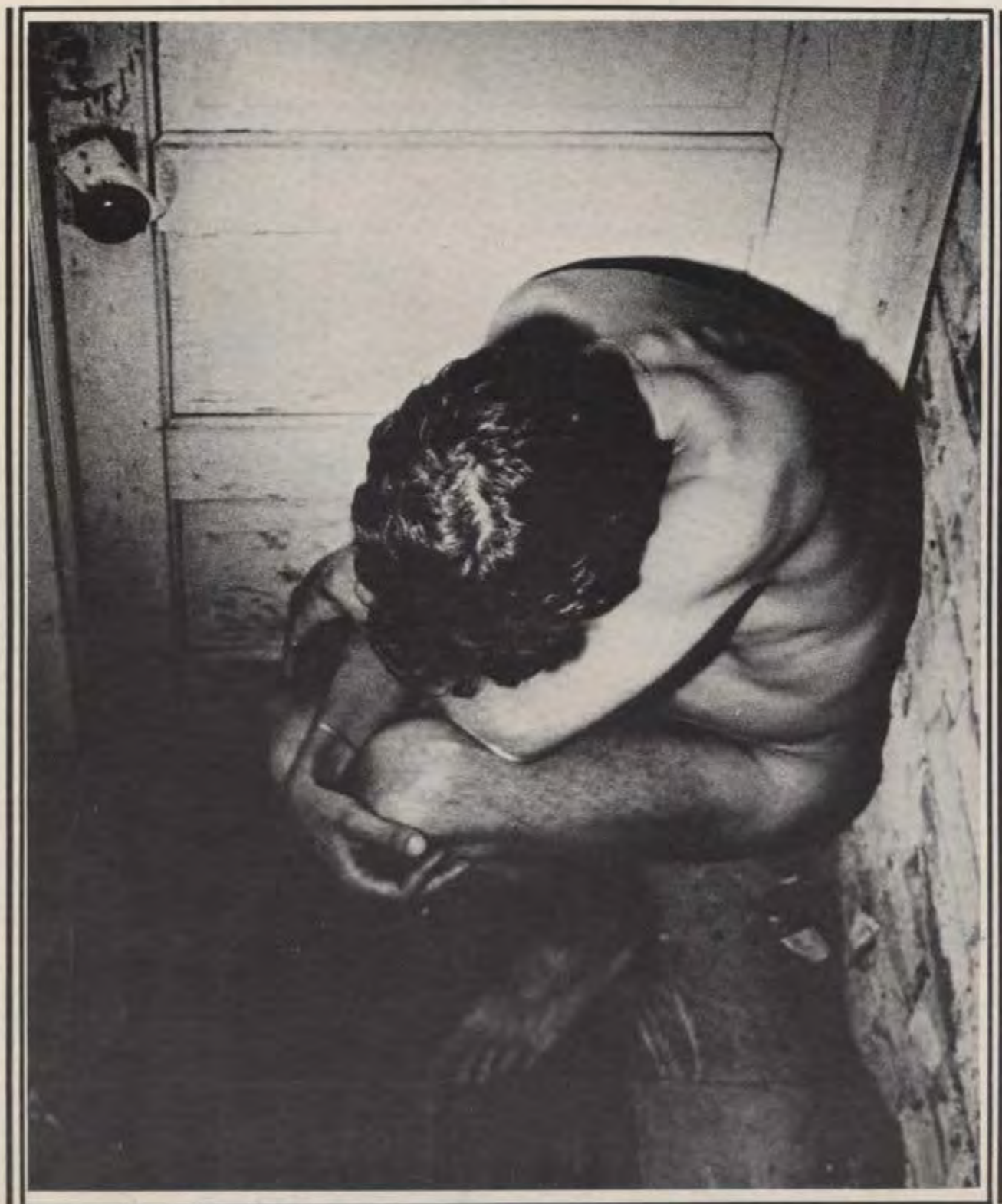


The New Voice

O F N E B R A S K A



Our Turn

Views and opinions by *The New Voice* staff.

The Cover

Dave Hustak, artist and photographer from Omaha, has contributed his fourth cover to *The New Voice*. His recent work, entitled "Within Myself," fits the theme of this special issue, featuring coming out concerns. His previous nudes have sparked diverse opinions, including praise, controversy, and different interpretations.

Dave is a 1984 graduate of Kearney State College. He earned a BFA with an emphasis on creative photography. Many of his fine prints are available in limited editions. This includes 11 x 14 inch signed silverprints. Dave has had his works displayed in several showings across the state. Recently, his photographs were seen at the Gay Arts Festival during Gay Pride Week and the Labor Day picnic. Dave can be contacted by calling 553-2084.

I Opened the Closet Door Gradually

Fear of the unknown almost kept me in a permanent closet. I wanted to be accepted by my family, friends, neighbors, and co-workers. I feared I would lose everything if I accepted my feelings and lived an alternate lifestyle. It took me several years to gain self-acceptance and come out fully as a gay person. Several gradual steps in the coming out process have now led me to be a happy whole individual.

My biggest struggle was self-acceptance. I always knew that I was attracted to males since I was very young, but I didn't want to admit this to myself. I had been warned about the sins of homosexuality and masturbations. I had no role models and felt all alone in a suburban Air Force community. Most books on homosexuality were hidden in the public library and reading material I did find was mostly negative in tone. I had sexual experiences with other men when I was seventeen and nineteen, but did not gain self-

acceptance until after I graduated from college. At age twenty-one, I started going to the gay bars in Omaha and within a short period I started a relationship. I decided that my future happiness relied on being honest with myself and liking who I was, including my sexual inclinations. I no longer felt that I had to satisfy society.

My second step was telling my immediate family, which consisted of my mother and sister, and close friends. My sister was open-minded and supportive, but my mother had great difficulty understanding. She had a lot of guilt and blame. She also felt I could change if I met the right girl and kept away from those "queers." Telling friends was just as difficult. I realized that my closest friends would stand by me and was prepared for the rejection that I faced by a few. I also told former professors at Bellevue College and the coach I worked for as Sports Information Director.

Step three was community involvement and the need to help other gays and lesbians deal with their

own personal struggles. I co-founded the Gay/Lesbian Crisis and Referral Line and also became involved with the local organizations in Lincoln.

My fourth and final step only came recently. At age thirty-one, I no longer hesitate if anyone asks me the question "Are you gay?" I have come out fully to neighbors, friends, and co-workers. Even though I don't wear a banner, I am very proud of who I am and I am no longer afraid of how others may react. In fact, I feel my new-found openness can serve to reduce some peoples' irrational beliefs and help educate people who have never been in direct contact with a gay person.

Fear can only limit oneself. The reactions to my coming out was mostly favorable. I have only run into a few roadblocks. Also, I no longer see my lifestyle as a problem. Prejudice and bigotry are the problems of other people, who are insecure or lack understanding.

—Larry Wiseblood
Editor

January 1987

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The New Voice is published and distributed each month by a dedicated volunteer staff. The magazine is completely financed by donations and advertising.

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Subscriptions: 1 year—\$12.00
Classified Ads: \$2.00 for 20 words or less.
15¢ for each additional word. Display rates given upon request.

The New Voice of Nebraska

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Local Events

Bridget and Friends to Perform Benefit Show

Bridget and Friends, a local comedy troupe, will perform at The Max on Sunday, February 22, beginning at 9:30 p.m. The show is also a benefit for *The New Voice* magazine. This will be Bridget and Friends' first performance at The Max.

Bridget and Friends offers funny, mad-cap routines, lip sync, and a famous puppet named Bridget. Beth Buelin formed this group about two years ago. The troupe uses original material as well as a variety of props and costumes. Several of the skits are done in group fashion, rather than solo fashion on stage.

Other members of the performing troupe include Sherri Hanneman, Sheri Overly, Jamie Johnson, Cindy Aerni, Dora Bianco, Charm Saytree, and Lisa Uhl. Additional members are Pam Coffey, make-up and costumes; Leslie Schulz, bodyguard to puppet Bridget; and Ann Woods, who helps backstage.

It is not easy to describe this group on paper. You will have to see Bridget and Friends to fully understand their brand of entertainment; so mark your calendar for February 22 at The Max.

New Bowling League to Form at Ames

There will be an organizational meeting on January 14th at 9:15 p.m., at the Ames Bowling Center in Omaha, to see if you want a gay/lesbian bowling league at the Ames Bowling Center in Omaha on Wednesday evenings.

Some questions have been voiced. Allow me to clarify a couple of things and hopefully the other questions can be answered at the meeting.

Why *The New Voice* League? Chuck, manager of Ames Bowling Center, contacted the staff of *The New Voice* so that he could work from within the gay/lesbian community in promotion of a league. Chuck felt that *The New Voice* represented favorably the gay/lesbian community (and who are we to argue!). Although we are lending our name to the League (unless you don't want it), the staff does not intend to run or control the League. Most of our staff are Lincolniters and most of the Omaha staff are non-bowlers. Officers of the League will be selected from all those bowling. I'm still looking for two others to make up a *New Voice* team.

What will happen to the fees? Monies collected from the League will remain in the League and will be returned to the bowlers in the way of prizes, trophies, etc. The budget of *The New Voice* will not be enhanced by this venture. *The New Voice* and the management of the Ames Bowling Center want to help you form a league where you can have fun, meet new people, and grow as a community.

And, yes, we invite, encourage, and welcome the women's segment of our community to take an active role in this venture.

See you all at the alley.

--Jerry Peck

3rd Annual Chili Feed at Kelly's

The New Voice is sponsoring its third annual Chili Feed to be held at Kelly's in Lincoln beginning at 6:00 p.m. and continuing until 9:00 p.m. on Saturday, January 24. Many variations of chili will be featured, including vegetarian style. Also, baked goods will be sold. A new feature to this year's event will be the awarding of ribbons for the three best chilis.

