



Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays

Meetings - 2 PM Third Sundays
Presbyterian Center, 41 Oakdale

Houston, Texas
(713) 464-6663

January, 1985 Newsletter

Now that the Referendum in Houston, concerning City employment of homosexuals without discrimination, is over, we must re-orient ourselves and proceed with our lives as before. We were soundly defeated because of so much homophobic hate from those who have no knowledge of what homosexuality really is; nor do they want to educate themselves on the subject. Should they accept the truth, there would be no discrimination. They do not realize that they are hurting families and non-gay friends of gays, and that somewhere down the line some of them will surely learn that they have a gay loved one also. I hope they that they will contact Parents FLAG. We will be here.

After voting, Freda carried a large sign saying, "What would you do if you should learn that a child of yours is gay?" Most people read it, some at a distance. Those interested were asked what they would do. Some said, "shoot them," "show them the door," and such, but in Freda's Precinct, she found the majority gave affirmative answers and some even stopped to talk about it -- positively. (How did we lose?)

Houston Parents FLAG is happy to have some new members! Welcome! This month we gained one and lost one. Nancy came for the first time, and Frank (Freda's husband) died on January 13th.

Dr. Virginia Young, of the University of Texas Health Science Center in the Texas Medical Center, was our speaker this month. The most important thing she told us is when we have a child who tells us that he/she is gay, do not show fear or anxiety, even if we feel it. That stress will transfer to the child and he/she is already stressful because their greatest fear is that telling will upset the parents. Dr. Young said that children do not need that extra stress of dealing with the fear of the parents. It has already been difficult for them to deal with accepting their own homosexuality.

WHAT GAY PEOPLE WANT

The answer is simple. At the most basic level, the gay agenda, if there can be said to be such a thing, can probably best be summed up as a request to be left alone. Yet if that is so, one might ask, then why are gays marching, lobbying and, in general, making such a big deal about their sexual orientation? The answer is also simple: Gays are not left alone. As U.S. Rep. Barney Frank, D-Mass., says, "There's no big deal about lesbians and and gay rights; they're just like the rights that every American wants and expects." But gays do not get them. Even the most quiet, obsequious and deferential lesbian or gay faces a considerable risk of harassment and interference in her or his life...Three times this year St. Louis gay bars were subject to raids at the whim of the vice squad, and patrons were charged with obviously fictitious counts of lewd and lascivious behavior. In a different sort of situation, a friend, the victim of a nonviolent crime unrelated to his sexuality, was suddenly treated as if he had committed the crime when officers discovered his sexual orientation...from the Post-Dispatch by Him Thomas, editor of the Gay News Telegraph (St. Louis Newsletter)(Phoenix Dec. '84 Newsletter).

NO MAN CAN BE GOOD TO OTHERS WITHOUT BEING GOOD TO HIMSELF

In Leviticus, Chapters 17 through 26, there is a holiness code given to Moses by God. Scholars tell us it was written somewhere around the 5th or 6th century B.C. During this period slavery was common as it is mentioned in some of the laws. Also, women were considered chattel. The rules were not made for them but were often about them. Priests were to marry virgins because widows or divorced women were blemished. A "man blind or lame, or one who has a mutilated face or a limb too long, or a man who has an injured foot or an injured hand, or a hunchback, or a dwarf.." could not approach the altar or touch the priests robes because they were blemished. Farmers were not to plant more than one type of seed in a field and no one was allowed to wear clothing with more than one kind of material in it.

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Any of the dozens of rules having to do with sex carried the penalty of death. One of these rules was, "You shall not sleep with man as with woman". There is no mention of homosexuality or sexual orientation because this concept was not recognized at that time. Women were not mentioned in connection with this theme-as indeed, women were mentioned little except as they entered into the laws given for men.

This statement in the Bible is often used by those who want to make homosexuality a sin. Those rules which do not fit modern belief are discarded by these people who claim to interpret the literal meaning of the Bible.

A set of rules which made sense to the mentality of the society of the 5th or 6th century B.C. does not fit in the 20th century. We must use judgement to determine the intent of the laws. We encounter legalism when the letter of the law becomes the focus. We are in danger of legalism today when the laws of the Holiness Code are used to separate neighbor from neighbor rather than to bring each of us toward each other, toward our own holiness, and toward God. (Phoenix Dec. '84 Newsletter)

YOU DID IT OUT OF LOVE...by Leroy Dysart

You didn't have to share our load, you didn't have to walk our road,
But you did it out of love,
You didn't have to hold our hand, you didn't have to understand
But you did it out of love.

