

sonoma county lesbian & gay alliance

NEWS

Free

Volume 2 Number 3

April 1979



Over 500 women marched in "Women's History On Parade" March 10 in downtown Santa Rosa. The march concluded Women's History Week, planned to coincide with International Women's Day, March 8.

--Photo by Pat Urquhart

Alliance Task Forces Form

The single focus and high energy of the SCRAP 6 campaign has given way to a more diverse and less formal Lesbian and Gay Alliance.

The Alliance, which meets at 7:30 PM every other Wednesday, (April 18, May 2, May 16...) at the Northern California Savings and Loan Building, 3rd Street and Santa Rosa Avenue, has begun to crystalize around task forces and interest groups working for the benefit of the Lesbian and Gay community.

At a general meeting on March 21 a number of task forces reported on their progress.

The Health Services Committee is establishing liason with county mental health services and is seeking to make information and openly Gay and Lesbian services available to the people of Sonoma County.

A Gay Liberation Tenth Anniversary Celebration and Festival is being planned for Sonoma County in early June which will feature a picnic, games, women's music and Gay men's entertainment for the whole community.

A task force is forming to coordinate the participation of the Sonoma County Contingent in the San Francisco Gay Freedom Day Parade on June 24.

Another task force is forming to help coordinate participation in the March On Washington set for October 14.

In addition to these task forces, the Alliance continues to maintain a fundraising committee, a site committee and a graphics media committee.

The Alliance also maintains connection with affinity groups such as Parents and Friends of Gays and Gays Under 21.

Washington March Talk

The National March On Washington will be the topic of discussion at the next open meeting of the Lesbian and Gay Alliance on Wednesday, April 18, at 7:30 PM.

The guest speaker will be Rita Goldberger, a Bay Area Lesbian act-

Conservative Family Group Surfaces in In County

By Adria-Ann McMurray

The Pro-Family Coalition, a Sonoma County group linked with a statewide anti-abortion and anti-ERA organization, emerged publically for the first time March 24 under the banner of The International Year of the Child.

The coalition, which claims its main purpose is to protect the home and family, presented a "Family Conference" at Sonoma State College which attracted approximately 40 well-dressed women and a few men to discuss such weighty topics as "The Warm Fuzzies of Family Life" and "Living with Teens and Loving It."

As innocuous as the workshops appeared to be, the bottom line politics of the group are not. Organized last August "out of the frustration of people out in the suburbs who feel no one even listens to them," the group originally called itself California Women's Coalition, according to founder Melva Wheelwright.

In November, the local group merged with the statewide Pro-Family Coalition, whose main emphasis during last fall's election was passage of Proposition 6, the anti-Gay initiative authored by conservative Senator John Briggs. The goals of this statewide organization include the following: "To stop the rampant growth of abortion in the state; elect morally concerned legislators, eliminate pornography and other moral indecency in the community; uphold the Constitution and help bring the nation to the United States of America that our forefathers intended it to be."

The PFC also "strongly opposes" the ERA and the March of Dimes. The latter comes under attack for its genetic research and testing for birth defects and implied advocacy of abortion.

Although the local PFC claims no affiliation with any religious or political group, Wheelwright estimated that at a recent leaders' meeting 80 per cent of the women present were Mormons. In fact, the state PFC was reportedly formed by California women who felt their minority opinions were not expressed during the International Women's Year conference in Houston, Texas in 1977. The most disgruntled group of women at the conference were Mormon women, who appeared to oppose practically every resolution that was passed.

According to Wheelwright the group sees itself as effective in its legislative lobbying on issues affecting the family, primarily through letter-writing campaigns. Telephone trees alert members of local and state issues requiring immediate action, she said.

PFC claims more than 600 members countywide.

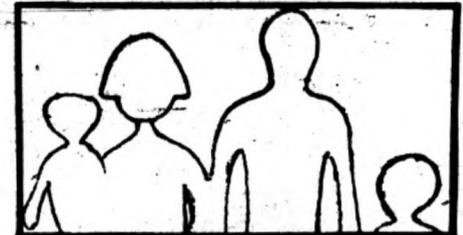
A group with similar goals, the Pro-Family Forum, recently formed in Petaluma with a core group of approximately eight women "who enjoy being wives and mothers." One of the founders, Pat Jackson, describes the group as "conservative and essentially pro-life," and on the issue of ERA, members range from "concerned about its vagueness to radically opposed."

