

# LAMBDA

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## Carolina Gay Association Newsletter<sup>®</sup>

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Volume II, Number 2

November/December 1984

### Gay Awareness Week Nov. 26 - 30

By the time this issue "hits the streets," Gay Awareness Week will be underway.

On Monday, Nov. 26, at 7 p.m. in the Carolina Union, Elizabeth Gurley of Parents & Friends of Lesbians and Gays will be speaking on "Coming Out to Parents." Anyone who attended the panel discussion after the film "Word Is Out" in October will remember Ms. Gurley for her humorous and well-informed comments.

The major speaker for the week will be Tom Chorlton of the National Association of Gay and Lesbian Democratic Clubs. Chorlton will be speaking on post-election gay political strategies on Wednesday at 7:00 p.m. in Gerard Hall.

Other programs include presentations and facilitated discussions by the North Carolina Lesbian and Gay Health Project on "Sex in the 80s," Rev. June Norris of St. John's MMC on "Gays and the Gospel," the Triangle Area Lesbian Feminists.

The social highlight of the week will be Thursday evening with Charlie Cochran at the Savoy Restaurant in University Square. The door will open at 9:00, and the cover charge will be donated to CGA.

Don't forget the dance on Friday, Nov. 30, at 8 p.m. in Craige dorm basement. A donation will be requested at the door.

Event times and locations are listed on the Calendar page of this issue.

-Richard

### Harassment on Campus A Gay Catamount Speaks

Those of you who are attending UNC-CH should consider yourselves extremely fortunate. Not only are you attending one of the finest schools in the state, but your campus community is rather liberal towards homosexuality compared to the campuses of other schools in the state.

I was not so fortunate. After my graduation from high school, I promptly enrolled at Western Carolina University in Cullowhee. I know what you're thinking. How could Cullowhee be thought of as liberal? Actually I didn't expect WCU to be liberal, but after living for many years in a small Western North Carolina town, I looked forward to any college campus as being more liberal than my hometown.

At any rate, my life as a freshman at WCU was not any better than it was as a high school student. Secrecy and unlimited discretion was the common practice of the almost non-existent gay community. There was no organization which could come close to resembling the CGA. I was one of the very few gays on campus who was out of the closet.

Those of us who dared to be publicly gay paid dearly for that openness. Membership in fraternities and other social groups was, of course, out of the question. Public ridicule was extremely common. I learned very early of the virtues of eating my meals during uncommon hours (see GAY CATAMOUNT on page 4)

### Southeastern Conference Returns to its Roots April 11 - 14, 1985

"The only annual regional gathering of lesbians and gay men in the United States." That's the way Virginia Apuzzo of the National Gay Task Force characterizes the Southeastern Conference for Lesbians and Gay Men, which will be returning to Chapel Hill next spring. The CGA will host the three-day confab which planners hope will draw 800 people from throughout the 14-state region.

The CGA last hosted the Conference in 1979, and 600 people attended.

The 1985 gathering will be the 10th anniversary of the Conference, which began in Chapel Hill in 1976. Entitled "Here Today and Here to Stay!" the 1985 Conference will in part focus on affirming our presence in the South and on our determination to continue organizing for (see CONFERENCE on page 2)

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Carolina Gay Association Newsletter

The Carolina Gay Association is an "officially recognized, semi-independent" student organization at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The CGA is funded by the democratic vote of the Campus Governing Council and through CGA fundraising activities.

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We welcome your comments, criticisms, and information. If you would like to be part of the staff, call the CGA office; if no Lambda staff member is available then, we'll return your call.

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CGA office is 230 Carolina Union  
Hours are:

Mon 10-6	Thurs 11-4
Tues 11-1, 2-4	Fri 10-4
Wed 10-2	

Phone 962-4401

(CONFERENCE continued from page 1)  
progress during these conservative political years. Some of the Conference events will also chronicle the last decade of Southern lesbian and gay organizing.

Since the first gathering in Chapel Hill, the Southeastern Conference has traveled to Tennessee, Georgia, Louisiana, Florida, and Alabama. It traditionally features well-known speakers and entertainers along with workshops on current topics of interest, book and craft booths, banquets, regional caucuses, and social events. The variety of events is meant to appeal both to activists and to those not involved with a group.

At the 1984 Conference in Birmingham, Alabama, speakers included Abby Rubinfeld of Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, Mike Rutherford of the Gay Press Association, Virginia Apuzzo, and Birmingham's Mayor Richard Arrington.

Arrington welcomed conferees to the city and credited lesbian and gay activists for helping bring positive change to the city. The mayor's administrative aide later presented the key to the city to musician Meg Christian at the major concert of the Conference.

Planning for the 1985 Conference began in April when CGA voted to bid to host the 10th anniversary. A survey of about 20 area lesbian/gay organizations was done to find the level of community support, and approximately 80% responded that they would actively participate in the planning.

Since then a Steering Committee, composed of representatives from across the state from lesbian/gay organizations and businesses, non-gay supporters, religious leaders, and legal and other professionals has been meeting to lay plans.

The next meeting of the Steering Committee will be Saturday, Dec. 1, at 10 am in the UNC-CH Carolina Union. Volunteers are welcome.

If you're unable to attend the Steering Committee meetings and want to contribute suggestions or if you want more information about the Conference, write:

Southeastern Conference  
P.O. Box 344  
Chapel Hill, NC 27514-0344



# Farewells to the Closet

## Reflections on an Outreach

November's strong, brisk winds cut through my jacket. I pulled my arms closer for warmth and trudged on through the leaves covering the walkways, making my way across campus for an appointment--an appointment I did not want to keep.

The day had not been going well. It started when I awoke alone on that very chilly morning in my big double bed, an all too constant reminder that I had not yet found a lover to share it or my life, and continued with a nagging headache and a scratch throat, which warned me a cold was about to pay me a visit. Now I was on my way to talk to a Health Education class about the one thing that made me different from them: my attraction to men.