The world is never easy if you don't conform,
If you don't fit the norm they'll shut you out.
And if your friends and parents tell you that you don't belong
It's hard to still be strong, hard not to doubt.
So it is good sometimes to see a smiling face along the way,
To hear somebody say, they'll help you build a brighter day.

It would have been convenient just to turn your head,
Pretend that we were dead, not even there.
And the forces that oppose us soon will have your name
And try to bring you shame, because you care.
But the force of love is stronger than the force of hate you know
And with your help, we'll grow, and soon all hate will go.

That poem says it all, and somehow the following ties in with it, at least for me. Self respect cannot be bought. It is never for sale. It comes to us when we are alone in quiet moments, in quiet places, when we suddenly realize that knowing the good we have done it; knowing the beautiful, we have served it; knowing the truth, we have spoken it. The more I am able to come out of the closet the more self respect I have.

The Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches has finished editing an hour long documentary, "God, Gays and the Gospel: This is our Story." Besides telling the story of this growing, worldwide church, most of whose members are gay and lesbian, it includes a moving sequence on the relationship of lesbians and gays to their parents. To help get this on the air, contact Rev. Troy Perry, U.F.M.C.C., 5300 Santa Monica Blvd., Suite, 304, Los Angeles, CA 90029 (From the San Francisco Newsletter) (Phoenix Jan. 85 Newsletter)

"We must talk about homosexuality honestly and openly with all young people. Many homophobes believe that accurate information somehow "lures" otherwise heterosexual young people into being gay. Evidence does not support this myth, yet its effects are often tragic. We deny young people information, and this leads to alienation. Alienation can lead to worse: Young gay and lesbians are more likely than the general population to be victims of family neglect, depression, drug abuse and suicide. Homosexuality has existed throughout history and in all cultures. It is the natural path for gay people, just as heterosexuality is for others. Our children deserve to hear that truth. For some it is too late. But not for thousands of others." (Griff Humphreys, Social Worker in Hollywood, CA San Francisco Newsletter) (Phoenix Jan.85 Newsletter)

Dr. Karen Schlitz Grove, clinical psychologist, at the October meeting, shared thoughts, methods, procedures and results of a scientific investigation and evaluation of human behavior. The question considered was whether father-mother-son relationships affected the development of adult male homosexuality. Some of the parents who were the subjects of Dr. Grove's study were drawn from the membership of Parents ELAC.

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January, 1985

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The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of New York is prepared to give up \$72 million a year in city funds for social programs rather than comply with a mayoral order banning discrimination against homosexuals. Archbishop John J. O'Connor said "It's much more than \$72 million as some of the city money was matched by state or federal grants." (Phoenix Jan. 85 Newsletter)

HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE PARENTS? (For Gays) "The average time from initial recognition of homosexual attractions to arriving at homosexual self-definition was found to be six years."--Lou G Nungesser (Chico Newsletter)

THE MAN WHO DOES NOT DO HIS OWN THINKING IS A SLAVE, AND IS A TRAITOR TO HIMSELF AND TO HIS FELLOWMEN.

Robert G. Ingersoll

Paul Verhoeven, Dutch film director, quoted in The Advocate: "There was an opinion poll recently in Holland asking the public if it matters to them if someone is homosexual or not, and it turned out that nowadays 70% of the population says no we don't care at all, and 20 years ago it was 25% saying they didn't care. So things have changed considerable." (Chico Newsletter) Is there hope for Houston, Texas?

AIDS In a recent sermon titled "The Politics of a Plague," The Rev. Douglas Morgan Strong spoke out on AIDS, the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome. Mr. Strong, minister of All Souls Unitarian Church in Augusta, ME said in part: Last summer four people in South Boston were bitten by mosquitos and oddly enough contracted meningitis. Within days, half a million dollars were allocated by the Commonwealth to "look into the situation." Yet it took the US government nearly three years to get around to funding AIDS research. Last spring Reagan announced he would veto any bill involving AIDS research. Since then the gay community has become politically organized and instituted a large scale lobby effort to convince the government that this disease deserve research grants.

You can bet if 3,000 Boy Scouts had AIDS it wouldn't take so long to get money for research. The gay community is a victim of politics. When herpes hit the white middle class heterosexuals, nobody said they were getting what they deserved. Yet that is the dominant thinking about AIDS. Gay men are getting what they deserve. And that attitude is everywhere. The truth is that people don't want to spend money for research because the largest single group who develop the disease are gay men who have a history of casual sexual encounters. So what has happened is that we are, as a nation, judging the sexual behavior of certain people by linking it to research monies.