This local group is affiliated with the National Pro-Life Forum, an anti-abortion organization that is linked with ERA-opponent Phyllis Schlafly's Eagle Forum.

According to Jackson, members were active in letter-writing in support of Prop. 6 and attempted to persuade San Francisco city officials to withdraw funding for the SF Gay Freedom Day Parade.

Some of Pro-Family Forum's other concerns are government interference in schools and family, the use of taxes got day care centers, and sex education.

After being alerted by a Contra Costa chapter of the national group, local members marched down to the Petaluma Public Library to make sure the book "Show Me," used in some sixth grade sex education classes, was not on the shelf "for just anyone to see." The book, which was been praised by many educators for its honest portrayal of human sexuality, is, according to Jackson, "nothing but child pornography." This incident led the group to take a closer look at "text books that might affect morality" and they plan on examining all the books used in the public school system over the summer.



The emergence of these "grass-roots" ultra-conservative organizations in Sonoma County appears to be part of any alarming nationwide right wing backlash. Their zeal to "protect and preserve" the family is fuelled by moral fervor and their targets are, among others, Lesbians and Gay men, abortion, and the ERA.

The groups appear to be, at this point, loosely organized and relatively low profile. They are growing, however, in sophistication and number. They are dedicated and they feel they have God on their side, a formidable combination.

Continued on Page 6

Second Gay Skate Scheduled April 16

The month of March brought the first in a series of new gatherings for the Gay community and all our friends: a monthly roller skating evening.

Roller skating is an activity which can be enjoyed by most of us, skilled or not. It's a sport which relies on cooperation rather than competition, so it's very relaxing and we can skate at our own pace. Those of us who are out of practice have a special advantage--there are plenty of helping hands for those who are unsure on their wheels.

Our first session was attended by about two hundred, both Gays and our non-Gay friends. There were men, women and children. Children are part of our Gay families and are certainly welcome here.

The Gay skate is presented by Doug Fiero with the cooperation of Cal Skate in Rohnert Park. This is a private party and is posted as such at the

door. Admission, including skate rental, is \$1.50 which is less than the cost at the public sessions. This money goes entirely to Cal Skate and is not making a profit for Doug or any other person or group.

Although this is a private party Cal Skate asks that we honor their usual dress code, which excludes white T-shirts, tank tops, halter tops and shorts. Also, gum can be a choke-hazard if one falls while chewing, so please don't chew on the rink.

The next session will be April 16, the day after Easter, from 8 to 10 PM.

Cal Skate is located at 6100 Commerce Blvd., Rohnert Park. Turn east on Rohnert Park Expressway from 101, turn left at the first traffic light, and look for Cal Skate on your right. For further information call Doug at 526-6077 in Santa Rosa.

Brown Bans Discrimination In State Employment

Gov. Edmund G. Brown, Jr. has signed an executive order prohibiting job discrimination against homosexuals on state government.

Brown made the disclosure during a midnight speech Saturday before the 27th annual convention of the liberal California Democratic Council, saying he would sign the order "proscribing and prohibiting in state service any discrimination against men and woman based on sexual preference."

In October 1977, Brown fired an avowed Lesbian in the state Health Department, Dr. Josette Mondanaro. Many believed her sexual preference was the reason she had been fired. She has since been reinstated by the state Personnel Board.

During his second inaugural address last January, Brown called for legislation to end job discrimination against homosexuals. But the legislature has so far

failed to pass such a bill.

Delegates applauded loudly when he announced he would sign the executive order, even though the council had earlier adopted a resolution urging Brown to issue such an executive order.

"He knew the right buzz words and they responded like a bunch of sheep," one delegate, Robert Camen of Glendale, complained afterward. --UPI

Gay Business Group

A Gay business association is being formed for Lesbian and Gay owned or managed businesses and professionals.

There has been tremendous input to date.

Please contact John Darragh at 584-9773 during business hours or 795-3973 evenings.

Gay Male Couple Adopt Child In Landmark Case

San Francisco--In what is believed to be the first instance of its kind, an openly Gay male couple have been granted the right to legally adopt a two year old boy.