Yes, I was going to talk to a class about homosexuality, and I was scared. This was my very first Outreach, and I was going to do it alone. How did I get trapped into doing this. Why hadn't anyone else agreed to come along with me? Was I really ready to come out to a group of complete, perhaps hostile, strangers?

After all, what did I know about being gay? It was only a short five months before that I had finally begun to come out of the closet. I could still count

the number of guys I had been with on one hand. There was still so much I had to learn about being gay! Yet, here I was, suddenly being put in the position of trying to explain just who I was, and that unexplainable question, why?

I questioned my commitment to the CGA. Only a few weeks before, I had reluctantly agreed to serve as treasurer for the organization, and that responsibility was already taking more of my time than I really wanted to give. Now, here I was interrupting my afternoon with yet another CGA responsibility.

I wanted to turn around and go back home to watch "Guiding Light." Yet, my feet kept moving forward. Despite my many other faults, I do keep my word. I had promised to do this Outreach, so I kept on going.

All too quickly, I reached my destination. Panic struck. There was still time to turn around and leave. But, somehow, I summoned my courage, took a deep breath, and said, "Oh help," just as Maria in "The Sound of Music." I grabbed the doorknob, turned it firmly, pushed the door open, and entered the classroom.  
(see OUTREACH on page 6)


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## CGA, GALA Kickoff

### Football Meet with Food and Injuries

On Sunday, Oct. 28, several members from GALA, a gay student group at N.C. State, met a large group of CGA's finest for a combination picnic/football game. Rain threatened to dampen the "gridiron" at Umstead Park, but the sun prevailed for this festive event.

After we introduced ourselves, we broke out the food and sat down to a filling--if not entirely healthy--lunch.

The football kickoff followed lunch. As we chose captains and began picking teams, some of us were reminded of times when we were growing up and were always the last to be picked for a team, if we were picked at all. Realizing this common fear of being the last one chosen, we never let it get down to only one person; we simply grouped off.

The game was intended to be injury-free, two-hand tag. But we soon got more competitive, and the passes got longer and the "tags" rougher. The game ended in a tie, so there were no losers.

The next day, however, at the CGA office, Cathy hobbled in on crutches, and I came in with a finger splint. Others complained of sore muscles and bruises.

I guess we once again destroyed the stereotypes. We're not a bunch of wimps; we have our injuries to prove it.

-Jim

(GAY CATAMOUNT, continued from page 1) in order to avoid harassment in cafeterias. Church attendance was unthinkable; we black sheep were not desired in any flock. I quickly discovered that the fastest way to empty a communal dormitory shower of its occupants was for me to walk in. I used this discovery to my advantage at times when all of the stalls were in use.

During the year that I spent at WCU I suffered no bodily harm due to my sexuality. Considering the aforesaid, this fact is nothing short of amazing.

Property damage was, however, an entirely different matter. My car suffered most of all. Before I left the campus at the end of the year, my car had been vandalized ten times, my dormitory room lock glued shut three times, and last--but not at all least--the word "queer" was permanently engraved on the same unfortunate door.

After my experience at WCU, I have decided that I am much better off in my hometown. Since my return home I have enrolled in the local technical college and am pursuing a two-year degree in electrical engineering.

So the next time that those of you at UNC-CH have some sexual slurs or unkind remarks hurled in your direction, remember me and the other gay Catamounts and never take for granted the liberalism of your campus and the constant battle that is required to keep it that way.

-M.R.

## Drug-resistant STD

A drug-resistant strain of gonorrhea has cropped up again in Durham, according to Dr. John Fletcher, director of the Durham County health department, as quoted in an Aug. 1, 1984 article in the Durham Morning Herald.

Fletcher said about 25 cases of the sexually transmitted disease have been reported since May but that he does not expect the current outbreak to be as extensive as last year's outbreak which affected some 200 people.

He reports that the usual penicillin and tetracycline do not cure the resistant strain and that doctors instead must use spectinomycin.

Since its discovery the strain has been reported in 16 states, as far west as Oregon, and has been found in both heterosexuals and homosexuals.



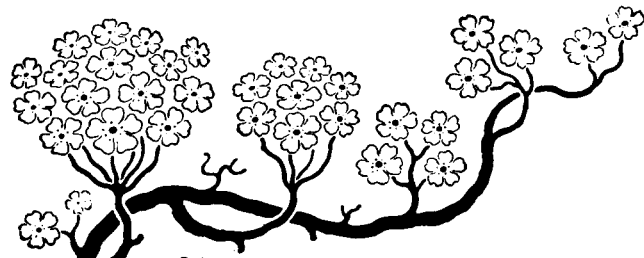
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We don't want to lose you, so when you receive the "lavender reminder" return it along with \$3 and we'll extend you.

Additional contributions are very helpful. But CGA and LAMBDA are not tax exempt.

# Their Crime, Our Punishment

## A Personal Account of Anti-gay Violence

Surely one of the most tragic consequences of social homophobia is the violence against gays known as "fag bashing." As a gay man who has had the misfortune to be bashed twice by homophobic thugs (sorry, I can't bring myself to use a nicer phrase), I'd like to share my personal perspective on this troubling problem of our times.

First, the nasty details. Four years ago, I left a gay bar late at night and hopped on my bicycle for the ride home. I never made it. A carload of thugs trapped my bike against the curb at a red light, and before I could escape, one of the car's occupants shot me with a tear gas gun. Utterly disabused of the quaint notion that these fellows might hold any pacific intentions towards me, I struggled to get away. It wasn't easy. My glasses fell off, I was blinded in one eye, and could barely see with the other.

Of course a half-blind fairy on a bicycle was no match for four thugs in a V-8 1970 Chevy, and in seconds they had cut me off again and piled out of the car for a one-sided rumble. I experienced a moment of pure terror as a fist came my way, the sort of terror I learned possesses a victim when he realizes that something terrible is about to happen and he can do nothing to stop it. My last sensation in a blind abyss of pain was of a crash landing on my chin on the cold February pavement.