Claudia Schmidt to Perform at UNL

The UNL Women's Resource Center presents *Claudia Schmidt in Concert*, Saturday, January 17, at 8:00 p.m. in the Great Plains Room, East Campus Union in Lincoln. Claudia Schmidt is best known for her appearances on National Public Radio's "A Prairie Home Companion" where she regularly entertains audiences with her diverse musical talents including jazz, blues, and folk. Instrumentally she focuses on the 12-string guitar and the pianolin. Tickets are \$5.00 for UNL students, senior citizens and children under 12 and \$6.00 for the general public if bought by January 10th. Tickets will be \$6/\$7 at the door. Childcare will be provided and the concert will be interpreted for the hearing impaired. Call 472-2597 for more information and ticket purchase.

AIDS Conference to be Held

Members of the gay/lesbian community are welcome to attend the Kansas Regional AIDS Conference to be held at the Comery-O'Neil VA Medical Center at Topeka, Kansas on Thursday, February 5 and Friday, February 6. Several national speakers will be featured including representatives from the Center for Disease Control, VA Medical Center-San Francisco, New York Medical College, and The Shanti Project. For further information and registration details contact the Topeka AIDS Project, P.O. Box 2655, Topeka, KS 66601.



Women's Resource Center Announces Events

Second semester programming is getting underway early. The Women's Words and Music collective is planning to make this semester an exciting and well-rounded one. A mixture of concerts, topical events, cultural diversities, and educational discussions will be featured throughout the semester.

January begins with the Claudia Schmidt concert. Claudia has been a performer on the radio broadcast "Prairie Home Companion" for a number of years. Tickets to this concert to be held on the 17th may be obtained by contacting Kathleen Wingard at 472-2597. A lot of hard work has been put into making this production a success.

In February, Margaret Sloan-Hunter will be in town. She is one of the three founding editors of *MS. Magazine*. She will give a keynote address concerning racism and sexism at UNL's Regency Suite on

February 17th at 7:00 p.m. Everyone is strongly encouraged to attend this dynamic woman's talk on topics which are of such importance to us all.

March is the month to watch out for. An abundance of events are scheduled for this year's Women's Weeks. Yes, that's right, Women's WEEKS! The WW&M collective has decided to expand the time frame for this traditional celebration. In the past, people have expressed concern with the difficulty of attending every event on consecutive days. Therefore, to make all programs accessible to everyone, we will spread out the events.

Dates are tentatively set for most activities during Women's Weeks. However, in order to eliminate possible confusion these dates will not be released until later. You can look forward to hearing more about programs such as the following:

An International Women's Panel Discussions and International Food Festival; a lesbian slide show by

photographer Joen E. Biren (JEB); a concert featuring a Native America group called the Thunderbird Sisters; a women's bookfair and film night; a topical educational series; and a dance featuring Linda Tillery, a black woman musician from Oakland, California. Her music is a mixture of funk, R&B jazz, and contemporary sounds. Also, it is a possibility that a feminist dance troupe will give a special performance.

The WW&M collective is looking forward to providing an extremely event-filled semester for all to enjoy. We invite everyone to be part of as many activities as possible.

--Jeane Proctor



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you always have
been clever with your hands

LOVE,
KELLY



River City Chorus Reaps Praise at Christmas Concert

"Don We Now" was the theme of the River City Mixed Chorus' third annual Winter Concert performed on December 21 at the Strauss Performing Arts Center at UNO. Their performance was fast-paced and well-received by an enthusiastic audience.

The River City Mixed Chorus is composed of 31 members, with Dale McDole the conductor and Michael McCabe providing the accompaniment. The presentation flowed almost flawlessly from beginning to end.

The first segment of the concert featured classical works. The chorus sang from an attractive upper balcony with pipe organ accompaniment. Handbells also added to the sound. The opening and closing of the first half featured thirteenth century plainsong. Other works included "O Come, All Ye Faithful"; "O Though That Tellest Good Tidings to Zion" (from Handel's "Messiah"); "Gesu Bambino" (The Infant Jesus); "A Star Shining Bright"; and "Alleluia" (For Us A Child Is Born -- Cantata No. 142). My favorite song was "It Came Upon A Midnight Clear" with male voices switching to a female chorus.

The second half of the concert was festive as chorus members opened the segment trimming the Christmas tree with red bows and white stars. The men wore red suspenders, white shirts, and red bow ties; the wimmin wore large green bows. The stage was also adorned with several red and green poinsettias, donated by The Max. Popular songs completed the show, ending with a chorus and audience sing-along. Some of the numbers featured were: "We Need a Little Christmas"; "The Most Wonderful Time of the Year"; "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas"; "Christmas Memories"; "Home for the Holidays"; "The Christmas Song"; "Let It Snow!"; "Sleigh Ride"; "I'll Be Home For Christmas"; and "White Christmas."

The chorus received generous applause and appreciation from the audience. A large banner from

friends and members of the Imperial Court wished the chorus a happy holiday. I have attended other concerts but this was by far my favorite.

--Larry Wiseblood

Coffeehouse Held by "Women's Words and Music"



On November 21, the Women's Resource Center's programming collective, Women's Words and Music, held a coffeehouse in UNL's Nebraska Union. Beginning at 5:30 and ending around 8:00, the coffeehouse spotlighted a variety of talented individuals.

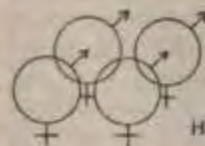
The entertainment began with the local talent of Jan Deeds and Cindy Zuby. Those of you familiar with their voices know how enjoyable their performance was. The evening was ended on the very pure notes of Margaret Zephier. Margaret is a Native American folk singer from South Dakota. Between these performers we heard poetry from Joyletta Alice, who calls herself a "black lesbian, feminist poet, and then some." During the short half hour that she was before us, Joyletta shared many of her own words. It appeared (from the smiles, laughter and quiet conversations that took place) that those 75 - 100 people who were in attendance had a very good time.

--K.A.



Important Notice

It is the policy of *The New Voice* to accept only articles and letters that give the complete identity of the writer. *The New Voice* can use a pseudonym or first name at the request of the writer. However, full names will be verified by the magazine before articles or letters are published.



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Absolutely "The Max"

We at The Max would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Yes, the holiday season is upon us, and you could sure tell it at The Max this past month. Little penlight Christmas lights covered the two seventeen-foot Christmas trees that have taken residence in the club. Our patio also takes on the look of the holiday season with a blanket of untouched snow that covers the entire area. The centerpiece is a twenty-foot Christmas tree in the water pond with garlands and lights and a giant star (of course) on top. Poinsettias of red and white line the stairway going to the upstairs bar. As you walk into the disco, you see the lighting scheme has also changed to that Christmas spirit. Red, white, and green lights form a "wrapped package" look on the disco wall with the rest of The Max's extravagant light show. Topping off the festive Christmas decorations is a ten-foot wreath of silver tinsel with a giant bow on top.



Veronica O'Rourke

As January goes into full swing and we see the coming of the New Year, we will also see the crowning of the third Miss Max. The Miss Max pageants have always been pageants to remember, and this year will

prove to be no exception. The management and staff of The Max would like to say "Thank You" to Miss Veronica O'Rourke, Miss Max '86, for being such a wonderful representative of our club. We would also like to wish Veronica continued success in her new position as Empress VI. We are very proud of you, Ronnie.

By the way, January 11th at 10:00 p.m. will be Veronica's final stepping down show as Miss Max '86. Come and support Veronica and her special guests as she says "Thank You" for making her year as Miss Max a special one.

Miss Max '87 will be held on January 25th at 9:30 p.m. at The Max. Be sure not to miss this grand event. Come on down and cheer on your favorite contestants. If anyone would like any additional information concerning the pageant, contact me, Vince/Velvet at The Max. Applications are available at The Max and the turn-in deadline is January 18th.

--Vince/Velvet Percy

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Coming Out Experiences

Open With a Bang

Being born in a small Nebraska farming community of 4500 people in the 1950's and into a family of eleven kids to boot can cause some interesting problems if you have always known you were gay. I knew I was gay way back when other boys my age were just discovering girls. I was discovering other boys, and making believe that I was really interested in girls, simply because I had it figured out that I could fool everybody because I was always in the center of a crowd, and chased by girls even then. Besides, I was known as a son of a big and well-liked German family and was afraid to disgrace the family by being different than everybody else in a town where the most excitement we had was the county fair and a small church-affiliated college. Besides, "nice" boys weren't gay, were they?

My homosexual feelings surfaced at the most inopportune times, too. Like at gym class, and at the community swimming pool, ball games, drinking parties, etc. You get the picture. So I did what everybody else did in that hick town, and ran around with girls, got one into trouble, became a father at age eighteen, got divorced at age twenty, and remarried at twenty-one. What else could I do? I had to get married again to keep up my respectability, especially since I did want more children. Well, the second marriage went on for ten years, and inside I was miserable. Especially when I realized that to just complete my "marital" duties, I had to fantasize about men. But even so, I was able to father two more children, and when that marriage went down the tubes, I denied my feelings again, and became "Mr. Mom" and took care of my kids by myself for three years. I don't regret that one bit, except for when I felt unwanted and unfulfilled when it came to intimacy. I had none after my marriage ended, and was very lonely and frustrated. I did have my family, though, and tried to become everything to everybody else. I was always "Mr. Fixit"

whenever one of my many siblings had a problem of any kind, and had myself fooled into believing that this was enough for me. During the whole time, though, I don't think that anyone had any idea what was going on inside my mind (although I did have problems stifling the urge to do or say something that would have total shock value for those around me), and I knew deep down inside that one day I would have to make a choice. Either admit my true feelings, and to hell with everybody else, or to withdraw even deeper into myself and eventually give into my deep-seated feelings of self-destruction.