The adoption of Robert David Dykes by pediatrician Dr. Albert Lanny Dykes and his lover, San Francisco Metropolitan Community Church pastor Rev. Jim Dykes, was approved by a Los Angeles Superior Court judge on January 12.

The couple was open about their homosexuality throughout the entire adoption process, and, according to Rev. Dykes, no objections to the adoption were raised on that basis.

Rev. Dykes told an interviewer in the *Philadelphia Gay News*, "As the social worker told us, 'You're making us a policy decision, you put it right on the line; what can we say about a minister and a physician raising a child. You're the stereo-typed epitome of our society.'"

Since there is no legal recognition of Gay couples under California law, Dr. Dykes is officially recognized as the child's parent, while Rev. Dykes--who took the surname of his lover several years ago--is recognized as Robert's guardian.

Although the couple have contracted "within our faith to maintain a long-term relationship," the adoption is still officially listed as a single parent adoption.

The adoption was arranged through direct contact with the child's natural parents. This was possible because California law allows independent adoption, which eliminates the requirement of an adoption agency as the only channel for adoption.

As part of the adoption agreement, the two men agreed to send yearly reports about Robert to his natural parents until the time he turns 16.

However, no face-to-face contact between the child and his natural

parents will take place until he reaches that age.

They say that they will educate their son about homosexuality "the same way we will about sexuality in general--when he asks questions, we'll answer the questions he asks."

The two men would like to adopt another child, and, says Rev. Dykes, "Our dream is that the next child will be a girl." --Gay Community News

N.Y. Health Conference May 18 - 20

The Second National Gay Health Conference will be held May 18-20 at Hunter College, New York City.

The conference is sponsored by the National Gay Health Coalition and the Hunter College Student Health Society.

The conference goals are: to clarify the health concerns of all segments of the Gay and Lesbian community and identify their needs for health services; to establish the rights, needs and obligations of Gay health providers on the job; to define the current federal impact on Gay people's mental and physical health and suggest future changes.

For further information, application forms, etc., contact: Ann Polivka, 1212 Ordway St., Berkeley, Ca. 94706 or call (415) 524-6625.

Chico Celebrates Gay Awareness Week

The Gay People's Union of Chico State University will celebrate Gay Awareness Week April 17-21.

Following a week of films, speakers and activities designed to increase awareness of Gay life in Chico and Northern California, a day of softball and picnicking is scheduled for Friday, April 20. The week will end Saturday, April 21, at Portuguese Hall, 14th and Broadway, Chico.

For further information, call the Associated Students Information at (916) 345-4073.

Coming Out: Send Us Your Story

Blurred vision, sweaty palms, dry mouth, headache, nausea, weakness of knees, flight of ideas and general anxiety are symptoms with no observable medical cause that have been known to occur simultaneously or in various combinations, in Lesbians and Gay men.

The onset of the symptoms is gradual and usually corresponds to an individual seriously considering the possibility of informing her/his parents or other significant persons of her/his sexual preference.

The severity of the symptoms accelerates rapidly after the decision to inform has been made and usually peaks at the point of the actual act, whether it be in person, by telephone or via pony express.

Coming out to parents seems to be one of the very hardest steps for many of us in validating our own lifestyle. For me the process took many months, during which time I suffered all the symptoms I described above. Time after time, I would sit down with pen and paper, write "Dear Mom" and then stare at the page having no idea of what to say.

I often thought my task would be lessened if only I had, at my disposal, "coming out" letters from other persons, that might give me courage, not to mention the possibility of a good lead in.

If you have a coming out letter



(in part or in whole) or stories that you would be willing to share, please send it to The Northern California Gay Media Project/SCLGA NEWS, P.O. Box 4801/Santa Rosa, CA/95402. Of course, names will be changed or omitted if requested. If there is sufficient response Coming Out will become a regular monthly feature.

Lesbians Sue Cops After SFPD Harassment

By Karen Ryce

Two Lesbians who were harassed and arrested by San Francisco police outside a women's bar in late January have had all charges dropped, pending 90 days without another incident.

The two women, Sue Davis and Shirley Wilson, were accosted by two policemen on January 21, as they were leaving a women's bar, according to Maureen Rafferty of Wages Due Lesbians, a group that has been working on the case. The women were thrown against the wall and handcuffed, Rafferty said, then brought to two different police stations where they were not given their allowed phone call or told the charges against them.