When I regained consciousness, I found myself in a wheelchair in a hospital ward, one eye all sealed up and for all appearances gone for good, the other still stinging with the tear gas. From what I could see, my clothes were drenched in blood. "Do you know who you are?" "Where are you?" "Do you have Blue Cross?" "What's your policy number?" So came the questions, relevant and absurd.

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. . . I NO LONGER HAD ANY ILLUSIONS THAT POLICE WERE WILLING TO EXTEND A PROTECTIVE OR RETRIBUTIVE ARM TO A GAY . . .

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I was thrown up against an x-ray machine, then wheeled frantically down the hallway to an ophthalmology clinic. I thought to myself, at least I was lucky enough to be bashed practically on the doorstep of the world-famous Massachusetts Ear and Eye Infirmary. But I reproached myself bitterly, thinking, "I lost an eye for a chance to get laid."

At the clinic they pried my sealed eye open (you can imagine the pain), found it was still there, but that it had broken through the socket floor (a "blowout fracture"). Over the next few weeks I had cause to wonder at both the fragileness of

the human body and its remarkable ability to recover from severe trauma. Slowly that eye opened up, giving me double vision at first, then months later--miraculously it seemed--restored sight.

The stupidity of the criminals in using some credit cards they had stolen from me to buy gas for their cars enabled me to track them down through the auto registry. To this day I know the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of my assailants. Yet even more shattering than the actual assault was the refusal of the city police department to make a serious investigation of the case, much less any arrests. After having practically solved the crime myself, I simply proved an embarrassment to police detectives who evidently felt that I had gotten what I deserved at the hands of the "enforcers of the contemporary morality."

I went on with life, enormously sobered about "crime and punishment" as it applied to gay people. My story might have ended here, had not a much less serious assault this past summer served to provide a puzzling postscript.

This time I was traveling in a car, riding down the main street in Provincetown, a well-known gay resort. While I dozed off, the driver and another friend in the back seat chit-chatted about the young men on the street. "Did you see that blond, Charley?" "Yeah, but he's got to be straight."

A moment later, said blond youth was at the window of my car seat and battering me around. "You were looking at me," he said, educating me about a "crime" I didn't know existed and which I didn't "commit" anyway.

The irony of the comparison to the earlier assault struck me keenly. Now I was sitting inside a car, trapped by a seat belt and unable to crank up the window, being bashed by a pedestrian! After promising to "knock" my "head off next time," the assailant stopped his attack.

Other than being convinced of the utility of buying power windows for my next car, I found myself at a loss over this incident. I no longer had any illusions that police were willing to extend a protective or retributive arm to a gay, so a complaint seemed utterly futile.

On the other hand, I still search for the "politically correct" response I feel I failed to make. Surely gays have not been put on earth to serve as convenient punching bags either for crazed thugs or uptight youths, least of all in a gay resort, where the simple instinct for self-respect seems to demand a stand for our "turf." So I still wonder, what are we to do? What worse things are in store when it becomes clear that we can be beaten up with impunity?

## Health Project Services

The North Carolina Lesbian and Gay Health Project is in the process of establishing a telephone health care referral system and an AIDS support network.

### Health Referral System

The health care referral system will help gays and lesbians who are looking for health care providers who are both competent and sensitive to their needs. Some 157 different health care providers were recommended to the Project by respondents to the Project's health care survey in 1983. All 157 providers were contacted to request permission for inclusion in the referral service. Fifty-nine of the 79 who replied gave their permission. A list of these 59 providers has been cross-referenced by name, locality, and specialty. These providers include medical professionals, such as doctors, nurses and chiropractors, and mental health professionals (psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers and counselors).

The health care referral system should be operational by late November. Persons calling the Health Project will be asked to call back after seeing the recommended provider so that an evaluation of the visit can be obtained, enabling the Health project to revise and update its files.

All referral work will be confidential, and the names of the callers will not be used on the evaluation form.

### AIDS Support Group

The Health Project has also established an AIDS Support Network. Living with Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome and related problems requires both learning to deal with traumatic clinical aspects and to handle changes in living necessitated by AIDS and its treatment.

The purpose of the AIDS Support Network is to help during the restructuring and rebuilding of one's life, so that the non-medical needs of those with AIDS can be met as can their medical needs. The Health Project's goal is that no one in North Carolina would have to face AIDS alone.

Among the services offered by the Health Project for people with AIDS are legal counseling, social services advocacy, and limited financial assistance for emergency, non-medical expenses.

Most important is the buddy network that provides companionship, emotional support and assistance with the chores of daily living.

Compared to the urban centers, the number of AIDS cases in North Carolina is not large. According to the Centers for Disease Control, only 17 North Carolinians (see HEALTH PROJECT, on page 8)

(OUTREACH continued from page 3)

The teacher greeted me immediately and was quite friendly, putting me a little at ease. I sat down and anxiously waited for the rest of the students to arrive, wondering if I would make it out of that classroom alive.

God, what was I going to say? What tiny fragment of any outline for my talk had been in my head had suddenly vanished. Was there still time to escape before I made a complete fool of myself?

Finally the other students arrived, and I was introduced. I began nervously, stumbling over my words at first. But I began to relax soon; the students seemed genuinely interested in what I had to say, and none seemed to have weapons or be overtly hostile.

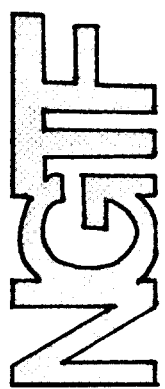
Before long, I was talking about personal feelings, being more frank with them than I had anticipated. I told them about the awkwardness and sense of being different that I had felt throughout high school and about that puzzling obsession I had for a married man with whom I had worked for two years and the many ways I had sought his attention. I told them of my desperate desire to find that "right little girl," hoping it would make everything in my life fall into place, thus ending that annoying confusion about myself I'd always felt.

