

A Publication by the Lexington Gay and Lesbian Services Organization

GLSO NEWS JANUARY 1994

ATTENTION GLSO SUBSCRIBERS

The GLSO mailing list will be turned over to the Community Mailing list after March 1, 1994. If for any reason you do not want your name on the community list, please call Mary Crone and request that your name not be turned over. If you or your group would like to be part of the decision making for how the Community List is to be managed, contact Ann Olliges for the time and place of the Service Network meeting.

Between the Acts!

Finally— "Coming Soon" a play by Debby Klein brought to you by Between the Acts. Mark your calendar for March 11th and 12th. Look for details in the February issue of the GLSO News or call Barb at 277-3119.

AIDS HOTLINE

Lexington.

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Fairness Campaign of Lexington January Events

Martin Luther King, Jr. Parade.

The Fairness Campaign will be participating in the parade on Monday, January 17th in Lexington. Exact times are not known at the time of this writing, but in the past, the parade has begun at 11:00 am, and organization for those groups participating will begin at 10:00 am. As soon as more information is available, it will be announced on the Information Line: 275-7812.

Meeting for January.

After the parade, Fairness will have their first meeting of the year. After the successful campaigning for George Brown, Jr. in the City Council race against a Right Wing Extremist candidate, Fairness is optimistic about the upcoming year, and how to help integrate gays, lesbians and bisexuals into local areas. At the meeting, we will be discussing how to proceed with this task, and with similar events in the coming elections and political decisions. At this time, we will also be discussing the Steering Committee, which will have approximately 2-4 openings in 1994. In addition, announcements will be made concerning events taking place in 1994, such as "Stonewall 25" march on the United Nations in New York to further the equal rights cause. If you do not wish to volunteer, we would still like your input on these and other issues.

**Have you been discriminated against
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276-5383**

GLSO Discrimination Project

GLSO NEWS

Published Monthly by the
Lexington Gay/Lesbian Services
Organization

P.O. Box 11471, Lexington, KY 40575

GLSO Annual Dues - \$15.00

Dues for Couples - \$20.00

Newsletter Only - \$10.00

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I've been involved in on gay civil rights issues since I was a teenager. For over twenty years now I have tried to stay aware of our current enemies. Their faces keep changing, there was Senator Joe McCarthy, J. Edgar Hoover, all the way through Anita Bryant and Senator Sam Nunn. I have relished every confrontation with the homophobes, and I applaud every inch of progress that we've made. In fact, I think the progress we have made and are making is unbelievable sometimes, I could not have imagined how far our dialog would go in 20 years.

I sometimes read the e-mail correspondence of the UK Lambda members and the GAYLIBN list and I can sometimes recapture that same enthusiasm that I once had. Let me tell you, as a group, I think we have made some remarkable progress, and I am proud that I have been a small part of what is happening.

Yet, when a member of the community takes his or her own life I realize we still have a way to go yet. I have lost many friends and acquaintances to suicide over the years, more than I've lost to AIDS. And of course, besides explicitly suicidal behavior there is all the ways that we can kill ourselves indirectly, drinking or drugging, consorting with abusive companions or practicing unsafe sex. I've come to realize that despite the many faces that homophobia and intolerance have taken in our lives, the very worst face is the face that looks back at us in the mirror every morning. Until we can conquer our own internalized homophobia, we can never really be free.

-Peter T.

SISTER SPIRIT NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT

I first met Brenda and Wanda Henson seven years ago at the Southern Womyn's Music and Comedy Festival. They worked in and later managed the crafts area, selling a variety of jewelry, stones, and other items to support their work in Mississippi. They started the first feminist bookstore in their state and found it to be a community focal point for a variety of causes. They started women's discussion groups, coming out support groups and an HIV support network. Four years ago they incorporated as Sister Spirit, a non-profit organization and bought 120 acres of land near Overt, Mississippi. Camp Sister Spirit is described as a feminist cultural retreat where volunteers have set emergency food and clothing banks, worked to combat illiteracy, provided hospice for PWAs, offered support of battered women and more. Lesbian and straight women work together to meet some of the needs of the community.

Not surprisingly, they have had to deal with opposition and harassment from the surrounding community. Recently, several religious leaders have organized community members to protest against Camp Sister Spirit and have urged the county Board of Supervisors to intervene and limit the women's use of the land. At recent town meeting, Clint Knight, (as quoted in the **Hattiesburg American**) said "These people can pick up our little girls and take them to this place and do whatever they want to." Another community meeting is planned in Overt on January 4.

