

Lesbian/Gay AA roundup

by Gus L.

Last Tuesday a man drove from his home in New Hampshire to our gay and lesbian Alcoholics Anonymous meeting in Burlington; it would take him three hours to do the round trip, not including the one and a half hours spent at the meeting. He also had come to our Thursday meeting the week before. We were discussing the Third Step of AA: "Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understand him." Some of the lesbian members present stated how they had a difficult time getting by the pronoun "him" written into the steps fifty years ago. Many of us expressed the difficulty we had with the word "God" when we first joined the program. The man from New Hampshire said, "I have a hard time dealing with God because he doesn't like gay people."

This is why there is going to be "The Other Roundup '86" July 25-27 in Burlington. We hope to meet with hundreds of other gay and lesbian alcoholics who will share their experiences, strengths and hopes with each other. I hope our new friend from New Hampshire is there.

Registration will be at the Rowell Building at the University of Vermont at 5-8 p.m. Friday, July 25. At 8:30 p.m. we will have a speakers' meeting, to start everyone off easy, listening to one or two people who wish to share. That night we will find accommodations for those registering late who have nowhere to stay. We will need volunteers from the non-alcoholic and non-gay or lesbian communities who can provide space. In typical AA fashion, even though the meeting will break up at 9:30 p.m., people will stay around to chat and make new friends.

After coffee and doughnuts Saturday morning, we'll have workshops, from 9-10:30 a.m. and from 10:45 a.m.-12:15 p.m. Suggested topics have included Affection and Intimacy, Relationships, Gay and Lesbian Pride, Is

God Straight? Sex in Sobriety, Dealing with Straights, S&M, Facing AIDS, Coming Out, Cruising the Program and Making New Friends.

In the tradition of AA, we will not choose the topics or the leaders of workshops until Friday night, to give as many people who want to share the chance to do so and to give as much geographical representation as possible to the workshops. (We have registrations from as far away as California, Texas and Florida, among many others.)

Afternoon workshops will run 2:25-3:45 p.m. and 4-5:50 p.m. Saturday night's dance will start at 9 p.m.

On Sunday, we will have a final round of workshops from 9:30-11:30 a.m., perhaps on new topics, perhaps finishing discussions from the day before. The great thing about AA is that nothing is ever fixed: we are bound by obligation and tradition to consider first and utmost that person having difficulty staying away from a drink today. This responsibility comes before any other plans or persons; it is why we exist.

At 11:15 a.m. we will start our final meeting, a meeting of gratitude. Traditionally here anyone may express his or her thoughts about the roundup. We plan to break up this meeting about noon.

Finally, there will be a picnic at the Ethan Allen Homestead, which is close to North Beach, for those who want to go swimming. This is usually a joyous time for people reveling in the fact that they are not alone any longer, that they are grateful they are lesbian or gay alcoholics and they they have found a place in the fellowship of AA.

If you would like a brochure on our program or would like to offer housing (please state preference as to which sex, smoking or non-smoking, and if you have pets) please write: Chair, The Other Roundup '86, P.O. Box 4295, Burlington, VT 05401.

Writer seeks material

I am writing a book tentatively titled NOT SO GAY: WOMEN WHO LOVE GAY MEN, which will explore love relationships that occur between straight women and homosexual men, especially (but not limited to) relationships serious enough to have led to engagement or marriage.

My goal is threefold: 1) To help the woman understand what happened, why she fell in love with her partner, and how to cope with the very special rejection that eventually comes to her; 2) to do the same for the gay man and to help him if he's still leading the "double life;" and 3) to help the couple accept their unique situation, come to terms in as gentle and loving a way as possible, and survive the hurt together, as friends.

I would like to interview or correspond with: 1) Gay men who have been, or still are, seriously involved in a relationship with a woman, whether or not the woman now knows they are gay; 2) Women who have seriously dated, been engaged to, or married a gay man they later discovered is gay or who knew he was gay but thought she could change him.

If you fit any of the categories above or know of anyone who does, will you please pass this information on? Thanks.

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Interfaith Service held

by Carrie

Approximately 40 people were on hand to celebrate the Interfaith Service at the Friends Meeting House, in Burlington, for the final event of Gay Pride weekend.

The outdoor service began with words of welcome from Barr Swennerfelt of the Friends Meeting House who read a resolution drafted by the Putney Friends affirming gay rights. During the service, several people shared readings. Joan read a poem by

Marge Piercy and David read from "Behold a Pale Horse." The music included several guitar-accompanied songs played by Philip Roberts, as well as pieces for the piano (played by Gilles) and cello (played by Aaron). Flowers and signs of peace were also shared.

Of the two speakers, Suzi talked about the importance of understanding the perpetual need to make choices in our daily lives as a form of liberation and Irv spoke of the fact of our existence being evidence of God's intention to create a diverse world.

This was the third Interfaith Service organized by the Vermont Interfaith Coalition for Lesbian/Gay concerns.

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