At the second station, they were verbally and physically abused, being yelled at and having mace sprayed directly into their faces. One of the women was put handcuffed into solitary confinement and the other placed in a cell with other women. When they were released in the morning, they were both seen by their respective doctors who documented how badly bruised their bodies were.

The two women and their lawyer have approached the legal aspects of the incident from two angles. The first was to have the charges against the women dropped. The charges were: 1. Resisting arrest, 2. Public drunkenness, 3. Failure to identify themselves. The second, was to file a civil suit against the city of San Francisco for compensation and damages for the two women.

Now that the charges are considered dropped, the civil suit is being launched. The procedure is to file a claim against the city; the city then has 90 days to reply before a lawsuit is filed.

In an open letter to Mayor Dianne Feinstein, February 15, 1979, written on behalf of Wages Due Lesbians, Rafferty stipulated three demands: 1. A public statement must be made reprimanding these specific actions taken by the San Francisco Police Department, thereby setting a pre-

cedent against all kinds of police harassment.

2. The charges against Sue and Shirley must be dropped. The general poverty of women makes it difficult to fight and win a legal battle. Sue and Shirley have been through enough without having to prove their innocence.

3. Compensation must be made for their losses--i.e. medical ailments and bills, loss of time on their paid jobs, and the excessive emotional stress they have had to endure.

The open letter was endorsed by approximately 40 feminist and movement groups in the Bay Area as well as across the country and England. Many of the local groups sent letters directly to the SFPD demanding that the charges be dropped. Rafferty said she believes the public pressure was responsible for the charges being dropped last week.

Feinstein's only response to the letter was to turn it over to SFPD Internal Affairs Bureau and to Police Chief Charles Gain.

"We are all refusing to carry this daily... harassment any longer."

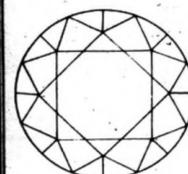
In the letter referring to Sue and Shirley, Rafferty wrote, "their situation is not an unusual situation for Lesbian women. In choosing to lead our lives independently of me, we often encounter harassment and violence. We know that the brutality Sue and Shirley received and the fear it generates is an attempt to constrain every woman's mobility and independence. Lesbian women are part of a world wide movement of women intent on ending rape, violence, and the general poverty of women that makes us vulnerable to this type of treatment. Like Sue and Shirley, we are all refusing to carry this daily burden of harassment any longer."

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The NEWS is published monthly by the Northern California Gay Media Project, Inc., a non-profit, tax-exempt corporation. The NEWS is produced by a collective of three women and three men. The collective is: Donna Canali, Sandy Lowe, Adria-Ann McMurray, (Robert) Melvin Muller, Karen Ryce and Pat Urquhart.

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We welcome contributions of articles from our readers. To insure return of articles enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelop.

When The Nazis Spoke....

"Don't let the fascist speak."
"We want to hear what they have to say."
"Keep them out of the classroom."
"Everybody is entitled to freedom of speech."

I am a child of America
a step child
raised in the back room
yet taught
taught how to act
in her front room.
my mind jumps
the voices of students
screaming
insults threats
"Let the Nazis speak"
"Let the Nazis speak"
Everyone is entitled
to speak
I sit a greasy-legged
Black child
in a Black school
in the Black part of town
look to a Black teacher
the bill of rights
guarantees
us all the right

my mind
remembers chants
article I article I
& my innards churn
they remember
the Black teacher
in the Black school
in the Black part
of the very white town
who stopped us
when we attacked
the puppet principal
the white Board
of education
cast-off books
illustrated with
cartoons and
words of wisdom
written by white
children in the
other part of town
misleading pages
caricatures
of hanging niggers
the bill of rights
was written to

protect
us

my mind remembers
& my innards churn
conjure images
police
break up
illegal demonstrations
illegal assemblies
conjure image
of a Black Panther
"If tricky Dick
tries to stop us,
we'll stop him."

conjure image
of that same Black man
going to jail
for threatening
the life of

THE PRESIDENT

Twelve Nazis made a second attempt on March 24 to speak in Santa Rosa, and were greeted again by hundreds of protesters.