Finally, at age 32, I made the decision to go after what I really wanted, even though I wasn't completely sure of it myself. One day while my kids were away from home staying with their mother, I took a trip to Lincoln, and tried out what I had always fantasized about. I liked it. It wasn't the most exciting thing I've ever done, but it was a start. Shortly thereafter, the opportunity came up to move to Kansas City, and I did, entering the gay scene in that city with a bang. I was never alone when I left a bar, and had more dates than I knew what to do with. One day, I met a man from another city in Kansas City, and I knew right away that something was happening to me, as the dates became unfulfilling and I wanted something more. I became restless and dissatisfied with the "scene" and moved back to Nebraska to be with the man I met in Kansas City.

This presented a whole new twist, as to be with this man, I had to live in the same city with most of my family, and would be near my children again, who I desperately wanted in my life. Not wanting to live the double life, I decided that my family must be told, and I started (naturally) with my mother, and then proceeded to other family members. When I told my mother, I was very disappointed, as I didn't receive the tears, lamentations, or chastisements that I thought I de-

served. I was just told that "It doesn't surprise me that much," and so thought that the rest of the family would be a piece of cake. I was wrong, though, as one brother who lives in Kansas City and who I was always very close to decided that he was ashamed of me, and wouldn't want anyone to know he had a "queer" brother, but he still wanted me in his life. So far, though, the rest of the family has been pretty "cool" about the whole thing, and many of them have accepted my new relationship very well. Even my kids like their daddy's new "friend" and get along very well with him. I haven't told either ex-wife, and until they bring it up, I won't either. Why borrow trouble?

The bottom line is that I wasted a lot of years being miserable, and if I had just come forward sooner, I could have been a happier man all along. I realize that my case is probably unique compared to some other coming out experiences, and maybe it's easier for me since I haven't run up against much resistance. Maybe I had to wait until the time was right. I know the happiness I feel now was well worth waiting for. The road may not always be smooth, but I believe that if we, as gay and lesbian people, accept ourselves and are comfortable with being who we are, others will catch on to the fact we are who we are, and don't owe it to anyone else to be anything other than who we are.

--John Riley





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Coming Out...Okay

I'm still coming out; to myself, to my lovers, and to the significant others in my life. But the many stops and starts I made finally did evolve into a recognizable coming out experience.

Most significant was the evening all the walls of denial fell. The instant, undeniable fully feeling inside; the warm glow and desire I'd never felt for anyone before came one evening as a friend I knew to be lesbian sat beside me. The spontaneous flirting I had never known encouraged the pursuer in me to step out. My lesbian friend needed pursuing as she was not as convinced as I that she should be the object of my affections while coming out.

Unfamiliar with the pain I was feeling, I realized it was from this woman rejecting me. No man's rejection had ever hit me so hard. And I would not simply walk away as I had done before. I felt the thrill of victory when she changed her mind, while I promised undying love and two roses every week. One can imagine what followed. I felt as though I was rushing uncontrollably towards a brick wall. In a sense, I was.

The end of that relationship brought with it the first reality of coming out: it is not the solution to all of one's problems. Coming out has brought me much closer to the solutions. I am a lesbian and for me that says a lot. It tells me why in some situations I am more comfortable than in others. I gladly shut many doors after coming out and have tentatively been opening others. Most exciting for me are those unexpected moments when I catch the image of my true spirit in the mirror. This image comes with my willingness to define me. This is the greatest gift coming out has led me to thus far.

--Chris Carroll

Take Care of Yourself
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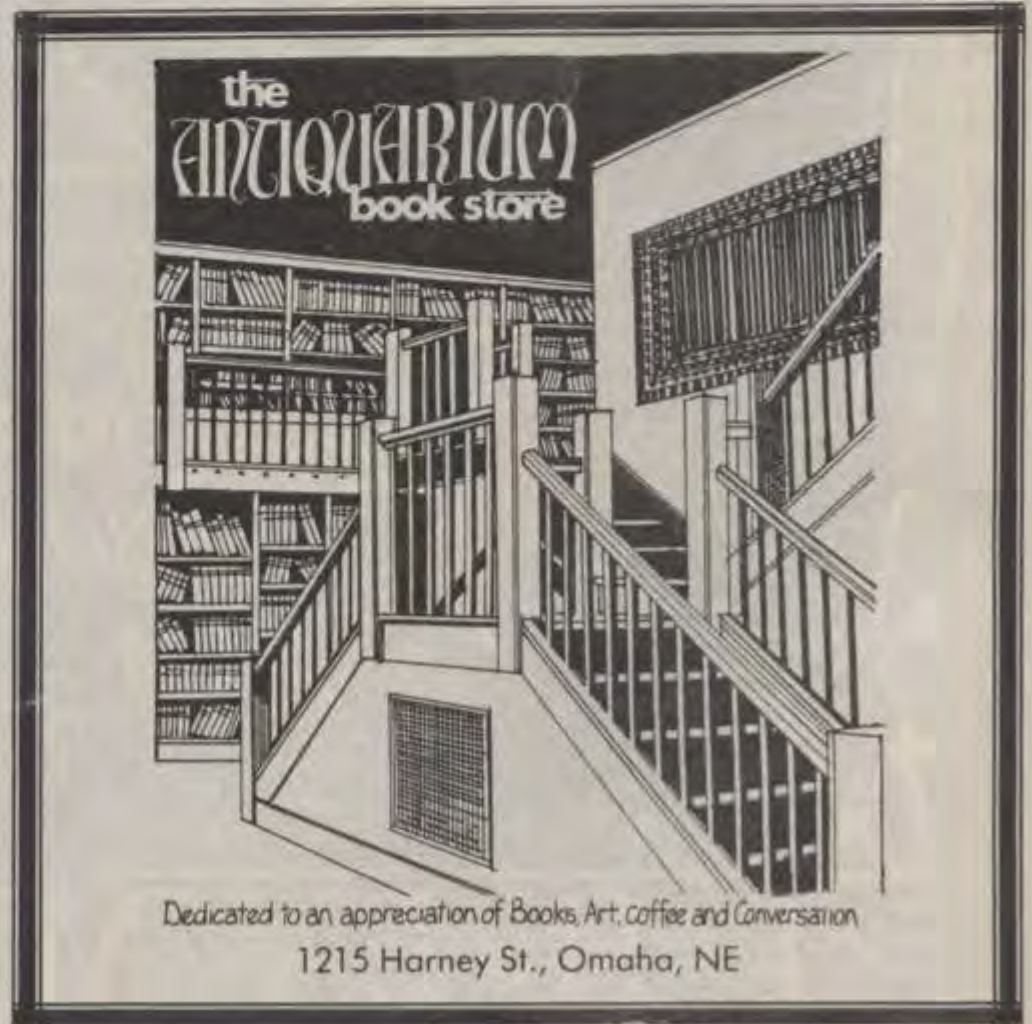


Sharing the "Secret" with Your Parents

"My name is Bill. I live, I breathe, I eat; I am a normal person. I do not lurk in dark corners waiting to convert young boys to my hideous lifestyle. I was not lured into my life by some lecherous old man. In spite of all the things I am not, I am a homosexual. It's true! Despite the fact that I'm not branded with a pink triangle and have never worn paisley shirts with pastel scarves, I am a fruit, a queen, a fairy, a faggot, a queer; believe me, I have heard them all and more.

And yet I'm not a failure. Perhaps I'm not the person that my father envisioned when he gazed down at my wrinkled, newborn face and I will probably never perpetuate the "family name." In the eyes of my parents, and much of society, I am a failure. Because of my desire to live a life which fulfills my needs, I'm not worthy of being their son. Oh, the blame alternates! One moment I am to blame for "choos-

ing" this perverted lifestyle. The next, my parents are berating themselves for buying me a GI Joe doll instead of a baseball mitt. I have long since stopped believing that I am somehow to blame. There is no failure to assign. Yet my parents continue to believe that in some way, somehow, they have failed to raise the quintessential young American man. I know exactly how they feel. I've thought about suicide too many times not to feel empathy for them. When I told them I was gay, they really didn't understand. Literally! They didn't know what I was talking about until I put it into the dreaded "H" word. I could have written the scene. I knew my Mom would burst into tears, her head buried in her hands, her shoulders slumped as if under a crushing weight. I knew that my Dad would lumber to his feet, towering over me as if brute strength would chase this unbelievable demon out of his son. He hit me. More of a backhanded slap really. I guess I wasn't deserv-



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ing of a real man's punch. Then I could see the failure seeping into their bones, weighing them down with the knowledge that somewhere they had gone wrong. I tried to explain that it wasn't their fault, but they wouldn't or couldn't understand. Something as insidious as this must have blame to lay somewhere.

Failure. I was a failure. They were failures. Life was a big joke where the punchline read "Failure." I haven't spoken to my parents in over five years, although my Mom did sneak me a Christmas card this year, but she signed it with their first names. In spite of these things I've learned to like myself. I like the person I have become and most of the time I even like life in general. I have a lover with whom I have been with for a year. It's tough building a new life together. I have fought and won my war with failure and I pray every day that my parents will win the same battle."

Bill is not a real person, yet his experience is real to thousands of gays and lesbians who have "come out" to their parents. Being gay is not an easy thing and the knowledge that somehow you must break this knowledge to your parents is equally as difficult. Rage, pain, and shame are common emotions for parents to feel when faced with this pronouncement. It's normal for them to feel this way; after all, you have just shared the single biggest secret of your life. Many parents react like "Bill's." They shut their son or daughter out of their lives as if they had never existed. How can they forget that this is the child whose diapers they changed, whose cuts and bruises they bandaged, and whose love they have returned all these years. Many parents of gays and lesbians feel like they are failures and blame themselves. Maybe if they had done this differently or had been better role models their child would be "normal." Homosexuality is not a disease. It's not something you catch, and it's not something you did or did not do. Because you are gay or lesbian doesn't mean that your parents are failures. It also doesn't mean that you are a failure. Accept that and work with your parents so that they can accept it, too.

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The Women's Bar

Ask your parents to take a good look at you. Aren't you the same person you were before sharing this important secret about yourself? Try to share with them the anguish and pain you have silently suffered while wrestling with your self-identity. Now that you have finally taken the steps to include your parents in your life, don't you think it would be nice to know that you are still loved, even if they cannot offer acceptance. You have not failed them and neither have they failed you, unless either of you withhold love like a prize to be earned or won.