AIDS affects everyone. When hospital workers refuse to go into a patient's room if she or he has AIDS, when lab technicians refuse to do biopsies, when garbage collectors refuse to touch trash from an AIDS person's home, when the tourist trade in Haiti drops from 70,000 Americans a year to less than 10,000, thus leading to a near total collapse of the Haitian economy, when families and friends of AIDS people cease to reach out, it is an outrage and affects who we are as a humanity.

AIDS affects everyone. The government and the religious right would like us to believe that AIDS is a problem only for white gay men. As though if it were only a problem for white gay men we should not come to their side in alliance. AIDS is the number one killer of gay men in their 30s and 40s. If for no other reason, everyone should fight for a rapid solution to this loss of valuable life. (Unitarian Universalist World, June 15, 1984) (From the Long Island Newsletter) (Phoenix Jan 85 Newsletter) A TOTAL IMMERSION IN LIFE OFFERS THE BEST LEARNING TO LOVE!



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March, 1985

Parents FLAG National Office, in the first phase, has mailed 41,000 letters, survey sheets and about out children booklets, to churches and synagogues nationwide in our educational program. All the local groups are following up by contacting these pastors and Rabbis to see if they received their packets and to feel them out about the subject. It has been, and will continue to be, interesting. And this is only the beginning. Hopefully they will be educated to the point of acceptance. Hopefully this will, indeed, change a lot of people's minds about homosexuality. Here in Houston we get many calls from lesbians and gays about their parents lack of understanding and acceptance. These sons and daughters are deeply hurt when they are rejected by their families. Is this religion? The Bible says. "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." Parents, take note.

The lamda, seen in gay-oriented publications and jewelry, is a reproduction of the lower case Greek letter lambda, equivalent to the English letter 'L'. The Greeks used it originally as a symbol, first of scales and gradually to illustrate a concept of qualities of balance which for them meant a reconciliation of opposites, needing continuous adjustment. The small hook on the right end was added to indicate the need for action to reach equilibrium and to maintain it once achieved. The Spartans adopted the lamda as a symbol of their unity and it appeared as a logo on their shields. As such, it signified a special balance between the individual and the state which, representing Spartan "society," was never to interfere with the total freedom independence of the individual person. The conquering Romans, borrowing from Greek culture, noted the suggestion of a flame in the lamda, and the word for it developed into the Latin work for "torch." When Gay Liberation began to emerge as a movement, the lambda was chosen as a symbol to signify freedom, equality, and independence. Borrowing from the added Roman concept of a torch (light), it came to represent for gay men and lesbians the spread of the light of knowledge to overcome ignorance and to bring hopes of a future of dignity for gay men and lesbians everywhere, an acceptance of differences within all humanity. (Parents FLAG, San Francisco, March 85)

(OTHER NEWS) Parents led by conservative activist Phyllis Schlafly are demanding that public schools get their written permission for classroom discussions of sex, drugs, death, evolution and other topics deemed dangerous to morality. Such groups in 20 states have drafted form letters to teachers and school boards listing 34 topics that could "undermine their child's beliefs and moral values." At least one school system has responded with a warning to new teachers, and teachers union officials fear the campaign may affect publishers of standard textbooks. The 34 topics include alcohol and drug abuse, abortion, suicide, nuclear war, anti-nationalist politics, homosexuality, pre- or extra-martial sex, witchcraft, and organic evolution.

--SP *****group of Protestant, Roman Catholic and Jewish leaders in New York City, in a joint statement of concern, have called on the public "not to stand in judgement" of those with AIDS, "but to grow in compassion" for them. One American Baptist minister called the idea of divine retribution (put forth by Moral Majority types) "un-Christian and judgemental." A rabbi from a New York synagogue noted that in the Middle Ages Jews were accused of causing the plague by poisoning the wells of Europe. "Jews were falsely accused and put to death," he said. "The effects of ignorance and bigotry are terrifying and lethal." Likewise, he said, gays have been charged with creating a medical epidemic of which they are the victims rather than the cause. (P.F.L.A.G./San Francisco, Mar 85)

The New York Times' Style page on December 10, 1984, features a story, "Homosexual Couples Find a Quiet Pride", reporting on the "depth and endurance" of long-term homosexual relationships. Psychiatrist Robert E. Gould: "Parents of gays are learning to accept their youngsters, not just as gay but as being in gay marriages. This means more open relationships and more long-term relationships."

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A MESSAGE FROM A MOTHER: "REACH OUT AND TOUCH SOMEONE:" After the initial shock, pain, and anguish parents go through on learning that their son or daughter is gay, comes the realization that this child, loved and cherished, is still the same person. Sexual orientation is not by choice, but part of nature's plan. We are all God's children: "homosexuality is found everywhere in nature" (George Weinberg, "Society and the Healthy Homosexual", p. 99).