every citizen
is entitled to
freedom of speech
my mind remembers
& my innards churn
conjure images
of Jews in camps
of socialists in camps
"Let the Nazis speak"
"Let the Nazis speak"

faces in a college
classroom
"You're being fascist too."
"We want to hear what
they have to say"

faces in
a college classroom
young white faces
speak let them speak
speak let them speak
Blacks Jews some whites
seize the bull horn
"We don't want to hear
your socialist rhetoric"
socialist rhetoric
survival

rhetoric

the supreme court
says it is illegal
to scream fire
in a crowded theatre

to scream fire
in a crowded theatre
cause people to panic
to run to hurt each other
my mind remembers
& now I know
what my innards

say
people
illegal to cause

to panic
to run
to hurt
there is
no contradiction
what the Nazis say
will cause

people
to hurt
ME.

—Pat Parker

Pat Parker is a Lesbian Feminist poet
who lives in Oakland.



Feminist Ethics: An Opinion

by Judy Freespirit

You are walking down a busy street or riding on a crowded bus when suddenly you realize that you are stark naked and everyone else is dressed, and they are all staring at you. You try to find something to cover yourself with but there is nothing handy so you start to run, but the best you can do is run in slow motion, no matter how hard you try. Well, this is the nightmare that flashed in my mind as I began to write this response to the questions posed by the Tide on "A Feminist Ethic." "If I really say what I think I'm liable to get crucified," flashed through my feverish brain. "Maybe I can write it under an alias," was my next ploy, "Or under my own name and soft peddle it . . . just a little bit." "But ah," droned an unwelcome voice of my conscience, "How can you do an unethical thing like that in an article on ethics? "Well put, you creep!" I thought. "Well, I'll write it and be damned, and let the criticism fall where it may. After all, if I'm not catching flack I'm probably not doing anything." "True," whined a small voice of dubious character, "But do you always have to be such a martyr? Let someone else put their necks out, then you can write and criticize them!" "Get thee behind me, pig," I cried.

Now I stand naked at your feet. Do with me what you will (but do remember about "sisterhood" and all those wonderful slogans the movement is so famous for, or write your own answers to the questions and join me.)

I have responded to these questions in the first person because they are my own subjective thoughts and ideas on the subjects. My intent was not to imply that these are the definitive answers to the questions. Well, here goes . . .

On Allies And Enemies

An ally is someone who is working against a common enemy and for the same cause(s). For example, I see all women who are working for abortion rights as allies in the abortion struggle, and all women working towards the elimination of sexism are feminist allies, all women working against racism and imperialism are allies in those struggles. The problem of definition arises when one attempts to define an ally in all-inclusive terms. I'm not sure that it is possible to use this term in this way. Ally seems to me to be a term to use to describe those are are fighting on one's side in a particular struggle. Thus, Russia and the U.S. were allies in World War II when fighting a common enemy, although ideologically there were serious differences which after the end of the war caused the two countries to once again become "enemies" in the "cold war." Ally then seems to me to be a temporary term for a specific battle or cause. I could be allied with any woman on a specific issue.

"Between allies, there is room
for disagreement."

Who is the enemy is more difficult to define. In my mind the enemy is (1) those institutions which serve to create oppressive class differences and which perpetuate those differences, i.e. white supremacy, male supremacy, imperialism, fundamentalist religions, and those who use coercion or physical force to maintain those systems, such as armies, police forces, psychiatrists, etc. and (2) those people in the ruling class and those who work for them to maintain those systems and institutions.

Now, that leaves a whole lot of people, the vast majority, who in my mind do not fit into either category. They are the majority of people who are potential allies, but who have not been educated, to see that it is in their best interest to ally

themselves with those who are attempting to overthrow oppressive institutions. These people are not necessarily my enemies, nor can they be called allies until and unless they take some action and-work towards goals which I see as mine. I see the majority of women as my potential allies although they may not in fact so be now.

The problem then becomes how to define those women with whom I share a similar political

"It is always ethical
to lie to the enemy."

perspective. I define myself as a radical Lesbian feminist, and would assume that any other woman who defined herself as such would share certain common political ideals, such as valuing cooperation instead of competition, a willingness to struggle against male domination, the right of Lesbians to create all woman spaces, a recognition of the need for radical change in power relationships between people, and a million other issues too numerous to list here. When women who self-define with the same terms find themselves having differences of opinion on specific issues or strategies, how would we interact ethically? That seems to me to be the essence of the ethical question in the feminist communities which needs to be addressed. Do we treat each other as "worthy opponents" in political struggles or do we treat those women closest to us politically as enemies when we disagree? The logical answer seems to me to be the former, but to my regret I have seen all too often recently the latter to be the case.