Maybe your parents, in time, will come to terms with your sexuality, and maybe not. The important thing is to offer your parents the same love and acceptance that you expect from them. Don't shut them out of your life. Share with them as much as they are willing to deal with. But don't force your lifestyle on them. After all, you don't want theirs forced on you. Be willing to give it time, and give it love.

--Joren Raye Franks

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Coming Out My Way

Coming out has always been a continuing growth experience for me. Every new person I meet means a decision to come out, whether they are gay or straight, and I'm sure we all have experienced this in some form or other.

When I was age fourteen in 1955, I first began to get the feeling that I was different from the other guys. Whenever I heard the word *homosexual* my ears perked up and I endeavored to listen to everything that was said about the subject, be it good or bad. Back then there were no intellectual writings on homosexuality, nor anywhere a person could get any objective studies or writings about gay lifestyles. I went to the library on a daily basis after school perusing all the books on the subject to find all there was. To my dismay, all I could find were clinical studies written by Freud and friends which were of no help to me because I wasn't interested in pursuing the psychological reasons for being gay; I wanted to know what I could do with my life and whom I could share it with.

Unfortunately, during those days, there were no community centers, nor support groups, nor organizations to which I could turn for practical knowledge; I was alone in my plight. Homosexuality was completely underground, and had to be searched out. People were afraid of being raided and arrested for such activities.

My father (God bless his red-neck thinking), who thought I was a dismal failure for the so-called "effeminate wreck" that I had become, had no use for me as a human being. You see, he knew what was becoming of my sexuality years before I realized anything about it, yet he refused to discuss it with me. Since there was no one who I could turn to regarding my lifestyle, I became a recluse. There was no sexual contact with any person until I was eighteen and had moved to Chicago.

I was alone in a laundromat late one cold, snowy February night near Clark and Belden Streets, except for another man who was also

doing his laundry. While he was waiting for his clothes to get done he was drawing pictures, and my interest in these pictures caused us to engage in conversation, and subsequently, to go to his apartment to see the rest of his artwork. When he showed me his "etchings," I found them erotic and reacted appropriately. His touch and his feelings toward me felt perfectly natural regardless of my insecurities, and I knew then that I had finally reached the pinnacle of the discovery of my true sexual feelings.

At that point I had "come out" to myself, and had accepted myself as a fulfilled human being with no compunctions toward that red-neck upbringing. I no longer felt dirty toward myself, nor did I feel guilty about what I did. My actions were completely natural, easy, and enjoyable.

My next coming out experience was telling my father about my newfound lifestyle, which, I realized in later years, he was totally aware of but never conveyed to me. If only he had been true to me and let me know what was happening to my own system before I knew what was going on! My father's reaction to my coming out to him was one of total disgust and loathing. With this reaction I felt there was no more feeling in me for this person, so I left with nothing more to say. There was no longer a reason for me to be where I wasn't understood or loved, so I went where I could be accepted and loved for what I believed in and was very much a part of.

There have been many experiences in my life where I have come out to others, and the pluses exceed the minuses as far as their reactions went. If a person can't accept my homosexuality, then I don't need that person in my life. Of course, one can't expect to come out during the initial meeting or interview; one has to have a proven track record of achievements and social acceptance before the bomb can be dropped.

On the other hand, a person like The Reverend Elder Troy Perry, the world leader of the Metropolitan Community Church, feels very free to come out to anyone he pleases, at any time -- even to the

point of encouraging gays to whom he lectures to follow suit. However, with a person of his track record, he fears no one. He is a person who demands an audience, and feels most confident when he has one. He has an imposing stance, an icy glare, and a demeanor which defies anyone to oppose him in his views. He has a knowledge of the Bible which would put any clergy to shame, and he can out-quote anyone in any scriptural references. This man can come out to anyone and be accepted for what he is!

You and I, however, don't have as much moxie. We have to worry about the boss firing us; about the insurance company rejecting us; about the landlord evicting us; about the doctor refusing us; about the undertaker unwilling to accept our remains.

Rejection is the main reason that coming out is such a dilemma. At times it can be our sole reason for befriending people, just so we can come out to them and have them accept us as we are -- not someone's preconceived notion of what humanity should be.

When we find such a person, s/he is our very best friend in whom we can confide anything. It is at that point that the clouds have opened and the sun shines in and everything wonderful happens. Bells ring, angels sing, and the dancing begins! But what happens when the confidence and trust is broken?

Simple. We reject that so-called friend and go on in search of another person we can trust to begin the cycle all over again. A straight friend of mine once said to me that he always found gays searching for something, but they never knew what they were searching for.

I have always wanted to be free, truthful, open, happy in my convictions, and most of all, loved and accepted for what I am. If I have to spend the rest of my life searching for these attributes, then hand me the lantern. There have been disappointments along the way, but I will always find myself getting back up and starting over again.

Yes, coming out is a true experience ... your whole life through.

--Gary Griffith

I'm Doing Real Good for Myself

I'm doing real good for myself. I smile a lot more since I've come out about my being gay. The definition of "gay" is being happy. They sure picked a perfect word to describe it -- because I do; I feel very happy!

Before, however, it was a long trek to where I am today. I'm nineteen now and for the last seven and one half years, I've been aware of my feelings for men. Up until about ten months ago I denied these feelings knowing they weren't right. My first recollection was eyeing all the other guys in the locker room after gym class. I always felt they were looking back, and I was embarrassed.

Later on a girl came up to me and said her friend liked me and said I should ask her out. Since that was the norm in jr. high, I did. It had to be the most boring relationship I'd ever had. We were together for two years until she finally broke it off at our ninth grade promotion dance. It was about time.

During those two years, though, I had experienced my first sexual experience. I guess I should mention that it was also my first homosexual one as well. It only happened once and I was so confused afterwards that I never spoke another to that kid to this day. I don't even know where he lives now. It sure ruined a good friendship.

There were several incidents that have happened my past that have always got me wondering why my parents never suspected about me before I came out to them. Most of them were almost surely related to the topic.

First of all, I seldom brought any girlfriends home to meet them. Twice I even brought just a real good girlfriend of mine home and almost immediately they thought we were serious. One of them was event pregnant and that didn't even startle them.

Second, I had a run-in with the law on charges of indecent exposure. Since I was a minor at the time, I had to go through youth counseling. I don't think it did any good

and to this day, the best solution I could come up with for why it happened was that it gave me pleasure. But I am not sure if my being gay had any direct bearing on it. Oh, well!!

Third, my father once found some porno pictures of men in my room. They belonged to my sister and I had just borrowed them to look at. He threatened me, "If this is how you want to live your life, you'll do it out on your own!" And that was the last I heard about it. But he really did mean what he said.

Fourth, there are all those minor things like: I would rather cook dinner, help mom, or go shopping that watch sports, fix the car, or help Dad. I also did silly things like wear my hair out of fashion and have weird colors and dyes in it. This was a phase my parents never understood.

Lastly, I secretly observed my best friend in my senior year in high school taking a shower at my house. The next day started the beginning of my coming out experience.

...continued on page 12

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"I never laughed so hard," stated Pee Wee in a recent backstage interview

"Bridget is one funny lady. Only Miss Piggy makes my heart beat as fast," remarked Kermit

It was around closing time at work. A good trusting friend of mine and I snuck off into a corner because she had something she wanted to tell me. She said "I'm in love with Dave (not his real name) and since you're his best friend, can you help him notice me?"

I replied, "So am I."
She looked puzzled. "What?"

I answered "I'm in love with Dave, too!"

Her face drained real fast. "What do you mean?"

I just up and said "I think I might be gay!"

We talked for nearly twenty minutes until the supervisor caught us and got us back to work. After work, we got back together and she told me I could be cured if I dated girls. I didn't believe her.

Then I felt guilty about what I had done to Dave the day before, so I came out to him, also. It didn't seem to bother him that I confessed about watching him in the showers. He too said that dating a few girls would be the sure-fire solution. So I asked a girl to the junior-senior prom. It didn't work out.

Finally an article in *Newsweek* about "Growing Up Gay" convinced me of what I thought all along. I was definitely gay. But I didn't want to be. I didn't want to be harassed. Why did God deal me such a burden to have to live with?

I came out to a teacher who gave me the phone number for Benjamin Roe. I called it. (Answering machine.) I decided to pay a personal visit. After an hour or so with Ben, we decided a good start would be P-FLAG.

After my first meeting, I met a real nice guy who introduced me to the gay community. He accompanied me to the Boardwalk for the first time. We have become real close now.

I've come out to most of my close co-workers, my sister, and indirectly to my parents. I still get a little bit of faggot jokes and sissy remarks from a few co-workers, but it

doesn't bother me anymore. The only bad thing is that my folks haven't completely accepted my gayness yet. They sent me out of their house -- like Dad threatened a few years earlier. But I'm going to give them time. It took me years to come out to myself. They need time to absorb it, also.

But as I said, "I'm doing real good for myself." I attend several support groups and am even trying to form another one. I have a nice roommate who accepts me the way I am. Although my boyfriend has moved away for personal reasons, we keep in close contact. And I still have some really supportive friends. I hope they last. I'm out of the closet for good. It's closed tight, never to be opened again -- except when my parents are ready to come out.

--BL

Free Pamphlet Offered—Coming Out to Your Parents

"Coming Out to Your Parents" is a 16-page booklet published for lesbians and gay men who are considering coming out to their parents. The booklet, published by Philadelphia Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (Parents FLAG), identifies six stages most parents go through when they learn of their gay child's sexual orientation.

The stages (shock, denial, guilt, anger, personal decision-making, and

true acceptance) are described, along with specific ways young adults can assist their parents in each of these stages. The author, the father of a gay son, relates his personal experience and that of hundreds of other parents who have come to Parents FLAG meetings.