I shared with them the long, near suicidal, depression I had felt because my life didn't feel "right." And finally, I talked about the burden I felt lift when I accepted my sexuality and began to come out, the freedom I felt when I no longer had to deny that I found a guy attractive. I told them about the happiness I felt when I discovered a whole, beautiful new world that had been around me the entire time.

Suddenly, my time was up. Had an hour and a half really passed? It only seemed like thirty minutes. Don't make me stop now, I thought, I'm on a roll.

Yes, that hour and a half I had so grudgingly given up was over, and it had been a wonderful experience! I felt so much stronger, so proud of myself, so glad to be gay. The round of applause I received was all the thanks I ever needed.

-J.M.



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The Book Corner

Growth and Awareness with Other Women

Other Women by Lisa Alther. Alfred A. Knopf, Publisher. New York, 1984. \$15.95.

Every month I spend 30-40 minutes reading the rather boring blurbs sent to me by my book club. Imagine my surprise and delight when I recently came upon--stuck on the back page no less--a synopsis of Lisa Alther's new book Other Women.

Having worked in bookstores for more than two years and a self-admitted bibliophile, I was familiar with Ms. Alther's earlier works, Kinflicks and Original Sins. But I had never read them, despite their provocative titles.

As I read the book club's blurb, which describing the main character, Carolina Kelly, as a 35-year old emergency room nurse who still looked for the love and acceptance she never got from her parents, I thought, "Ho-hum, another novel about finally growing up and learning to be sophisticated.

I was wrong, and what stopped me in my tracks was the line which ended a list describing Caroline's dissatisfaction with her life stating that she had problems with her lover, Diana.

What? Surely a misprint, I thought. But once again I was wrong, and after reading Other Women, I found that this is a book whose purpose is to tell the story of a woman's search for self-love and acceptance and not a book which uses Caroline's sexuality as a major plot line. Being a lesbian is just another part of what she is.

Briefly, the plot of this book is as follows. Caroline Kelly has always been a helper--a lesson well learned from her social-worker parents. But at 35, she suddenly realizes that her life is all coming apart and she herself needs help. She has tried many things and roles in her life: loving daughter, faithful wife, dutiful mother, medical healer, and general savior of humanity. After a rather boring marriage and a polygamous relationship in a commune, she now lives with her lover Diana, though in a now celebrate relationship. Everything she has tried has turned out wrong and she now turns to psychotherapy, but not without a struggle.



There follows the real story; Carolina discovers herself through the help of Hannah Burke, a confident and successful therapist. Hannah also benefits by the relationship in that she is moved to examine the true self she has been hiding for years. Caroline's hunger for understanding forces Hannah to face the bad experiences she has shoved aside from her past: her parents' abandonment, the failure at her first marriage, and the death of her first two children. Caroline and Hannah become alternately patient and therapist for each other until in the end both have broken through their self-imposed defense and enriched their lives.

This book appealed to me because, like Caroline, I am a lesbian. But I'm also many other things. I still have many thoughts that deal with sorting out who I am as a woman and a lesbian, but I also think about my job, my family and all the problems those entail which don't deal directly to my lesbianism. Like Carolina, being a lesbian is part of what I am, and it infuses everything I do and am to a point.

But this book stresses one woman's problems in dealing with what she is as a whole person--and isn't that what it's all about?

-Kim T.

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## Administrative Coordinator's Report

The first report from "the blond on the couch" went so well that I was practically begged to write about the goings on here at the CGA office on a regular basis. Reluctantly, I agreed.

Our membership list continues to grow (now over 70 people) as we come to the end of the semester. We've had more coverage in the Daily Tar Heel (DTH) and more attention by preachers in the Pit than ever.

You should've seen the time Cathy, one of our co-chairs, ran into the Pit proclaiming that she was a "whole person." A minister immediately descended upon her, casting out demons and leaving her, in her words, "devoid of any sexuality at all."

But that didn't keep Cathy out of the Pit. On the day of Democratic Unity ("we shall overcome Jesse"), she spoke for almost a half-hour on gays and politics. I know; I heard two homophobes in one my classes talk about it.

The CGA name change issue continues. A committee was formed to solicit ideas via the gay press. Something definite will be coming out in January. We'd still like to know your opinion on the name change, so drop us a note.

The October CGA meeting left a DTH reporter completely confused. I helped her out afterwards, and she still wrote a confused story for the front page. The meeting was highlighted by a visit from representatives of Student Mental Health who are forming gay support groups.

People in the office now are talking about Gay Awareness Week and the invitation we got to have a float in the Homecoming Parade. (Sorry, but this blond wouldn't ride on it if you paid me; there wasn't a couch!) But the ideas never really got off the ground, and Robert's bicycle never hit Franklin Street. Too bad there's no homecoming queen this year.

We had a week-long visit from students at Oberlin College. It was a great chance to see a view of gay life at a liberal, private school.

During the Campus Y's Human Rights Week, Raleigh lawyer John Boddie talked about "Privacy Rights and the Crime Against Nature Statute," and Student Television produced a feature on the CGA. Robert, Ann, and I came out to all of Village Cable's viewers! There was also a reading by area gay poets, and we had a more-than-fun potluck at Kim and Mary's.

Listen for the "Lavender Report" on WXYC radio during Gay Awareness Week, and, until the next issue, keep those letters coming.

-the blond on the couch

# Glenwood Park

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(HEALTH PROJECT continued from page 6)  
have been classified as true AIDS victims. Several of these have already died. And this figure does not include a number of people with AIDS-related conditions.

Since February 1984, the Support Network has provided assisted 5 patients and their lovers and families. Their support ranged from walking dogs to providing shoulders to lean on and cry on.