Between allies, there is room for disagreement. Difference of opinion on a specific action or strategy does not make us enemies, does not justify trashing, does not give one woman the right to sabotage or try to ruin the work or political reputation of another.

Sabotage

I don't feel it is ever ethical to "sabotage" a group, business or individual that publically identifies itself as feminist, Lesbian or Gay. If I have differences with these I feel it is ethical to discuss my differences with them and attempt to convince them with persuasion and reason, and listen to their arguments and weigh them seriously. If after considered communication we are unable to agree, I feel it is the ethical thing to voice my opinions and differences with those I consider my allies (the woman's community, in our press, etc.) but not to sabotage or expose our differences in the straight media, since I feel this could only hurt us with our common enemies.

Non Support

Obviously there are times when one would choose not to support some organization or individual for some reason of political principle. For example, a Gay organization which was blatantly sexist and oppressive to women would not be an organization I would choose to support. Ethically I would answer as above, I would attempt to change the organization with confrontation, and if not successful would not participate in or give financial or verbal support for their organization or projects. I would ethically give my opinion of them and their practices to other women who might be considering participating there so they could make a decision with that information available. If I felt the organization was particularly detrimental to individuals or the women's community in general, I would voice that opinion in writing in feminist and Lesbian media, again avoiding the straight press for the same reasons.

Honesty

It is always ethical to lie to the enemy. It is never ethical to lie to an ally regarding the issue on which you are allied. IT IS ETHICALLY IMPERATIVE THAT THE ENEMY BE CAREFULLY DIFFERENTIATED FROM OTHER PEOPLE, HOWEVER, AND NOT SEEN AS ANYONE WHO DOESN'T AGREE WITH ME ON A PARTICULAR SUBJECT.

Paid Jobs

Whether a job is paid or not seems irrelevant to me in terms of the ethics involved. Of course losing a paid job is a survival issue and more important in that sense, but it seems to me that the same criteria should be used. The procedure for firing should be set up in advance by the people working in the project or business and all should agree on it and understand it thoroughly from the outset. Attempts to change a bad situation should be made, criticism and self-criticism used in an attempt to alleviate the problem, but if no satisfactory solution can be found after an agreed amount of time that has been predetermined by consensus, then it may be necessary to ask someone to leave. Part of the ethics of this should include an understanding and exploration by everyone concerned of the dynamics of the situation. The oppression of the individuals involved also needs to be taken into account. There are times, however, when someone will be oppressed either way, either by being fired or the people working with them will be oppressed by their behavior which after struggle has not changed significantly. In this case it needs to be decided who needs to leave for the best interest of the organization, project or group.

I feel it necessary to say more on this subject than this article will allow. For now I will add that it is the kind and caring thing to do to avoid these situations, to be mercifully honest in the very beginning, and not be liberal about who you will and won't work with. We need to ask each other questions that would make clear the possibility of working together, attempting to define our similarities and differences before beginning to work together. We should work together only when there is no feeling of reservation. This meticulous care taken beforehand may help you avoid much pain and hurt feelings later on down the line. It is the responsibility of all parties concerned to talk absolutely honestly with each other before committing to work together, and it is the combined responsibility of all parties concerned when it doesn't work out and someone has to leave. The blame is never one sided and a recognition of this needs to be made since in truth all parties are more or less culpable in a conflict. In my experience I have done more harm by not telling someone honestly that I don't feel we can work together and by not listening to my own guts before making commitments. This goes for personal relationships as well as political and work commitments. I like to think of joining a group or taking a job as "getting married." If I take it that seriously, consider the ramifications in that light, I am more likely to make an enlightened decision.

NEW YORK CITY—The Lesbian Herstory Archives has announced the start of a Lesbian photograph drive "to end the legacy of lost faces." The group is urging Lesbians throughout the country to send photographs of themselves, friends, children, homes, pets and activities to the archives. Interested women can contact John Nestle or Deborah Edel at the Lesbian Herstory Archives, P.O. Box 1258, New York City 10001, or phone them at (212) 874-7232. —G.C.N.