The booklet (in its third printing of over 100,000 copies) begins by raising 12 questions that need to be considered before one comes out to parents. It offers an annotated list of resources about coming out to parents; it also provides an appendix of books and pamphlets to give to one's parents.

A list of over 160 parent groups/contacts in 50 states is provided. These parent groups are members of Parents FLAG, whose headquarters is in Los Angeles.

For a free single copy send a self-addressed, stamped business envelope to Parents FLAG, P.O. Box 15711, Philadelphia, PA 19103. (Address the envelope as you wish; no additional marks will be added.) Additional copies are 25¢ each; \$20 per 100 includes postage.

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Closet to Closet

It would seem that many people (gays and lesbians) have moved from single dwelling closets to multiple dwelling closets, but remain in a closet nonetheless. I realize that some feel the need to remain in a closet for "professional reasons;" however, when multiple dwelling closets become organized, the situation becomes amusing -- if not ridiculous. One of the supposed purposes of a gay/lesbian organization is to be a support group for others coming out of their closets. If the multiple dwelling is effectively closeted, no one can find the support the group allegedly offers.

Some time ago a gay/lesbian-based organization experienced a surge in the demand for their newsletter. The leaders of that organization promptly demanded a reduction in distribution claiming they wanted to maintain a "low profile," and that too many people were learning of their mission and work. This same group later invited a national leader for a series of meetings. The local newspaper was purposely given the wrong location of the meetings to avoid difficulties.

Two years ago Omaha held its first Gay Pride Parade. Although I consider myself to be fairly well informed on community activities, the news did not reach me until two days prior to the event. The media learned of it in time to be there with cameras and notebooks. The general public learned of it and cheered us along our brief march.

Last year, representatives from various gay/lesbian organizations met for months before Gay Pride Week. One person was assigned the task of preparing the press releases to the media prior to the parade. Without consulting the other representatives collectively, a block was placed on any prior notice to the media because it was feared that the parade would not be large enough or spectacular enough to merit media coverage. The result was the gathering of many gays, lesbians, and supporters meeting under the cover of night to march down deserted streets. I make a more profound public statement by entering the front door of a gay bar during happy hour.

An event was planned for a Friday afternoon/early evening get-together for a gay/lesbian group. I nearly laughed out loud when they announced the "safe" location. The business they chose employs more queens than a drag show at the Max. The chosen business does not support this publication or any other gay/lesbian publication with their advertising dollars -- because they do not want to be known as a gay establishment.

A year ago, a group of local gay athletes traveled to Chicago where they defeated their competition. Their picture, with story, appeared in Chicago's gay newspaper, but no local coverage was offered by the group. Another sports team traveled to compete, and we're still waiting to hear how they did.

I have been fortunate in that I have been able to throw open the door to my closet and declare, "Watch out, world, here I come!" It seems to me that there are many heterophobic gays and lesbians who are limiting themselves and the gay/lesbian community by staying in their closets -- even if it is a multiple dwelling. What is even worse, they are living in two different worlds (schizophrenic?), and practicing the art of deception. I cannot help but wonder how many "professional" employers would rather have a well-adjusted gay or lesbian working for them rather than a deceptive schizo.

I recall vividly the fear I felt when I first peeked out of my closet door, and the incredible joy I experienced when I found a support group.

Now, one of my goals in life is to

be available for others as they venture out of their closet, and I trust that they will not feel they have had to visit the catacombs in order to find someone to share in their struggle, and so theirs might be less traumatic than mine. I want to live in a community within our society -- not in a commune.

The membership of our local gay/lesbian organizations is but a fraction of the gays and lesbians in our community, and -- like society on the whole -- is transient. Propagation is not feasible, and proselytizing heterosexuals is not possible. If we, as a community, are to continue and to grow beyond the "silent minority," we cannot maintain a low profile. For those seeking support in their journey out of the closet, a low profile is a negative image.

We have much to be proud about, and an important part of the joy of being proud is finding someone to whom we can declare our pride -- or helping them find us.

--Jerry Peck

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Local Organizations

The Future of Community of Grace?

The Community of Grace held its first full Community meeting on December 14th, 1986, at Lambda House. The main topic of discussion was the possible disbanding of COG.

The Community of Grace is an organization that has been a part of Lincoln's gay/lesbian community since November, 1980. Lack of interest and attendance in the group in the last year has forced COG to face some tough decisions. Dwindling income has also forced COG to trim its \$770 per year budget.

For those who lack a church home or feel alienation with organized religion, COG has fulfilled a vital role in the gay/lesbian community. In 1985, COG co-sponsored a regional conference entitled "The Church and the Homosexual" which drew in people from all over Nebraska, Missouri, Iowa, and Oklahoma. P-FLAG, Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, has enjoyed a long and intimate association with COG. Each year, both groups join to hold a Thanksgiving dinner which is attended by more than fifty persons. COG has contributed time and money to other organizations in the gay/lesbian community. COG is also a member of the Lincoln Fellowship of Churches and a group member of the Lincoln Coalition for Civil Rights.

Membership in the Community of Grace is informal, based upon attendance at Sunday night worship at 7:00 p.m. Community meetings are held the second Sunday of every month beginning at 6:00 p.m. with a potluck supper. COG is currently meeting at Lambda House, 2845 R St. Anyone who is interested is heartily welcomed. Address inquiries to Community of Grace, Box 6881, Lincoln, NE 68506 or call 474-1205.

A final decision on whether to disband the group will be made at the meeting on March 8, 1987.

Professional Organization Holds Annual Christmas Party

The Omaha Business and Professional Club held its second annual Christmas party December 17th at Sam Mandina's mansion.

About 135 people, both members and non-members, enjoyed a variety of hors d'oeuvres, some of which were provided by Mr. Mandina. A cash bar was well patronized throughout the evening.

One noticeable difference in this year's party was the number of women in attendance. According to Carol Fichtelman, a member of the club, more women showed up for this year's party. In fact, there were more new people in general at the party.

"More women are starting to get involved in the club's activities in general," Fichtelman said.

This year the club increased the number of activities it offered to members and interested people, such as bicycle and canoe trips.

"The women especially seem to enjoy the outdoor activities," Fichtelman said.

Anyone wanting more information about the Omaha Business and Professional Club should contact Jeff at (402) 345-2966.

--Lois L.

Presbyterians for Gay/Lesbian Concerns

An organizational meeting will be held on Saturday, February 28 for a local Presbyterians for Gay/Lesbian Concerns chapter. The meeting is scheduled for 3:30 p.m. at 3810 S. 13th St., #26 in Omaha. The meeting will center on purpose and activities of the group, as well as setting the stage for future meetings. Interested persons should call 733-1360.

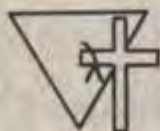
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Play Safe



PFlag Extends Invitation to Gays and Lesbians

Two parents attended the International P-FLAG convention in Portland, Oregon. The theme was *RAP on Homophobia ... Religion, AIDS, and Politics*. It is impossible to attend one of those meetings without coming home on a tremendous high!

While we were in Portland, I was so excited about the speakers there. Almost all were eloquent and definitely upbeat -- a "We Can Do" attitude was pervasive. I called my son and son-in-love in Oakland and told them they really *must* plan to attend the convention next year in Washington, D.C. And here is my point: I heard J.C., my son-in-love, say in a tentative, puzzled voice, "But what would we do there?"

I realized that, despite all of my involvement and promotion of P-FLAG, I had missed, somehow, conveying the full P-FLAG message to those of you who identify yourself as gay.

Yes, Parents FLAG is an organization for which the primary purpose is to provide support and education to parents who are having trouble with their son's or daughter's gayness, but our supporting goals of education and information, and combating homophobia in the larger community, are essential. It is not only parents who need education. You who are gay need to hear again and again, from as many of us as possible, that we love our gay and lesbian children; that although your sexual expression of love may be different from mine, it is equally normal, valid and wonderful.

P-FLAG *needs* your involvement, and membership, and attendance at our meetings. *You* are why we exist. I wonder if my son-in-love had the impression that we sit around commiserating with one another, and only helping those who are there with a gnashing of teeth and tears. The best way that we can

help people who have new learnings facing them is to start where they are and move on as quickly as possible, so there *are* some heavy times, but we also share the joys of new-found learnings in a place that appreciates who, and what, our children are -- and we need the children there to share in learning with us, sometimes to teach us, and to help us continue to move on. Gay people may well have some learnings they can gain from parents other than their own.

So please understand that you are welcome, not only as visitors to P-FLAG, but also needed as active, participating members.

--Jean Durgin-Clinchard
P-FLAG 435-4688

G.L.R.C. Community News

The UNL Gay/Lesbian Resource Center will re-open January 12. Do something you can feel good about: a meeting for new volun-

teers will be held January 17 at 5:00 p.m. Call 472-5644 to volunteer your help. New volunteers can be helpful by staffing the center, typing letters or answering the telephone.

GLRC help students and non-students with a library, referrals, peer counseling, AIDS and STDs information, speakers bureau, roommate and employer referrals, and a reporting center for violence and discrimination. A new feature of the Center is a bi-monthly newsletter to let you know what's NU at UNL! Every semester UNL GLRC offers internships with the Experiential Education Office.

Meetings in January include:

- January 15 Movie: "Before Stonewall"
- January 22 Coffeeshouse. Come and let's get to know each other!
- January 29 Myths, Stereotypes, and Homophobia. Bring a straight friend night!

...continued on page 16

THE STAGE DOOR

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Future Announcements.**

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All of the above meetings are at 8:00 p.m. in room 342 of the University's Nebraska Union. One meeting per month will be social.

GLRC will receive a \$500 grant from the All-University Fund on January 20. The grant is specifically for AIDS and STD educational materials. The center submitted a \$1,000 grant application in December for its Library and AIDS Education Project.

Don't forget our auditions for the play "Torch Song Trilogy" on January 11 and 12 at 7:00 p.m. in the Center.

