

# Stress workshop planned

By David B. Ryan

For many gay men who are healthy but worried about the AIDS epidemic, worry has become an issue deserving full attention. In a culture where stress contributes significantly to the vast majority of illness and death, this is good news. Ways of dealing with worry are being explored nationwide. People are finding out that worry tends to be a nasty habit which can be alleviated by a firm decision to go on a worry diet. This means:

1. getting lots of information on the topic of concern, such as transmission;
2. finding ways of releasing stress, such as physical exercise or massage;
3. being good to yourself by indulging in what you like best in life, such as free time, close friends, or a personal interest such as music.

This diet tends not only to reduce worry, but also helps increase knowledge, capacity, and desire to relax. Relaxation is an irreplaceable life skill and its popularity and importance are growing.

With the above in mind, Vermonters for Lesbian/Gay Rights is sponsoring a workshop related to stress reduction and the AIDS epidemic. John Calvi, founder of Soft Touch, a program of massage and stress reduction therapy for people with AIDS, will be leading the workshop. This will occur on April 19 at the Red Cross Blood Center, 32 North Prospect

St., Burlington, VT from 9:30 - 3:00 p.m. The morning session will focus on coping with stress and an AIDS update. During the afternoon, John will present stress reduction techniques. Participants

are asked to bring a "brown bag lunch". There will be a \$5.00 fee, but no one will be turned away for inability to pay. (Thanks to John for some of the information contained in this article.)

## The Lavender Couch

### Book helpful for choosing a counselor

When lesbians or gay men hit a low point in their lives, psychotherapy should be considered a realistic and non-threatening choice. Dr. Marny Hall explains how to choose and evaluate a "gay affirming therapist" that will meet your needs. The homophobic control in the helping professions has made many of us leery and cynical, but Hall's book, *THE LAVENDER COUCH*, goes far toward easing our fears.

Using clear, down-to-earth language and numerous anecdotes, Dr. Hall assures us that counseling is not restricted to "coming out" experiences. Break-ups, job loss, deaths, and depression are painful experiences you may need help to deal with. For lesbians and gay men these experiences can be more difficult to handle because of separation from more traditional support networks. We should not feel that this is failure of our friends, lovers, or community, or feel guilty for searching outside this sphere for help.

Getting help starts with choosing the type of counseling you want or need: individual, couple, or group therapy. This need can change over time and occasionally you may want to use some combination of these therapies. Individual therapy allows for exploring yourself in depth but is not necessarily the best way to deal with social skills or a problem requiring a great deal of support. Group therapy will limit the time you can discuss yourself, but can provide a wide network of support. Couples therapy deals more with a relationship than with individuals and can be an important step towards strengthening or dissolving a partnership.

Once you have decided how many others will be present for your counseling session, you must choose an appropriate school of thought. Here *THE LAVENDER COUCH* excels as a

## BODYWORKS

by  
Elizabeth Mae and David B. Ryan

layperson's guide -- the description of the choices is clear and avoids confusing jargon. Dr. Hall divides the counseling theories into three broad divisions: feeling, thinking, and behavior therapies. Using many personal examples she shows how each of these therapies are used, and how they are combined to develop most popular schools of thought.

To find a counselor who uses the theory and style you will work best with, Dr. Hall suggests seeking recommendations from friends, lesbian and gay newspapers, or community bulletin boards. If financially possible, interview two or three counselors before choosing. Ask questions about method, time, and finances at the first session, and back out if the answers aren't satisfactory.

*THE LAVENDER COUCH* emphasizes that it is you who hires and pays a psychotherapist. Dr. Hall stresses the importance of telling the therapist what you want at the first session, discuss problems that arise with your therapist, and find a new therapist if your needs are not being met. If you need counseling to help you through, read this book. Read it again after a few weeks of counseling, and use it as a reference when problems arise.