The National Gay Task Force and the ACLU are working with Wanda and Brenda. They need both financial and moral support. Letters of support can be written to the Jones County Board of Supervisors, Courthouse, Laurel, Mississippi, 39440. Financial contributions and letters can be sent to Brenda and Wanda Hanson at Camp Sister Spirit, PO Box 12, Overt Mississippi, 39464. I have known these women for many years and I've seen them return any profits from their work to community organizing. I think they are very deserving of any contributions of time or money you can make.

-Mary Crone

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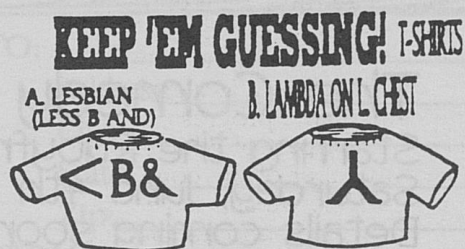
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A Directory of Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Publications

Have you ever wondered what the gay community is like in another part of the country, say New England or the deep South? Or a particular city like Seattle or Milwaukee? What the social scene is like - real estate or rental prices. What kind of services and businesses serving the the lesbigay community? Whether you plan to visit or move there or maybe even thinking of advertising your business there. Or even if you just need something special or unique that could best be found in the lesbigay community for yourself, a friend or relative.

It would have been difficult to learn this information until recently, but Jim Sorrells, in Guerneville California has just compiled a directory of 181 gay, lesbian and bisexual publications across the US and Canada. **The Directory** is like a cross-section of gay America. There are papers and magazines with as few as 20 readers or as many as 40,000, from porno reviews to literary reviews ranging from the very slick to definitely homespun. There is now at least one lesbigay publication in 45 of the 50 states. Canada has fourteen publications listed in Jim's directory, including one in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan! **The Directory** includes (when possible) frequency, circulation, subscription cost, ad cost, address and telephone, FAX number as well as a brief description of the publication and its editor. At \$17.95 including postage and handling, this is a real bargain. To order send a check or money order to Jim Sorrells, PO Box 1946, Guerneville CA 95446.



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* Please note the date changes. We don't want you to miss Rubyfruit's own Mariam Davidson as she performs with Muse on February 11th & 12th.

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LESBIAN AT LARGE

by Linda West

IS THE CINCINNATI MAYOR'S SEXUAL ORIENTATION REALLY PRIVATE?

I once had a terribly bitter argument with a straight friend. Our argument was over whether Willa Cather's family was justified in destroying (as they did) every letter, journal entry, and scrap of evidence within their grasp that reflected on Cather's life as a Lesbian. I said the family's action denied Lesbians our history as a people and that similar acts of destruction, multiplied thousands and even hundreds of thousands of times throughout history, have excluded Lesbians and Gays from the human record and preserved the myth that we are isolated aberrant individuals. I said the family's action was an act of oppression by one group against another. My friend disagreed, saying that Lesbians as a group had no claim on Cather's "private" life, and that because Lesbianism was a "private matter," the family's decision to conceal Cather's Lesbianism was also a purely "private" matter. My friend went on to describe the notion of "Lesbian history and culture" as "bogus."

Maybe it's memories of that argument which explain why, when I hear people such as Cincinnati's mayor refer to their sexual orientation as a private matter, I feel so thoroughly depressed.

Is Lesbianism a private matter analogous to whether one has had psychotherapy, or is it a matter of membership in a social and cultural group that has existed through time, passing a heritage of mores and values from one generation to the next? The question is significant because, if, as my friend asserted, Lesbianism is nothing more than a sexual taste, then to conceal it is not to distort human history. Moreover, Gay and Lesbian studies programs become no more justifiable than people-who-have-had-psychotherapy studies programs, or for that matter, people-who-have-had-liposuction studies programs.

One way of looking at this question, it seems to me, is to ask whether Lesbians and Gays have a group cultural life. We might, for example, compare ourselves to "people-who-have-had-psychotherapy." Do such people form their own churches, choruses, AA chapters, drama clubs, rodeos, bar associations, softball teams, and youth groups? Do they have their own flag, their own cultural and religious symbols such as the lambda and labrys? Do they celebrate their own holidays? Do they have directories of businesses owned by them—ranging from restaurants and moving companies to doctors and funeral homes? In the world's larger cities do they live in ghettos? Do they have an international association given consultative status by the UN?

The answer of course, is that they do none of the above, but Lesbians and Gays do them all, and on a grand scale. Here, in the backwater of mid-continent America, I attend a Gay and Lesbian church; go to Gay and Lesbian plays and concerts; shop at Gay and Lesbian businesses; can bowl, run, or play bridge with Gay and Lesbian bowling leagues, running groups, and bridge clubs; read Gay and Lesbian newspapers; have a Gay and Lesbian long distance phone company; and owe money on my Gay and Lesbian MasterCard.