Future activities of the Center include: UNL Safe Sex Day on February 17, and Gay/Lesbian Student Month in March 1987.

Couples Newsletter Seeks Articles

Short articles and commentary are sought for *Partners: The Newsletter for Gay and Lesbian Couples*. Of particular interest are personal stories of past and present relation-

ships, as well as informational articles on legal, sexual, financial, and counseling concerns for gay families.

The newsletter, edited by life partners Stevie Bryant and Demian, is a resource and forum offering timely and concise news, features, media notes, and interviews. Its stated purpose: "*Partners* aims to provide practical information and ideas to help gay men and lesbians develop and sustain relationships that are strong, satisfying, and successful."

Partners is an eight-page monthly; available only by subscription for \$36 per year. To submit material or subscribe, write *Partners*, Box 9685, Seattle, WA 98109.

Programming Victory at UNL

On December 2, 1986, the UNL Union Board passed GLSA's proposal to create a Lesbian/Gay Programming Committee, 6-3 in favor.

The proposal passed University Program Council-City and UPC Executive Board before going to Union Board.

The Lesbian/Gay Program Committee Proposal must go before the Committee on Fee Allocations. The CFA meetings are on January 20 at 6:30 p.m. and the voting on the issues January 22 at 6:30 p.m. Both meetings will be held in the Nebraska Union. If the proposal passes in CFA, it goes before ASUN (UNL's Student Senate), Vice-Chancellor Griesen, and Chancellor Massengale.

GLSA needs the community's support of gay/lesbian programming. Please send letters of support to: ASUN UNL, Room 115, Nebraska Union, Lincoln, NE 68588 or Vice-Chancellor for Student Affairs, James Griesen, UNL, Administration Building #305, Lincoln, NE 68588. You can help by showing up at the Student Senate meetings or by calling Vice-Chancellor Griesen and offering support at 472-3755.

--Rodney A. Bell, II
GLRC Gay Director



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Features

An On-Site Visit with Lancaster County Health Dept. — Antibody Testing



Arlene Gibbon and Anita Dover, Counselors for the Lancaster Health Department

One of the most controversial issues surrounding the AIDS health problem is whether or not high risk groups should be tested for the HTLV-III (HIV) antibodies. Most gay and gay supportive physicians advise against taking the test because the results are inconclusive and can lead to unnecessary fears and anxieties. The best practice is to receive a complete physical including blood tests to accurately measure the body's immune system, along with practicing safe sex with all sexual partners to stop the spread of sexually transmitted diseases and infestations.

This article is written for the curious who wonder what the procedures are for testing or for those who are determined to take the HTLV-III (HIV) antibody test. Again, it is highly recommended

that this test not be taken. Agencies such as the State Health Department seem to encourage the testing more for statistical reasons. Also, the test is meant to protect the nation's blood supply and is routinely given to people donating blood and blood products.

I chose the Lancaster County Health Department because of its caring reputation and supportive nature. I interviewed Arlene Gibbon, RN, counselor with the department. Arlene is one of two counselors working directly with clients seeking the HTLV-III (HIV) antibody test. Anita Dover, RN, is the other counselor for the department.

The first step is to make an appointment with the Lancaster County Health Department. Arlene or Anita may be contacted

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Monday through Friday from 8:00 to 4:30 at 471-7800. The State of Nebraska currently has 10 on-site locations. The Douglas County Health Department is another site. Most of the sites in the State involve physicians in the locality to draw the blood. Arlene made note that only four of the sites offer counseling services. They include Lancaster, Douglas, Hall (Grand Island), and Scottsbluff counties.

The pre-test counseling entails trying to determine if the individual wants the test for valid reasons. Clients are given shortcomings of the test, which include false positives, false negatives, and what may influence the outcome of the test. Arlene noted, "We try to do some type of health history, determine why the individual thinks the test is necessary, and whether the person may be having some type of chronic illness." The individual may be referred to another agency or to their own physician. For example, the person may be having a problem unrelated to their fear of having been exposed to the virus.

Confidentiality is also explained. No identification is required and the individual may give or sign with a fictitious name. A signature is required to give permission to draw the blood. The lab slip is shown and explained. The lab slip is a reporting mechanism and only contains numbers. No names or signatures are located on the lab slip. In the future the lab slips will also contain some other demographics.

It is explained to the person what a positive or negative result means.

Arlene will tell clients that the results don't of themselves mean anything. She also will ask questions concerning possible reactions to the test as well as support systems available to the client.

After pre-test counseling has been explained, the individual can decide not to take the test or take more time before making the decision. "Some people come in with the idea of the test no matter what you may tell them," relates Arlene.

Also, before blood is drawn, the person is asked to read and sign a form describing the test and what the test does and doesn't do. This form also gives permission to draw blood. The person who decides to take the test is then taken to the lab where the blood is drawn. It is only a matter of 5 cc's being drawn from out of the arm, much in the same way other blood tests are taken. A post-test appointment is then set up, usually for two weeks following the test. Appointments are set up by first name only, together with laboratory numbers. Individuals are asked to use the same first name for all appointments. A post-test appointment involves the individual going to a private room with Anita or Arlene and going over the results of the test. The person is told whether the test came out positive or negative, and what the meaning of the outcome of the test will do for them in relation to their lives. Arlene strongly encourages person with negative results to use precautions against being infected from someone else, not necessarily only from AIDS, but from other sexually transmitted diseases. "If the results are positive, then we will sit down

with the person and explore how they plan to handle the situation." Arlene adds, "Are they seeing a physician regularly? Would they like to see another physician?" Having a complete physical is stressed and referrals to specific doctors can be made. There are physicians who are sensitive and have agreed to take people from the program.

A person can also be referred to a mental health professional if they appear to have problems handling a positive result of the test. The Lancaster Mental Health Center is based on a sliding scale fee, depending on income. Counselors are available through the center. The individual may also be referred to a private counselor or clinic, especially if the person is in, or has already sought counseling.

Persons taking the test must be 19 years of age or older; however, no identification is required and the person will not be questioned if they appear old enough. Persons under 19 are denied service unless they have parental consent. The antibody test to the AIDS-related virus does not fall under the STD law, which is why parental approval is necessary.

A support group has been established for people who are HIV positive or have been diagnosed with ARC or AIDS. The group is not a publicized group. Questions concerning this group can be directed to Arlene.

I was very pleased with the openness and sincerity expressed in the interview. Also, members of the staff are knowledgeable and sensitive about the problem. I don't recommend that persons take the test, but if a person insists on going to a site, as a mental health professional, I would refer them to the Lancaster County Health Clinic.

--Larry Wiseblood



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PFlag Booknotes — "Goodbye, I Love You"

Another parents' choice this month is *Goodbye, I Love You*, by Carol Lynn Pearson, 1986, hardback, \$16.95. This book is soon to be a CBS television movie.

Goodbye, I Love You is one of the finest love stories I've read in a number of years. Carol Lynn and Gerald Pearson, whose backgrounds were both Utah and Mormon, were married in 1966 in a moving, family-oriented service -- "sealed" forever by their love and commitment to each other and their church. The next eighteen years contain the highs and lows of any growing family of four children, busy husband, and writer-wife. Carol's talents as a poet and writer blossom into books, local fame, money, and continuing spiritual growth as she struggles with the problems of being a woman in a male-dominated society/church. Both Carol and Gerald struggle with the inevitable acknowledgement of Gerald's homosexuality and his love for Carol, the children, and the church.

I think this is a beautiful story, as it contains all the pain and love, growth and defeat of honest people trying their best to live up to their own expectations, but always having to redefine and redirect their needs as the needs of others clash with their own. Gerald's death in 1984 of AIDS is both tragic and triumphant -- tragic because death wins, but more triumphant because love remains and continues in the lives of his family and friends. Above all, their story is honest and forthright, worth anyone's time to read and re-read as we all struggle with ourselves and our place in the lives of others.



In a period of great agony in her life, Carol wrote:

I dim
I dim
I have no doubt
If someone blew I would go out

Later she added:

I did not.
I must be brighter
Than I thought

--M.O.M. of P-FLAG

Madame Zelda's Horoscope— Capricorn

CAPRICORN

(The Fish-Tailed Goat)

December 22 to January 19

Capricorns are the most serious of the star signs. Often accused of having no sense of humor (a trait that they seem proud of), Capricorns will prove the statement. You love a challenge and your zeal to accomplish an assigned task is a strong force. You are a proud sort and your dignity is a precious facet of your personality.

Capricorns are not always friendly. It is not that they do not trust people, but rather are cautious and look at friendship as a bond. Being thorough to assure that the friendship is sincere, they are the most loyal of acquaintances.

In love, Capricorn, you are very stubborn and would rather end a relationship than work things out if

they are not going your way. 1987 will be a good year for your love life. A present relationship shall grow immensely. However, about mid-year, you will have a spat that may end it all. Take some time to yourself and then, even though you may be right, make the first move to make up.

Business for you is good as it usually is. When you do have problems, it's because others are not taking their jobs as seriously. Lighten up. People love your smile because they don't see it that often.

Put your strong will to good use and you shall go far. Pisces, Aries, and Cancers are your compatible signs. You don't fare so well with Libras or Geminis.

Happy Birthday.

--Madame Zelda

"Bookshare" Offered to Area Womyn Soon

A new information-sharing service will be available to Lincoln womyn starting sometime in January. *Bookshare*, a book exchange network, will give womyn the opportunity to share books with other womyn who are interested in feminist and/or lesbian issues. With a \$5.00 annual (household) fee, each woman will receive a complete list of the titles that are available through womyn who will lend out books from their personal collections. The fee will also cover the cost of pick-up and deliver of books, postage for updated bi-monthly listings, and the eventual

...continued on page 20

"If only I had done
something sooner.



Before it was too late."



Safe Sex is for *your* life

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Call (402) 342-4233
or write P.O. Box 3512
Omaha, NE 68103

Nebraska AIDS Project

production of a *Bookshare* newsletter with book reviews and commentary.