Hall, Dr. Marny. *THE LAVENDER COUCH: A Consumer's Guide to Psychotherapy for Lesbians and Gay Men.* (Boston: Alyson Publications, Inc. 1985). Paperback \$7.95

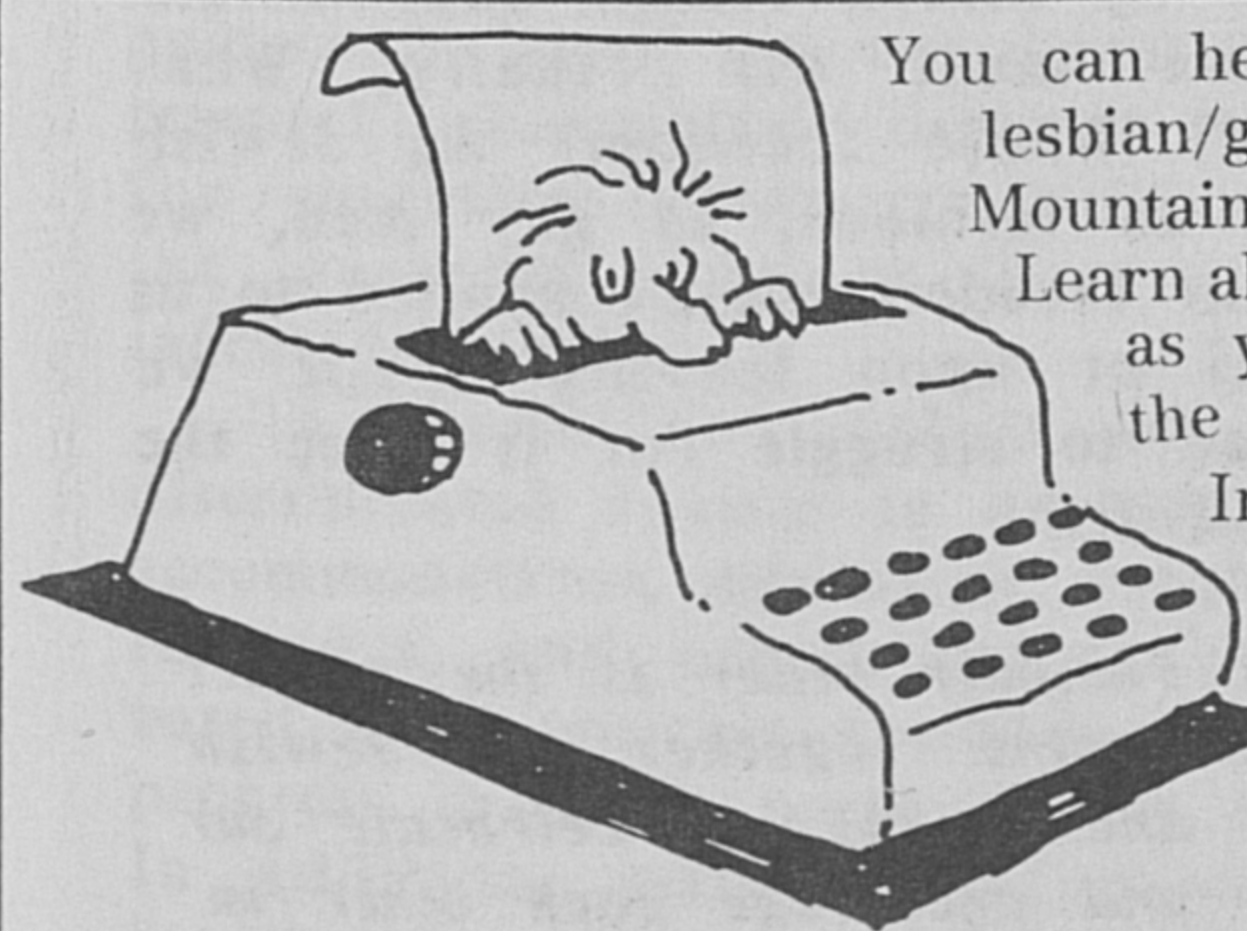
## Celebrating an Anniversary?

Send us your anniversaries! We want not only to keep us all informed of lesbian and gay news, we want to note our personal and communal celebrations. If you have ever wanted to publicly proclaim your anniversary (for example), this is your chance.

To have your anniversary published, we need to receive the following information by the 15th of the month preceding publication.

Please send the full names of both partners, number of years as a couple and anniversary date. Please specify if you want only your first names published. Send to

Out in the Mountains  
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**IF YOU WANT TO DRINK,  
THAT'S YOUR BUSINESS.  
IF YOU WANT TO STOP,  
THAT'S OURS.**

**Gay and Lesbian AA Group  
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