PROGRAMS

Madison Public Schools has committed itself to a more positive depiction of racial and ethnic groups as well as sexual roles through its Human Relations Department. So far, however, the department has shown no willingness to include gay people within its purview. McGrew suggested that the department may be "responsive to broadening its scope in certain areas, such as male-female stereotypes. But with regard to gay people, I would say no."

The department is charged with making curricular recommendations, serving on the advisory screening committee for new textbooks, and developing human relations courses for teachers.

DIALOGUE WITH THE GAY COMMUNITY

The school district administrators, like most bureau-

Part 1

As part of my dissertation in political theory, I have been studying the ways in which certain minority groups, including gays, are often subject to political and social discrimination at the hands of bigoted majorities. One thing which has impressed me is the way in which scholars in the social sciences, while professing to be impartial and "objective" in their studies of human behavior, may actually impart many of their personal prejudices into their work, which, as a result has been worse than unscientific, it has actually contributed to popular prejudice against gays and other groups such as the urban poor. In this article I want to give some brief illustrations from some of this literature. In the next issue, I'll try to explain the intellectual origins of such attitudes and offer some criticism.

The writers on homosexuality I have examined share several characteristics: all have been practicing psychiatrists or clinical psychologists; all have taken a psychoanalytic approach; and all believe homosexuality to be a "disease" which they can "cure." First on our list is the notorious Dr. Edmund Bergler, a famous psychiatrist who did most of his work in the 1950's. He thought there was a distinctive homosexual personality which had the following six characteristics: 1) Masochistic provocation and injustice collecting; 2) defensive malice; 3) flippancy covering depression and guilt; 4) hypernarcissism

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and hypersuperciliousness; 5) refusal to acknowledge accepted standards in non-sexual matters(!); and 6) general unreliability of a more or less psychopathic nature. Does that sound like you? Or your lover when he's in a bad mood? If you're gay it should, because Bergler says that "regardless of the level of intelligence, cultural background, or education, all homosexuals possess (this personality type)." Bergler also attacks the Kinsey Report for being "unscientific."

In the 1960's the most famous contributors to this swelling body of literature were Irving Bieber and Albert Ellis. Bieber, as many are aware, was among the first to put the blame on Mom. The so-called close-binding-intimate mother was supposed to have "seduced her son into gayness by replacing her husband with her son as her love object." Somehow, (we are never told exactly how) this leads gay men into a "pathological fear of the opposite sex." Consequently Kinsey is wrong when he claims that homosexuality is a kind of variant of normal sexual behavior, because "severe psychopathology in the (homosexual's) parent-child relationship was ubiquitous."

This may sound bad, but it is tame compared to the work of Albert Ellis, PhD. Let me stand back and let Ellis speak for himself. He says, "the majority of fixed(?) homosexuals have had little or no heterosexual experience, and they still vigorously contend that they could not possibly enjoy such experience, and must remain one hundred percent homosexual. This kind of arrant prejudice and bigotry on their part is equivalent to anti-semitism, anti-integrationism, and other kinds of racial and religious prejudice,