Contact the North Carolina Lesbian and Gay Health Project by calling 286-0079 in Durham.

## Attention Front Runners

Interested in running with other gays and lesbians? Several of us have been meeting for a few weeks for a moderate workout around campus.

We'd like others to join us. Sign up in the CGA office.



# Having a Gay Old Time

## Growing older . . . and better

One social scientist has called the elderly "the minority to which we all hope to belong one day." If nothing else serves the purpose, the inescapable fact that we will all get old unless we die sooner should temper the all-too-common discriminatory behavior of gay men--and to some extent, lesbians too--known as ageism.

"Being old" is a relative thing of course. I remember being made to feel old at the time I came out at age 25. As I myself grow older, I find friends my age self-defining a "desirable crowd" with ever more generous parameters. The age at which others are deemed "over the hill" creeps upward, from 25 to 30, 35, 40.

For many, there is a merciless aesthetic curve which seems to reduce the numbers of individuals who appear attractive in terms of purely sexual desirability. Notwithstanding the possible validity of the assertion that gay people of any given age group tend to keep themselves more attractive and in better shape than their straight counterparts, ageing does take its toll, and none of us is exempt.

So ageism has for all of us both a contemporary and a future relevance. Regardless of how any of us choose to relate to older gays now, we have to hope for happiness when we become older gays ourselves.

The problem has both a narrowly sexual aspect and a broader social dimension. Since gays already fall under social disapproval for same-sex relationships, we would appear to be freer than others to transcend the age limits of socially-condoned sexual partnerships.

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"THE VARIETY OF OUR EXISTENCE CAN ONLY BE ENRICHED IF WE REACH OUT TO GAY PEOPLE OF ALL AGES."

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Sometimes this is done very successfully, but often gays find they share one of those "retrograde" social beliefs which holds that sex is "right" only between coevals. Intergenerational sexual relationships, straight or gay, frequently come under harsh social disapproval. It is as if some sort of ancient taboo was being violated. Indeed, in the case of gays, such relationships often provoke a level of hostility which must be counted as one of the fundamental reasons for social homophobia.

To be sure, as the gap in age between partners widens, many real differences appear. As we ourselves get older, it is not a little disconcerting to discover we have our differences not only with those older than ourselves but also with an emerging younger generation. As pollsters

discovered this year, this phenomenon has major implications for our nation's politics. These differences (often epitomized by musical tastes) can also provide barriers to friendships between younger and older gays.

Older gays have the justest cause to complain when they find themselves excluded not just from sexual relationships with younger gays but even from friendship or simple conversation. In the long run, I think the younger gays lose the most from their ageist discrimination.

Many of us take considerable pains to assemble circles of gay friends to replace the straight acquaintances who have rejected us or who no longer seem suitable as intimates. I think it is a good idea to avoid choosing these friends through an "aesthetic porthole," i.e., by setting rigid standards of superficial appearance for those with whom we deign to associate.

The variety of our existence can only be enriched if we reach out to gay people of all ages. There is a special joy in knowing gays of the age of our natural mothers, fathers, uncles, aunts, older brothers and sisters. The intimate warmth one feels towards loved relatives is enriched by the possession of gay sensibility by their counterparts in these new circles.

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### INDISPENSABLE CONTRIBUTIONS

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To demonstrate the point, I think it's worth mentioning just a few of the indispensable contributions of older gays and why younger gays should be grateful for them.

For starters, older gays provide models of survival. As we get older, the "legitimate" excuses for remaining unmarried become fewer, and our exposure correspondingly greater. The benevolent assumptions of the heterosexuality of young men and women in their 20s turn to suspicions when they reach their 30s and often harden into convictions when they are in their 40s. Older gays frequently have to endure profound social contempt, aggravated by an unsympathetic attitude towards the sexual needs of older people generally. Unless social attitudes change drastically, we too will have to survive these challenges, and so we have much to learn from those who are facing them already.

Older gays provide us with our history and traditions as a subculture. Like primitive cultures, our modern subculture is largely dependent upon oral tradition for a sense of our past.

(see GAY OLD TIME on page 13)

## November's Views

# Sonia Johnson: A Woman for a Change

On Friday, Oct. 5, Mary and I joined about 75 other people, mostly women, in Hamilton Hall to hear Sonia Johnson--Mormon turned feminist, and Citizen's Party candidate for President.

Touted as the "most charismatic leader of the feminist movement," Johnson proceeded to prove that statement and charmed this member of the audience more than just a little. She lifted me up and out, above and beyond my already raised consciousness.

Have you ever heard someone speak or read an article that encapsulated all your beliefs, both realized and subconscious? That is what Sonia Johnson did for me that night. Here was a woman, disillusioned with the Democratic as well as the Republican parties--"dinosaurs...leading us into the tar pits" she proclaimed them. Any why? Because both the Democratic and Republican parties are patriarchies, run by white collar, heterosexual, white men. That much was realized on my part. Being a woman I remain sensitive to the ways of the patriarchal world. Being both a feminist and a lesbian, I have struggled in my own ways to battle their system. I am not a violent person, and I have not always been personally comfortable with some of the more radical acts of my sisters; I chose instead to approach it through my writing and lifestyle.

But I am not so sure anymore. After Nov. 6, I realize I'm much more angry than I knew.

But a month earlier, I saw listening to a woman take my thoughts and shout them to the world. She spoke of the sweet job of having the world take you seriously, as a woman. I have known that joy with a few people--some men, mostly women--and it is sweet indeed.

She also blamed sexism as the cause of the world's problems by setting the standard for world politics. She said, "The oppression of women is the archetypal oppression... It gives legitimacy to other forms of oppression...in the Mid-East, El Salvador."

Her words flew out and met thoughts already in my head and heart, giving them life and the will to fight. With just this writing six weeks afterward, I feel a renewed sense of strength--and fear, as well.