Sonoma County Support Groups

Four support groups for Gay people and their friends are forming in Sonoma County. The NEWS is publishing this information along with an invitation to others in the county to notify us if you know of, or are interested in establishing, support groups or workshops for Gay people.

LESBIAN SUPPORT GROUP

This group is designed to provide support around issues of special concerns to Lesbians. It is being offered by a county agency. Groups will meet on Thursdays at 5:30 PM starting May 3 at Chanate Hall, 3333 Chanate Rd., Santa Rosa.

Sliding scale or MediCal.
For more information: Pat Lytle at: 936-3644 or Joan Odette at 864-2866.

GAY MEN'S RAP GROUP

Gay men interested in forming and participating in a local rap group can contact Mike Gansom at 795-6292.

LESBIANS AND GAY MEN IN STRAIGHT RELATIONSHIPS

This group is designed to assist Lesbians and Gay men who are involved in straight relationships such as marriage, parenting, friendships, etc. For further information call Steve Gomes at 546-2761.

PARENTS AND FRIENDS OF GAYS

This is a Sonoma County group for parents and friends of Gay people who seek mutual support, understanding and a way to back their Lesbian and Gay children. For information call 526-6344.

New NEWS Subscription Policy

Sorry, but due to rising costs of doing mailings, we can no longer continue to mail the NEWS to your home free of charge. The June issue will be the last you receive unless you complete the coupon below and send it to us along with the subscription fee.

If you appreciated receiving the News in the past, please give us your support now.

The NEWS will still be available free at various distribution points, many of which are listed on this page.

We regret that our budgeting limitations force us to consider all money received previously as donations.

One of the goals of the Northern California Gay Media Project Collective is for the NEWS to become self-supporting. We are actively working toward realizing that goal but mean-

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Another goal is to broaden distribution, especially into areas that have little or no exposure to the Gay press.

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Part Two:

Prop 6 And Grassroots Resistance

by Sandy Lowe

Grassroots organizing across the State of California defeated Proposition 6, the infamous anti-gay teacher initiative, last year.

Amber Hollibaugh was a member of California Outreach, a small group of progressive San Francisco Lesbians and Gay men who helped shape the political tenor of the campaign by disseminating information packets to neighborhoods, professional organizations and to small communities throughout the state.

The following article is the conclusion of a transcript of a presentation Amber made before a workshop on Gay community organizing at a recent convention of the National Lawyers Guild in San Francisco. Questions and answers follow Amber's talk.

I think that if we are really serious about doing progressive work, anti-sexist, pro-Gay work and really confronting things, then we have to be more open about that question right there. Not necessarily with all the answers, but really suggest that relationships are something that are very painful, heterosexual relationships in particular, and that we do know something about that and not pretend that we don't. I think that we do know a lot. I think that we have a lot to say about it and I don't think that we need to be apologetic and defensive, as if we don't know

heterosexuality. Goddam it, we do know heterosexuality; we all survived it. I think that there was an assumption a lot in the campaign that somehow we don't really understand heterosexuality. As a pervert you wouldn't really understand. It really blew me out.

This fundamentalist minister just smiled and called me a degenerate and pervert. They are crazed people. The smile never goes away. You can say anything to these people and they will smile their way right on through it.

The other thing that is important is that if you push them, they will expose their own fascism and they are fascists. That is not an overextension. I don't mean to use that word uncarefully. They are. A lot of their following is not, but they are. When you push them around sexual issues, I would a lot of times push them to say what they thought an answer to the homosexual problem was. When pushed like that, they will frequently tell you that they think that Hitler was right and they will say it right out there in the debate. That was important because I didn't want to leave the impression that we just didn't get along on this one thing. I think it is important to expose the basis of those kinds of assumptions and where they go because then you can confront the question of genocide and bring it out as genocide.

Since we are not very visible in the community, people are not only anxious but are able to ignore violence against us. I think it is up to us to confront that and say that murder is murder whatever you call it. We know that it is murder in our own communities and we know that our suicides are murders. We know that the beatings of Gay men and Gay women coming from bars or known parks or adult bookstores are murders. We don't think that it was an accident that 17 year old kids are out there beating someone to death. Or that homosexual women who refused to identify with men are raped, and beaten and molested.