According to one founder, "Some womyn have been concerned that they don't have many books to share. Several womyn with just a few books is all it will take." And, of course, you don't have to have any books to borrow books.

Bookshare is the result of an idea that has been tossed around in several womyn's organizations as a way to circulate books within the womyn's community. There has also been a concern that some womyn do not have access to feminist and lesbian writings, few of which are available at public libraries.

Bookshare will allow womyn to share their favorite subjects, for example, feminist science-fiction, with other womyn who wish to expand their interests.

The success of the *Bookshare* venture depends largely on the participation of womyn. If you are interested and would like more information, please contact Anita or Sandy at 476-0272 (evenings).

Gail's Hit List

January

1. *French Kissin'*
Debrah Harry
2. *We Connect*
Stacey Q
3. *Brand New Lover*
Dead or Alive
4. *Song In My Head*
M&M
5. *The Calling*
Ken Heaven
6. *Open Your Heart (Remix)*
Madonna
7. *C'est La Vie*
Robbie Nevil
8. *Change of Heart*
Cyndi Lauper
9. *Time Keeps Moving On*
Calvin
10. *World Domination*
Belle Stars
11. *Stand Up*
Hazell Dean

12. *Band of Gold*
Belinda Carlisle
13. *Limosine (Euromix)*
Hubert Kah
14. *Fingertips*
Sparks
15. *Gimme Gimme Gimme*
Erasure
16. *Razor Garden*
Hanover Fist
17. *Trick of the Night (#1 Remix)*
Bananarama
18. *Male Fraud*
Shawn Benson
19. *I Need Your Loving*
Human League
20. *Someone Like You*
Sylvester



Study on Violence in Lesbian Relationships

The Working Group on Lesbian Battering announces a research project on Violence in Lesbian Relationships. This study, conducted by a Philadelphia sociologist, Claire Renzetti, has been endorsed by the Working Group, which has served as an advisory board to the study since its inception. Victims and survivors of lesbian abuse are asked to complete a questionnaire on the violence in their relationships. The group needs your help to fulfill its goals of raising the community's consciousness about this problem and developing services for victims. To receive a copy of the questionnaire, send your name (or a pseudonym) and address to:

Dr. Claire Renzetti
5600 City Line Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19131

The Working Group itself has been meeting since September 1984 and has been involved in community education, improving resources for victims and survivors, and offering

a support group for battered lesbians. They sponsored a community forum on violence in lesbian relationships in April 1985. The group advocates with the community to provide safe space for battered lesbians.

For further information, you may contact Shawn Tovey at Women Against Abuse (215-686-7082) or the Battered Lesbian Support Group (215-592-4583).

Jerry Does the Valley



A Hanging Mannequin at a Texas Bar

Upon my return from McAllen, Texas and surrounding areas (the Valley), some people have suggested there might be a new video on the market -- "Jerry Does the Valley." Although I can't deny having a wonderful time, *The New Voice* doesn't print accounts of that nature.

I did find time to explore the gay community in the area and talk to others interested in the development of a gay community. McAllen, with its two gay bars, seems to be the gay center for miles around. The regulars are from 40-60 miles down the road. There are no organizations or groups. MCC representative from Dallas are looking into a study group in McAllen.

My host and I attend PBD's

...continued on page 21

nightly. It is a cruise bar with "Miss Bitch" swinging above the bar, three pool tables, and a patio. Drew, with his lover/partner, Glen, are open 8 p.m. - 2 a.m., Monday through Saturday, and 2 p.m. - 2 a.m. on Sunday. Drew is an artist with metal sculptures in St. Louis and on the Texas interstate. Drew is also a part of the gay bar owner's organization for the state of Texas. PBD's plays either radio or tapes, accepts Master Card and Visa, and has a jar of free rubbers.

The other McAllen gay bar is Bumpers. They play disco music and attract younger people. Their disco lights are the same that the roller-skating rink in Sabetha, Kansas had 10 years ago. (They would freak at The Max.) I understood that this bar is having trouble with minors. Texas drinking age went up to 21, and not everyone agrees with the law.

In Corpus Christi, we went to the Hidden Door. This bar was smaller than our Diamond and not nearly as nice.

While at the Hidden Door I talked to the editor of their newsletter. The problems *The New Voice* has are not unique! I also learned that MCC had issued a call to a pastor, but the woman had to refuse the position because her lover could not find employment.

The Valley does not have the organizations and groups that we have in the Omaha/Lincoln area, but they do have a good group of people striving to establish "community." I was fortunate to be visiting someone who was "in" with an aspect of the gay community, and we were invited to private parties.

While in McAllen, I met a young man from the Falls City, Nebraska area (my hometown). My first night back, I met a man from the McAllen area at The Diamond. The gay world is indeed a small world, and I am thankful I am a part of that world.

--Jerry Peck

Inmate Died During Sex Act

MASON CITY, IOWA - A pathologist, Dr. Bruce Hyma, testified in court on December 13 that Richard Vargas of Alden, Minn. died while performing oral sex on inmate Larry Fielding at the Cerro Gordo County Jail.

Fielding is charged with first-degree murder in the death last July of Richard Vargas. Fielding is serving three life sentences in Missouri and was at the jail in Mason City to testify in a Hardin County case.

Dr. Hyma told jurors that Fielding probably sat on Vargas' chest while Vargas performed oral sex. Dr. Hyma said Fielding was larger than the 18-year old Vargas, and Fielding's weight on Vargas' chest and neck may have stimulated a nerve in Vargas' neck that slows and sometimes stops the heart.

--*Omaha World-Herald*

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What's Hot!



Who doesn't love a man in a uniform? Whether he's the sultry fireman slithering down a firepole or a hot cop on the beat, he's a man in a uniform and the appeal is universal. Andre Fiset has produced two full-color calendars for 1987 as well as two provocative top-quality black and white posters. The two full color 10" x 14" calendars, *I Love a Man in Uniform* and *Dreamscapes*, are available for \$8.95 each. The two 22" x 28" posters, *I Love a Man in Uniform* and *Andre Fiset*, sell for \$4.95 each. Auto-graphed posters are available for \$6.95 each. Send orders along with an additional \$1.50 for postage and handling to Andre Fiset Productions, P.O. Box 1721, JAF Building, New York, NY 10116.

Traveling America, a quarterly newsletter for gay men traveling, and *Listings Report*, a gay men's bed and breakfast listing are a must for occasional travelers or persons who are on the road quite often. To obtain a guide by mail, send \$6.95 each to NPG Listings, Route 2, Box 11, Fontanelle, IA 50846-9702.

A new lubricant is on the market that is easy to use and claims to have an antibacterial agent that is more effective than monoxynol-9. Lubraseptic comes in an easy squeeze container and is odorless and non-irritating to skin or mucous membranes. Lubraseptic is a long lasting water-based lubricant that is safer to use as a sexual lubricant than oil and petroleum-based products. Further, it is odorless, non-staining and safe to use on rubber and latex materials. It is a highly recommended product. To order a 4 oz. bottle by mail, send \$6.95 plus \$1.50 postage and handling to Harriman Laboratories, Inc., 230 Marcus Blvd., P.O. Box 14248, Hauppauge, NY 11788.



Safe sex can be erotic and fun. This is fully illustrated in the new 1987 Safe Sex Calendar produced and published by *Gay Chicago Magazine*. The calendar offers quality and artistry. The black and white calendar is accented by color backgrounds. Calendars can be ordered from *Gay Chicago Magazine*, 1527



N. Wells St., Chicago, IL 60610. The cost of the calendar is \$10, plus \$1.50 for postage and handling.

What could be a more priceless gift than an erotic stained glass piece of art? Richard Vincent's first erotic series features original interpretations of the human form—combining the beauty of natural lines with the classic stained glass medium. The panels are handcrafted using different clear textures of glass for the body and tonal smoked grey glass for the background. To receive an order form, write to Richard Vincent Studio, P.O. Box 3696, Newport, RI 02840.



Letters

National Couples Group Support Local Effort

In a recent conversation with Jim Erlich, who along with his partner Rod, serve as Chaircouple of Capital City Couples, we were informed that some former member couples of the group were spending their time trying to discredit the organization that Jim and Rod are trying to build.

Let me assure you and all our brothers and sisters in the Lincoln area that the COUPLES National Network and its participating member groups take their work quite seriously. We are extremely proud of our overall contributions to the gay and lesbian communities that we serve. We started out with the idea of a local group for persons in a relationship here in Southern California and in two years it has grown into a national organization with an international outreach. We have member groups in ten U.S. cities and this month we announced our first international participant, COUPLE/New Zealand. We have "contact couples" in thirty-three cities and that simple idea we alluded to earlier has now grown into a dream that someday there will be a member group of The Network in every city possible.

We have worked hard to establish our credibility and we are very protective of that credibility. And we have worked equally as hard at getting the coverage of the gay and lesbian press that we feel this organization deserves. We have expended a great deal of time and energy in promoting the positive aspects of relationships, and it is extremely discouraging when we meet with resistance from within our community. We would not want to believe that the negative attitude we have heard about reflects that of the overall community in the Lincoln area. It is our hope that we can count on you and *The New Voice of Nebraska* for support of the work that Jim and Rod are doing.

Sincerely, Rick Schroeder
John Morgan
Chaircouple

Enough is Enough

I would like to thank Michael Ramas for sharing his feelings and insight concerning the high rate of alcoholism amongst the gay community.

There are alternatives to the bars and it is okay not to drink alcohol, but I don't believe it's realistic to expect bar owners to post signs which would take from their very reason they are in business -- namely, to make a profit. A bar is a business which has, as one of its services, the selling of alcoholic beverages to those who wish to purchase them.

What I would like to see, instead, is the individual owners and those who work for them, simply refuse to serve our gay sisters and brothers any more drinks when it is visibly apparent they have had enough. My friends and I were recently in a womyn's bar where two womyn broke some glass, were knocking chairs over, and behaving obnoxiously, yet they were continuously served drinks non-stop. It's real simple - "I refuse to serve you anymore. You've had enough. If you want to drink anymore, you will have to go somewhere else."