Sonia Johnson also spoke of the violence against women in the forms of rape, incest, and pornography. I felt the chill within myself which must have been matched in others sitting around me. Listening to her stories of violent male oppression, I felt scared and unprotected--just as they would want me to feel. Once again the desire to fight back calmed that fear. What a debilitating feeling fear is. I heard her urge us to remain unified as

women. We are not alone, and we are strong. She spoke of the nurturing, healing aspects of women and the women's movement. "A saving movement," she called it, one without which we are doomed.


Johnson has been accused of running on a narrow platform, but she responds that "feminism is an entire world view, a philosophy, a value system." I know that the love of women and all things womanly is strong in me and always has been, stemming from the love I feel for my mother, who remains in my mind the strongest of the strong. How could I be anything but a lover and admirer of women when the first woman in my life was who and what she was and continues to be. I keep wishing my mother were there with me to hear Sonia Johnson speak instead of back at her home.

Leaving Hamilton Hall that night, feeling strength and exhilaration, I thought of what Sonia had said to us at the end of her message: "Patriarchy destroys us all because it teaches men to hate what is 'womanly' in themselves... They hate women because they hate the woman in themselves."


Once more she had taken my thoughts and given them voice. I wish I could adequately describe what she did for me that night. I'm just now beginning to realize and understand it myself. I cling to her words of hope and strength that she cushioned her inspiring speech with. I am assimilating what she said, both known and unknown to me, and out of it I am becoming a more whole person. I only hope it is in time.

-Kim

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## “The Same Sex (Homosexuality)”

(A sermon delivered at The Community Church of Chapel Hill, by Gordon R. Dragt, Sep. 23, 1984; reprinted with permission)

Aside from their extraordinary contributions to human progress and happiness, what did the following people have in common: Erasmus, Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Christopher Marlowe, King James I of England for whom the King James Version of the Bible is named, Sir Francis Bacon, Thomas Gray, Frederick the Great of Germany, Margaret Fuller, Mary Emma Wooley, Tchaikovsky, Nijinsky, Proust, A. E. Housman, T.E. Lawrence, Walt Whitman, Edith Hamilton, Henry Jamaes, W.H. Auden, Willa Cather, and Bill Tilden?

If you identified all of these persons who contributed to the positive good of the world as homosexuals, then you were right! And why do I bring up this subject in church...on Sunday...in a sermon?

I bring it up because I believe the once unmentionable has become unavoidable. There are ministers in our nation's churches and on our nation's radios and televisions claiming, as coming from God, the judgment that gay women and men are not only different, but sinfully different; gay men and women are slandered, excluded, isolated, and kept from having recognized ceremonies to celebrate meaningful and commitment relationships. I don't know how believing, feeling, reasoning people can avoid being aware, these days, of the hurt and loneliness experienced by our homosexual sisters and brothers. I believe there has never before been a time when the unmentionable subject has become so unavoidable.

But I also bring up the subject for another reason--one that is much closer to our own backyard. There is no North Carolinian and no one living in Chapel Hill-Carrboro who can avoid it. Every newspaper in North Carolina carried the story about the involvement of homosexual persons in the Hunt campaign. And everybody who listened to the second Helms-Hunt debate heard Helms cast an accusatory finger at Hunt. The most appalling thing about that, it seems to me, is that instead of affirming and applauding the inclusion into the political process of this once excluded segment of our state's diverse and pluralistic citizenry, many reporters treated it as something the Hunt campaign should hide, or definitely play down, or even something for which the campaign should feel ashamed!

And then in Orange and Chatham counties people are confronted bi-monthly with these sorts of distorted and biggoted statements in a local aspiring news commentary: "I will kill the faggots with kindness," wrote the self-righteous editor of the paper. In another issue he wrote: "They objected to my calling them a fag.

I told them that in the real world that is what they are called, along with many other terms like pervert, deviate, pansy, queer, and a bull dyke for the ladies...I just simply think," he wrote, "being a homo is a sin...I do not want to see those people in jobs where they may prey on little children or others. I do object to seeing our governor accept money from these people when he calims to be a good Christian...!"

Now I know most people don't take that paper too seriously...but the words hurt, nevertheless! I bring up the subject today because I believe it is time for us to stand up and to publicly say: "It may be legal, but it is WRONG TO BEAR FALSE WITNESS LIKE THAT AGAINST ANY PERSON AND ANY GROUP OF PEOPLE! I believe it is time for us to stand up and publicly affirm the gay women and men in this community as our neighbors, and as our sisters and brothers!

It seems that all through history, some group or another has been singled out as unworthy to be our neighbor. We look down upon them as less than fully human, and they are robged of their respect and the opportunities the rest of us enjoy. We ostracize them, we assault their dignity, we tear down their pride. And because we keep them at an arm's distance, and don't really listen to them, we never have to get to know who they really are as people and as human beings, who are contributing citizens of our commuity and our society.

If the homosexual is my neighbor, the Bible commands that I shall not bear false witness against that person. And if I am not to bear false witness against gays, then, it seems to me, I must do my best to find out the truth about homosexuality, and I must do my best to understand what the gay person is really like, so that I will not be guilty of imagining that he or she intends evil toward me or my children. It seems to me, if we claim to have any sense of religious conviction at all, then there is no way we are given permission to violate the commandment: "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor."

The Bible has a whole lot of things to say about how we should treat our neighbor, but none of them is repeated more often and with more force and clarity than the plea to "Love your neighbor as yourself." Just to make sure that everybody understands, the biblical authors repeat the love-formula eight times--and each time it is re-stated it is accompanied by the explanation that love of neighbor is THE summary of all that God requires of us human beings! Love of neighbor--that's it! Everything else is extra! It is THE universal requirement of God! Love of neighbor takes precedent over all other (see SERMON on page 12)

(SERMON continued from page 11)

biblical commandments and guidelines that arise out of a particular culture or out of a particular situation.