How is all of this private?

Beside my computer is a pile of fascinating materials. On top is a Fall, 1993, class schedule for the Institute of Gay and Lesbian Education in Los Angeles. The classes encompass Gay and Lesbian art, literature, history, and anthropology. Courses of general interest such as French and Spanish are also offered. Instructors are Ph.D.'s specializing in Gay and Lesbian studies. The class schedule explains

that the Institute is currently seeking accreditation by the state. Twenty years from now, do not be surprised if there are Gay and Lesbian colleges and universities in this country much as there are now Black and Catholic schools.

Under the above class schedule is New York City's equivalent of the Pink Pages. Its listing of service organizations includes a Lesbian and Gay Clinic, which has "provided health care to lesbians and gays for almost twenty years." Further down in the pile is an interview of Gay Congressman Gerry Studds, in which he expresses hope that someday there will be enough homosexual members of Congress to form a Gay and Lesbian Congressional Caucus. Still further down in the pile is an announcement of the formation of a Gay and Lesbian committee within PEN, the association of writers. The announcement states that the writers involved—among them Edward Albee, Allan Ginsberg, Gore Vidal, and Adrienne Rich—wish to have their "cultural identification" publicly acknowledged. Explains Rich: "My Lesbian identity is an informing part of my poetry."

Finally, at the bottom of the pile, is an anthology of essays on Lesbian and Gay history. It includes such titles as "Homosexuality in the Renaissance: Behavior, Identity, and Artistic Expression", "Lesbians in American Indian Cultures", and "The Birth of the Queen" a scholarly article describing the early eighteenth century "molly houses" in which British Gay males gathered and engaged in such cultural rituals as mock childbirth ceremonies and Gay weddings, one of which in 1726 took place complete with a local celebrity bridesmaid by the name of "Princess Seraphina".

How is any of this private?

Is homosexuality really a private matter, like being in therapy, or is it a public identity, like being Jewish? It seems to me that once the closet is gone, we are revealed as members of a richly evolved human culture which fosters an identity that is social, cultural, and political. And matters that are social, cultural, and political are not private.

My mind returns to my straight friend who wished to minimize the significance of my Lesbianism, and who eventually distanced herself from me when I did not share her view that Lesbianism had nothing to do with my life outside the bedroom. In the final analysis, her claim that homosexuality was "private" probably bothered me most because it suggested that one's homosexuality is unimportant to who one is. That I and my lover had sex did not upset my friend; what sent her running was our participation in a unique culture, different from her own. I don't know about Cincinnati's mayor, but the three most important identities I possess are that I am female, that I am American, and that I am Lesbian. My Lesbian identity has profoundly shaped my view of the world. To call it "private" is to trivialize it. It's to say that homosexuality is solely a matter of whom we have sex with, not a matter of loving, long-term relationships that should, in the manner of marriages everywhere, be publicly acknowledged. It is also to deny that homosexuality is about the freedom to participate openly in a culture that differs from mainstream America's; about having our history of persecution, resistance, and achievement included in the human record; about worshipping as we want, clothing ourselves in the dress and speech and body language of our culture, and challenging Western Christian cultural supremacy.

All of this is why, when I hear Cincinnati's mayor say "It's a private matter," what I hear is not a call for freedom, but a frightened defense of one person's closet. Not only is fighting to be allowed to keep our sexual orientation "private" not what the Lesbian and Gay movement is about, but for anyone who views homosexuality as more than a recreational sexual "lifestyle" the claim that it's private is just plain false.

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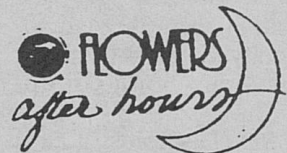
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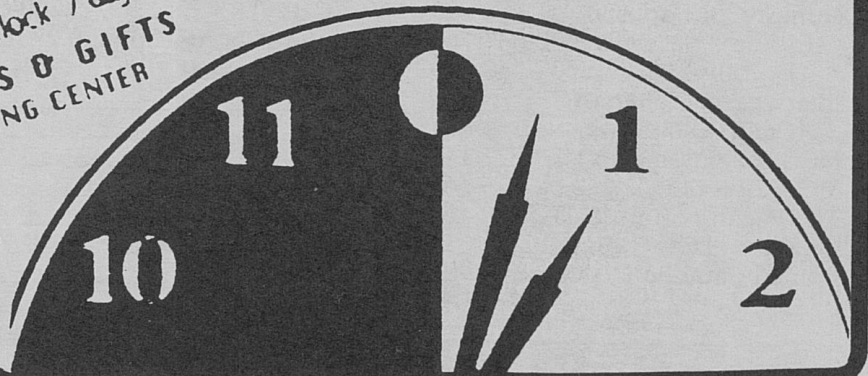
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- GLSO Disc. Project (Jeff)..276-5383
- GLSO News:
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 - Folding (Lee).....277-9365
- GLSO Speakers Bureau
 - (Bill).....266-9175
- GLSO Phonenumber Volunteers
 - (Peter).....273-5845
- GLSO Support Grp. (Mary)266-5904
 - (Mike).....225-1828