We claim our communities. I think that that is a real important part of dealing with homosexual issues. When we talk about how to organize against these kinds of referendums, I think the main issue is to expand and confront sexual issues. We have to take a front role because I don't think that the rest of the left will. I think that the progressive movement in general has been frightened of dealing with it. The feminist movement sometimes has a relationship to it and sometimes doesn't, but we have a direct and immediate and necessary relationship to those questions, and to deny it means that we can't fight the genuine issues that oppress us.

Q: Is there any other observation or perspective that you think is important?

A: Yes. One. And that is that I think that we have the capacity to become an aggressive force over all, in terms of leading a lot of different issues. And very specifically, beginning to deal with racism in communities where that issue is never brought up by anybody but Third World communities. Because it is only in Gay communities where Third World and white people come together in a natural social way and have to deal with their racism to even co-exist in their own communities.

I feel that a lot is different in smaller communities in terms of Gay men and Gay women being together.

Continued on Page 8

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Grassroots Organizing In Rural California

Continued from Page 7

Third World people and white people being together. That's a really under-mentioned phenomenon that opens up potentials for dealing with issues because they're already on the agenda because of the way people live and what they have to deal with. Therefore, there is sensitivity to other people's oppression. So Gay men were much more sensitive around questions of sexism in smaller towns. They weren't nicer. They weren't less sexist, but they knew that there was something real particular about Lesbian oppression that was different from faggots, because they were closer to Gay women and they had close women friends and so they had to deal with their own sexism and that meant that they were much more receptive to sexual issues that affronted women in general, and specifically around children.

And it was the same for racism. It wasn't an abstract thing where someone who's a Lefty feels they have to talk about something. It was an issue that was vitally important because part of the accusation about being Gay in those small towns was that you hung out with Black people. You hung out with Chicano people. You went to one of those bars. And "one of those bars" didn't just mean faggot or queer. It meant there were Third World people there in large numbers. And so in order to deal with being Gay, you had to deal with assumptions of racism. It seemed to me to be a really important observa-

tion that we miss here in the city because the Gay community is separated in so many different sections. I haven't seen any evaluation of that after the campaign.

I felt that the way that things are always talked about is that the rural community is somehow more backward in terms of issues in general and the city is more advanced in the struggle. I don't think that this is absolutely a lie, but I think that in some really vital ways, it's really just the reverse. That the way we are polarized and separated in the city; the way that we are genuinely a ghetto inside of a ghetto means that we don't communicate, that we don't struggle in the same way. We don't see each other as allies.

In the rural communities, people really had to deal with issues differently because they were confronted with them more intimately in their personal relationships and in their social lives as Gay people.

Well, part of the myth about organizing in small towns is that people have hay in their teeth, and they're dumb, some really disgusting class and political assumptions. Whereas, my experience was that people just didn't have a lot of access to information in small places and were slowed down by that lack of hook-in to the way issues were being debated in the cities and some of the sophistication of how an issue shapes up or why. But people were incredibly responsive politically and

moving much faster than they were in the city; while people here thought that working against Prop. 6 in San Francisco meant going to a disco dance on Saturday night. They didn't want to go into precincts. They didn't want to face people. They didn't want to talk about being Gay. They came there to be Gay only with other Gay people.

Q: So then, the power of California Outreach was in its ability to get information out to people who had no ready access to it and who were ready to go.

A: That's right. People should understand that when we went out, we took an enormous amount of literature. We took out a journal called Gay Left, information on the early Homosexual Rights Movement, we took out information on socialism, and on women's oppression because we thought that people would be real interested. And they were. They were thrilled to get that kind of stuff. They didn't think we were laying anything on them. We didn't go out in that situation and say: you have to have this or we won't speak to you. People were clammering for information. They desperately wanted it.

Nobody took them seriously in the city. Nobody thought they were worth bothering with. And the truth of the matter was that they were absolutely ripe for an incredible political commitment over-all. The men were ready to move around sexism. The white people were ready to talk about racism. The Gay people were ready to

confront homophobia. It was in the city that this fight was much more pessimistic, much more jaded. It was in the city that Gay men fought over the crumbs of the Gay community. David Goodstein versus Howard Wallace in the fight between Gay capital and Gay labor. In other places, people not only compromised more principally but struggled with a lot more depth.

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