I am always amazed at how people sometimes latch onto certain passages of the Bible, in order to condemn another person or another group of people. Often when this is done, there is very little integrity involved in taking care to interpret the biblical passages within the contexts in which they occur.

The story of Sodom and Gomorrah is a good example. The story is often used as a damning indictment against homosexuality. Yet, with a little research, one will readily discover that biblical scholars are far less clear about what happened there than are most contemporary evangelists and self-proclaimed newspaper prophets! The Sodom story says nothing at all about the homosexual CONDITION. The only real application in the story to homosexuals would have to be a UNIVERSAL one: homosexuals, like everybody else, should show hospitality to strangers and should deal justly with the poor and the vulnerable; and homosexuals, like everybody else, should not force their sexual attentions upon those unwilling to receive them. The story is an indictment against sexual violence and injustice and inhospitality--an indictment which is to be applied to gays and straights alike! When interpreting the Bible, it is important to be able to identify what is the MESSAGE, and what is the CULTURAL SETTING of the day. We have to also remember that the people of the Old Testament were a hard-pressed minority and, understandably, they were concerned that their future be insured. They didn't want their people to die out. So, for survival and political reasons, procreation was the main sexual emphasis in relationships. They then made it into a religious norm in order to assure its adherence among the people!

The Apostle Paul makes this point about misusing Scripture to condemn: "You, therefore, have no excuse," he said, "you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge the other, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things!" Or to put in different words: CONDEMNATION IS A BOOMERANG! Fortunately, for us, though, so is loving acceptance a boomerang! Whatever we do to our neighbor, for good or evil, we do to ourselves.

But who is my neighbor? Jesus was once asked the same question. He answered it by telling a story. He said there was once a man who was beaten by thieves and left lying along the roadside. A priest saw the man's plight, and later a Levite. Both appeared sympathetic at first, but both chose, instead, to remain uninvolved. Finally, a Samaritan (an outcast in that culture!), took pity on the man and, at great personal inconvenience and expense, helped him to safety. Jesus put it to the questioner: "Which one of these was the neighbor to the unfortunate man?" The

questioner had no choice except to acknowledge that the Samaritan who had shown mercy was the REAL neighbor. Jesus' reply was simply: "Go, and do as the Samaritan did! Show mercy!"

I find it interesting that Jesus did not define the concept of neighbor by geographical closeness, nor by race, nor by religion, nor by nationality, nor by political philosophy, nor by sexual orientation--but only by need, and by response to need! Anyone who crosses my path and needs my help, my support, my affirmation, my acceptance--is my neighbor! And I am neighbor to anyone to whom I give assistance--to whom I show mercy and understanding, and to whom I respond in a positive way! And as Jesus said to the questioner: "Do that, and you will live!"

Psychologist George Weinberg says, before society will be able to recognize gay men and women as neighbors, it will first need to deal with its own HOMOPHOBIA, that is its own FEAR of homosexuality. He says, the most basic of these fears, is to accept homosexuality, more and more people will CHOOSE to become homosexual. But if sexual orientation is simply a matter of choice, why are there so many gays in a society that rejects, and makes fun of, and punishes homosexuality? Paul Gebhard, Director of Indiana University's Institute for Sex Research, states that in his studies he has never known of anyone who is homosexual by choice. The only choice, he says, is whether or not to accept one's sexual orientation. And that means, of course, the CONDITIONS of gay people is as morally neutral as the CONDITION of straight people! Given proper support and recognized opportunities for commitment relationships, homosexual persons can express their affections and their relationships as ethically, morally and responsibly as heterosexual persons! In determining human and ethical expressions of one's sexuality, it is not the laws of biology we need to consult...but the law of LOVE! And that, it seems to me, is THE fundamental biblical message!

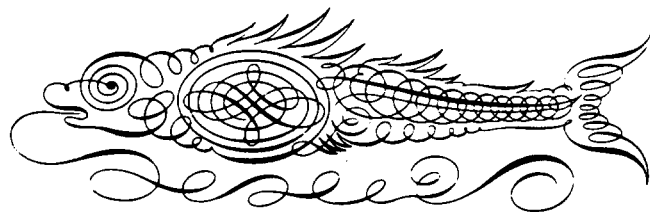
I think it is up to straight church people to reach the same position regarding gays, that we reached regarding other people in our society. They're different--that's all! And if their difference bothers us--I guess that's OUR problem! What we've come to recognize is that just as THE BLACK PROBLEM turned out to be a problem of white racism, and just as THE WOMAN PROBLEM turned out to be a problem of male sexism, and just as THE PROBLEM OF LEFT-HANDEDNESS turned out to be a problem of THE RIGHT-HANDERS, so THE HOMOSEXUAL PROBLEM is really the homophobia of many of us heterosexuals!

Now I know that gays have hangups--so do straights! I'm aware that there is promiscuity among some gays, but I seriously doubt if it is any more than (see SERMON on page 14)

# Calendar of Special Events

## November

### GAY AWARENESS WEEK



- 26 Elizabeth Gurley of Parents & Friends of Lesbians and Gays presents "Coming Out to Parents." 7pm, 211 Union.
- 27 "Sex in the '80s: Get What You Can, Not What You Don't Want," program sponsored by the NC Lesbian/Gay Health Project. 4pm, 226 Union
- Presentation by TALF (Triangle Area Lesbian Feminists), 7pm, 209 Union.
- 28 "Coming Out in the Black Community," a program dealing with the special problems of minority gays. 4pm, 210 Union.
- "Gay Political Strategies after the Elections," presentation by Tom Chorlton, Nat'l Assn. of Gay & Lesbian Democratic Clubs. 7pm, Gerard Hall.
- 29 "Gays and the Gospel," presentation by Rev. June Norris. 6pm, Toy Lounge of Dey Hall
- Join others in a CGA benefit with Charlie Cochran at the Savoy Restaurant, University Square. 9pm. Cover charge (to benefit CGA)
- 30 Blue Jeans Day! Wear blue jeans to show your support of gay liberation.
- CGA dance, basement of Craige Dormitory. 9 pm. Donation will be requested at door.