Student Groups

- ACE League: Berea College
 - (Russell).....986-9876
- AGLF: NKU (Pat).....572-5604
- Alt.Voice: Murry State
 - (Jeff).....502-574-5792
- B-GLAD: Centre (Mykol)....238-5332
- GLOBAL: UL (Ken).....502-852-3436
- GUESS: EKU (Matt).....622-5821
- Phi Omega Epsilon: MSU
 - (David).....783-4729
- UK LAMBDA (Andrea).....253-0955
 - (Jeff).....276-5383
- WKU LAMBDA (Larry).502-796-9114

Religious Groups

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- Dignity: Catholic (Don).....299-4458
- Gay Men's Spirit Group
 - (Steve).....233-1782
- GLAD (Disciples of Christ)
 - (Jeff).....255-4958
- Honesty (S. Baptists)
 - (Eddie).....502-637-7609
 - (Dorothy).....502-458-5392
- Interweave: Unitarian
 - (Craig).....269-8215
- MCC Lexington (Rex).....271-1407
- MCC Louisville.....502-775-6636
- The Pagan Forum (Pat)....268-1640
- Quakers FLGC (Connie)..276-2554
- Roman Catholic HIV Ministry
 - (John).....231-9955

Community

- Asians & Friends Ohio614-341-7349
- Bluegrass C.O.L.T.S. (Mark)233-7266
- Diversity Business Coalition
 -281-8444
- Esmerelda's Parlour (Laura)266-6568
- Fairness of Lexington
 - (HOTLINE).....275-7812
 - (Tomi).....266-1318
- Front Runners Joggers
 - (Keith).....254-6850
- GBL VETERANS (Columbus)
 - (Mike).....614-299-7764
- G/L AA (Dave).....293-6822
- G/LAI-Anon (Robert).....293-0516
- G/L Defense Fund.....502-589-2986
- G/L Services Net. (Ann)...266-6568
- ICBE. (Ken/Ashley).....255-9881
- KY ACLU (Keith).....266-3934
- KY Fairness (Keith).....266-3934
- Kentucky Legislature:
 - Bill Status Line.....800-382-2455
 - Meeting Info Line..800-633-9650
 - Message Line.....800-372-7181
- Lesbian Potluck
 - (Esmerelda).....231-0335
- Lex. Men's Chorus (Shelby)231-0090
- Louisville Fairness Campaign
 -502-893-0788
- Louisville Youth Grp.502-635-1302
- NAMES Project Lex. (Katie).272-2588
- PFLAG (Ruth).....276-1777
- Rainbow Bowling League
 - (Teri).....268-8563
- Tri-State Gay Rodeo
 - (Terry).....255-5469
 - (Cathy).....269-5966
- Women's Chorus (Connie).276-2554
- Womynweave (Kathy).....271-3484

AIDS Information/ Services

- AIDS HOTLINE LEX.....231-7545
- AIDS Vol. of Lex. (AVOL)..254-2865
- HIV/AIDS Legal Project
 -502-584-1254
- HIV+ Youth Support Grp.254-2865
- KY AIDS Hotline.....502-564-6539
- Partners of HIV+ Support Grp.
 - (Greg).....288-2437
- Thurs. HIV+/AIDS Support Grp.
 - KIPWAC (Edwin).....281-2100
- Sat. HIV+/AIDS Support Grp.
 - (AVOL).....254-2865

Anonymous AIDS Testing

- Jessamine County.....885-4149
- Lexington-Fayette County..288-2437
- Madison County.....623-7312
- Woodford County.....873-4541

Americans With Disabilities Act

If you suspect that you have been discriminated against because of being HIV+, contact these agencies:

- Employment**
 - (EEOC).....202-663-4900
- Medical care, Day care, Public Accommodation**
 - (Dept. of Justice).....202-541-0301
- Housing**
 - Housing & Urban Dev.800-669-9777

National G/L Crisisline

800-247-4283

Teenage G/L Support

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