I know there are some places which even offer non-alcoholic beverages to their patrons, and I say, right on. What concerns me is my gay sisters and brothers looking for solutions to the problems in such non-supportive atmospheres as bars. There are so many other alternatives like support rap groups, rap lines, counseling, volunteering in organizations, etc. Learning to like ourselves is the problem.

It scares me to see my own so-called "feminist gay sisters" encouraging others to drink up as if there is no tomorrow. But I learned a long time ago, "A bar, is a bar, is a bar." We can care enough to say, "You've had enough. No more."

Patricia Hines

Insurance Companies Should Not Use Antibody Test

The following letter was mailed to the *Omaha World-Herald* in re-

sponse to an editorial.

Your editorial, "An Unwarranted Blindfold for Insurance Companies," suggests that insurability should be linked to the blood analysis for antibodies to human T-lymphotrophic virus type III (HTLV-III), the presumed etiologic agent of AIDS. We disagree with this suggestion for three reasons.

First, use of the HTLV-III antibody test on humans is medically unjustifiable. The only justifiable purposes for the blood test are screening donated blood and organs and for limited medical research. The test has absolutely no diagnostic or prognostic value. The antibody test cannot determine whether a person will develop AIDS. The test, with the limits of its own accuracy, only indicates past exposure but not the subsequent clinical course. The most current clinical data indicates that most individuals exposed to the virus will not develop AIDS. Therefore, there is no medical justification for using the test in insurance risk assessment.

Second, the antibody test has been used to violate individual rights and liberties protected by the federal constitution, including the constitutional rights of privacy, due process, equal protection, and freedom from search and seizure. Outside the insurance arena, the test has been abused to deny child visitation, employment rights, and admissions to schools, hospitals, and nursing homes. These abuses violate the federal constitution, as well as other federal laws such as the Education for All Handicapped Children Act and the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973. If an insurance company were allowed to use the test even against medical evidence, there is no guarantee which could be offered to protect against later violations of an individual's civil rights and liberties.

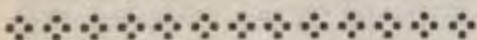
Third, insurance risk assessment should not turn on identification of initial risk groups, as your editorial suggests. The *World-Herald* would never suggest that blacks be denied insurance coverage because they, as a group, are more prone to suffer from sickle-cell anemia. Sickle-cell disease is a much more expensive disease to treat than AIDS, because

...continued on page 24

of the extended life-span over which the person with sickle-cell disease will need frequent hospital visits and intensive medical care.

For these strong medical, legal, and risk assessment reasons, the antibody test for HTLV-III exposure should not be used in assessing insurability.

--H.L. Kaufman, M.D.
M.E. Wojcik, J.D.



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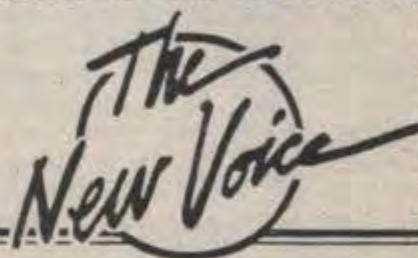
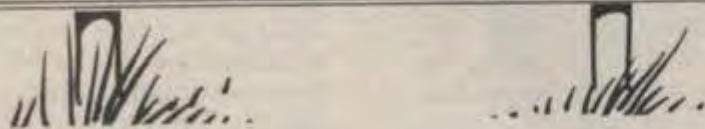


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- The Diamond*, 712 South 16th St., 342-9595.
- The Max*, 1417 Jackson, 346-4110.
- The Run*, 1715 Leavenworth, 449-8703.
- The Stage Door*, 1512 Howard St., 342-8715.

Lincoln Bars, Clubs and Lounges

- The Board-Walk*, 20th & O, 474-9741.
- Cherchez la femme*, 200 So. 18th (lower level), 474-9162.
- The Club*, 116 No. 20th St., 474-5692.
- Kelly's*, 200 So. 18th, 474-9962.

The New Voice



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- FEBRUARY—LOVE & RELATIONSHIPS
- MARCH—A SALUTE TO OUR ORGANIZATIONS
- "The New Voice" THIRD ANNIVERSARY
- APRIL—HEALTH CONCERNS

Gay/Lesbian Resource Directory

Nebraska Statewide

Affirmation of Nebraska. Box 80122, Lincoln 68501. United Methodists for Gay/Lesbian Concerns. Meets alternately in Omaha and Lincoln, second Friday of the month. Phone 476-9913.

Coalition for Gay and Lesbian Civil Rights. Box 94822, Lincoln 68509. Advocacy group which lobbies for lesbian/gay civil rights, provides educational presentations, publishes a newsletter and sponsors cultural and political programs.

Imperial Court of Nebraska. Box 3772, Omaha 68102. Social organization for the advancement of the gay society. Omaha meeting first Monday of each month, except holidays. Phone 733-1924.

Nebraska AIDS Project. Box 3512, Omaha 68103. Center for information, support, and coordination of AIDS related community efforts. Phone Omaha 342-4233 or toll-free statewide, 1-800-782-AIDS.

The New Voice of Nebraska. Box 80819, Lincoln 68501. Monthly magazine serving the gay/lesbian community. Staff meets in Lincoln the first Wednesday of each month. Phone 475-7740 or 345-2181.

UNL Gay/Lesbian Resource Center. Room 342 (Mail: Room 222), Nebraska Union, Lincoln 68588. Hotline: 472-5644. Social activities, AIDS education project, roommate referral, support groups, and library.

Lincoln

Gay/Lesbian Alcoholics Anonymous. Group meets every Friday. Phone AA central office for location, 466-5214.

Capital City Couples. Organization to promote positive aspects of alternative lifestyle relationships, create stability in those relationships, and to share and socialize with other gay couples. Phone 423-1374.

Community of Grace. Box 6881, Lincoln 68506. Interdenominational worshipping community of gays/lesbians, and those associated. Meets Sunday at 7 p.m. Phone 474-1205.

Gay/Lesbian Information and Support Line. Box 94882, Lincoln 68509. Referral and support phone line staffed by peer counselors. Phone 472-4697 in evenings.

Gay/Lesbian Student Group at Nebraska Wesleyan. Contact Dr. Mary Smith, NWU, 50th and St. Paul Sts., Lincoln 68504. Phone 465-2351.

Lambda Resource Center. 2845 R St. Meeting rooms, outpatient counseling, group activities. Phone 474-1205.

Lesbian Support Group. Contact Women's Resource Center, Room 117, Nebraska Union, Lincoln 68588. Informal discussion group for lesbians; all womyn welcome. Meets weekly. Phone 472-2597.

Lincoln Legion of Lesbians. Box 30317, Lincoln 68503. Lesbian-feminist collective providing a newsletter, confidential referral, and support groups for lesbians. Sponsors cultural and social programs.

Ministry in Human Sexuality, Inc. Box 80122, Lincoln 68501. Non-profit agency providing counseling, education, and supportive action for those seeking growth and understanding in the areas of sexuality and relationships. J. Benjamin Roe, Executive Director. Phone 476-9913.

New Directions Center. Short term individual counseling, support groups, classes, and workshops dealing with coming out, relationship issues, parenting. Sliding fee scale. Phone 476-2802.

Open Door Ministry. To provide orthodox spiritual counseling to all people in need at no charge. Phone 474-3390.

Parents/Friends of Lesbians and Gays. Box 4374, Lincoln 68501. Support group for parents, friends, and relatives of lesbians/gays. Meets fourth Tuesday of the month. Phone 435-4688.

Third Culture. Non-residential subculture dealing with issues such as coming out, social behavior, the gay lifestyle, suicide, and drug or alcohol abuse. Phone 474-1205 (Pat).

The Wimmin's Show. KZUM Radio 89.5 and 99.3 FM. 12 p.m. - 3 p.m. every Sunday.

Woman's Journal-Advocate. Box 81226, Lincoln 68501. Monthly feminist publication.

Omaha

Gay/Lesbian Alcoholics Anonymous. Group meets weekly. Phone 345-9916.

Dignity of Omaha. Providing common bonds through Mass and meetings for gays and lesbians and their friends. Regular Mass second Sunday of the month, 7 p.m., St. John's lower level. Phone 341-1460 or 345-9426.

Gay Parents Support Group. Support group for gay parents who have children. Phone 553-2308.

Lutherans Concerned of Omaha. Society of gay Christians and friends together to foster within a church climate of understanding, justice, and reconciliation among all women and men. Phone 592-1209.

Metropolitan Community Church of Omaha. Box 3173, Omaha 68124. Sunday worship at 10:30 a.m. and 7:00 p.m.; Tuesday evening Bible study at 7:30 p.m.; Wednesday Mid-week Program at 7:00 p.m.; Adult Sunday School at 9:10 a.m. Phone 345-2563.

Omaha Business and Professional Club. Box 24973, Omaha 68124. Networking organization of business and professional persons. Meets third Wednesday of each month. Phone 345-2966.

PACT (People of All Races Together). Box 3683, Omaha 68103. A gay/lesbian interracial organization that offers educational, political, and social activities. Phone 895-0865.

Parents/Friends of Lesbians and Gays (P-FLAG). Box 3173, Omaha 68103. Support group for the parents, friends, and relatives of lesbians/gays. Phone 556-7481 (Ruth).

Presbyterians For Lesbian/Gay Concerns. Organization meeting scheduled for February 28. Phone 733-1360 (Cleve).

River City Mixed Chorus. Box 315, Omaha 68101. Volunteer community chorus for gay/lesbian and gay/lesbian-sensitive men and women with the goal of musical excellence in performance. Rehearsals Monday evenings.

Two-Wheelers of Omaha (TWO) Motorcycle Club. 305 Turner Blvd. #8, Omaha 68131.

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