## December

- 1 1985 Southeastern Conference Steering committee meeting. 10 am. UNC-CH Carolina Union. Volunteers welcome.
- 1 TALF meeting at Durham YWCA, 809 Proctor Street. Potluck at 7pm, program (discussion about S&M) at 8.
- 3 & "Torhsong Trilogy" at Duke Univ. Union. For info on CGA group discount, call 962-4401.
- 8 Massage Workshop in Durham, for couples and friends (men and women). Fee \$10. Register by Nov. 30; call M. Hawk, 942-1009.
- 14 LAST Raleigh's Women's Coffeehouse. Farewell Party. Bring a baby picture and current photo for ID contest. Bring party food or drink. Fee: Mbrs \$2, Non-mbrs \$3
- Happy Hanukkah!  
Giddy Winter Solstice!  
Merry Christmas!

(GAY OLD TIME continued from page 9)

Doubtless countless collections of diaries, letters, and gay ophemera have been quickly consigned to the trash when discovered among the personal effects of deceased gay aunts and uncles by embarrassed straight nieces and nephews.

Since our written history is liable to this sort of capricious destruction--and our position as a despised subculture mitigates against much of anything being written down in the first place--what we know about our past is handed down by word of mouth. If you've never done it, try stimulating the memory of an older gay friend who has lived her/his whole adult life as a gay person. You will be in for a real treat as you learn that gay life did not begin with Stonewall.

Older gays (generally) provide the venture capital which makes possible many of our gay commercial enterprises. Bars, bookstores (respectable and otherwise), restaurants, guest houses, resorts require lots of money and hard work. Since few younger gays have the necessary financial resources, we must remain dependent on the preceding generation to provide us with the "playgrounds" for our social amusement.

Finally, though many younger gays may not care to find out, older gays have the considerable benefit of sexual experience. Like most physical activities, people become much better with practice. Admittedly a large part of the sexual thrill derives not so much from how well something is done as from the perceived desirability of who is doing it (otherwise we might all find it a lot easier to be straight!). Yet for those who can set aside the worst excesses of aesthetic snobbery, some delightful experiences lay in store.

-T.R.

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# News Notes

## TRIANGLE HOMOPHOBIC MAILINGS

About 300 people gathered on the UNC-CH campus on Oct. 24 for a rally and candle-light vigil to protest a pre-election wave of hate mail aimed in part at gay administrators and faculty on the campus. The rally followed a concert by feminist singer Holly Near.

A group calling itself the "Triangle Educators for Christ" sent a letter to 81 educators at N.C. Central University, N.C. State University, and UNC-CH, calling on them to remove from "bookshelves, textbooks and teachings" the writings of such "crazed homosexuals" as Homer, Sappho, Horace, Shakespeare, Satre, and Eleanor Roosevelt.

Another letter, mailed about ten days after the first, was sent to Dr. William Friday, president of the UNC system and to some 29 deans, department heads, and faculty members. This second letter, signed by "Southern Christians for Helms" threatened to publish a list of supposedly gay and lesbian faculty and demanded that all university employees be given lie detector tests. The letter praised the efforts of Senator Jesse Helms and Landmark editor Bob Windsor for launching a campaign to "end this endless filth that is draining the sap from the moral fiber of our youth."

Friday denounced the letter at an Oct. 19 meeting of the university's Board of Governors, saying the university must be "assertive to the rights of faculty members to be free of abuse." He said he had turned the letter over to the State Bureau of Investigation.

Dr. Doris Betts, chair of the UNC-CH Faculty Council, also made a statement to the Council denouncing the letters.

Claude Allen, sole spokesperson for the Helms campaign, also denounced the second letter and said he suspected it was part of "a cruel hoax" to hurt the Helms campaign.

(SERMON continued from page 12)

among straights! Dehumanization is degrading in ANY sexual orientation! (That is the message of the Sodom and Gomorrah story.) But I do believe straights bear a special responsibility. Just as blacks used to be labeled shiftless by whites who made sure there would be no reward for their diligence; so straights call gays promiscuous while denying support and public opportunities for stable, commitment relationships!

So enough of these fixed certainties and self-righteous proclamations! "If," says William Sloane Coffin of Riverside Church, "what we think is right and wrong divides still further the human family, then there must be something wrong with what we think is right." Enough of this cruelty, hatred, insensitivity, and punitive legislation toward gay people! I have always thought of the biblical authors as people who were involved in stretching their horizons--let us not now narrow ours. It has been said that a mind once stretched by a new idea can never return to its former shape. If that is so, then let us this morning gladly listen, learn, read, reflect, meditate, and pray--none of this is easy--until with the Apostle Peter's conviction we can make a similar confession: "Truly I perceive that God shows no partiality, but in every sexual orientation anyone who believes in God and who does what is right is acceptable to God."

What St. Augustine called the obligation of the preacher, I have always thought is the obligation of every one of us: "To teach what is right, to refute what is wrong, and in the performance of that task, to rouse the careless and to conciliate the hostile."

May we HERE, be granted success in THIS ministry of reconciliation in THIS community!

This sermon is based largely on the following resources:

1. Letha Scanzoni and Virginia Ramsey Mollenkott, Is the Homosexual my Neighbor?, Harper & Row
2. John L. McNeill, The Church and the Homosexual, Sheed, Andrews & McMeel
3. Gerre Goodman, George Lakey, Judy Lashof, Erike Thorne, No Turning Back: Lesbian and Gay Liberation for the '80s, New Society Publishers
4. "Christianity and Crisis," issues of April 4, May 30, and June 13, 1977.
5. William Sloane Coffin, Jr., "Homosexuality"
6. "The Christian Ministry," March 1979 issue.

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