Now we have to change our way of thinking. We must forget our preconceived ideas. We must not believe all the misinformation, the myths, and misconceptions we grew up with. And we must not feel guilty-- this is such a waste of emotion, Better that we educate ourselves, read, go to meetings of Parents FLAG, talk to and listen to other parents, exchange information, Most important of all: be supportive of our children with our love and hope. Remember, when we all join together, there is strength in numbers.

As we educate ourselves, we can then redefine our priorities and our values. We in turn can then try to educate the hostile society which is still unlightened and prejudiced through its ignorance about homosexuality. We want to make this a better world for our children. What we need is understanding, not sympathy.

So: reach out and touch someone. We will all be the better for it! (New York City P.F.L.A.G., Jan 85)

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(Unitarian Universalist World, June 15, 1984. From the Long Islandnews-better. P.F.L.A.G., Phoenix, 1-85)

Leo Buscaglia writes in the introduction to "The Way of the Bull": "I have learned, most importantly, that a WAY will only have reality as it relates to living in the now, for, as stated above, life isn't the goal, it's only the voyage, and the only reality seems to lie in change. But if all things that are, are already ours, then even change is an illusion, and the WAY becomes simply an unfolding, like the opening of a flower, for all things necessary are already a part of us and to discover it we need to nurture the flowers, be patient and to continue to grow."



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We were very pleased to have George Bright and Dorothy Slemet as the speakers at our April meeting. We certainly enjoyed their sharing with us and hope they will visit us again. Thank you both very much.

Freda was invited to meet with and speak to the Houston North Professionals, a gay group. She spoke about Parents Flag and what we do. These people are all nice, cordial and easy to communicate with. It was an enjoyable evening.

We are recognizing the fact that gay men and lesbian women whose parents and family members know that they are gay should tell their families about Parents Flag and if possible get them involved with our organization. It is one thing for parents to accept the fact that a son or daughter is gay but where possible they should support their right to be gay and Parents Flag is the place. We have Parents Flag groups (or contacts) in every state now. If one is not convenient to your family they can surely be put on someones mailing list. Their privacy will be respected if that is their wish.

A good life is not a passive existence where you live and let live; it is one of involvement where you live and help live. Issac Basheves Singer (Phoenix Newsletter)

The Youth Department of the Gay and Lesbian Community Service Center is sponsoring a day long gathering of raps and socializing on Saturday, April 13. The purpose is to introduce a new housing facility to be used by the community's youth. If Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Community can sponsor a gay/lesbian youth group there is no reason why some concerned people in the Houston gay/lesbian community cannot recognize the need for that outreach. There definitely are gay/lesbian youth in Houston with no place to gather or even to communicate with each other. Do Texas laws prohibit this? (Los Angeles Newsletter).

Quote for the month: "If you are neutral on a situation of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor. If an elephant has his foot on the tail of the mouse, and you say you are neutral, the mouse will not appreciate your neutrality." (Desmond Tutu, Bishop of the Church of the Province of South Africa).

Out of the closet and into the Church - Born in 1968 from a classified ad in The Advocate, the gay Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches (MCC) now has some 27,000 members in more than 150 congregations in eight countries. In addition gay religious organizations have been formed in every major denomination. Among them: Affirmation (Methodist) Affirmation (Mormon), Axios (Eastern & Orthodox Christian), Dignity (Roman Catholic), Evangelicals Concerned, Friends for Lesbians/Gays Concerns (Quaker), Integrity (Episcopalian), Lutherans Concerned, Orion Fellowship (Seventy-Day Adventists), Pentecostal Coalition for Human Rights, Presbyterians for Lesbian/Gay Concerns, Unitarian-Universalists Office for Lesbian/Gay Concerns, World Congress of Gay/Lesbian Jewish Organizations and now Acceptance and Passionists (Baptist)-Houston (contact Freda). (Philadelphia Newsletter-Phoenix)

ANCIENT GAY CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE RITE FOUND - Yale Professor of History, Dr. John Boswell, author of Christianity, Social Tolerance and Homosexuality, announced recently in West Hollywood that he is doing extensive research on an ancient Christian rite used for lesbian and gay male couples, and intends to publish a definitive text and English translation. Following up on a lead given him after the 1980 publication of his groundbreaking book, Boswell has now discovered more than 50 extant manuscripts of gay/lesbian marriage rites, many of them bound in ancient liturgical manuals that also contain the best examples of the Mass. Examples of the marriage rite fall into three families: a full eucharistic liturgy in which the couple to be joined stand together before the Altar and hold crowns above one another's heads; a simpler intermediate form similar to a heterosexual marriage without the eucharist; and a very brief form consisting of only a few prayers, the usage of which is still unclear. Boswell's research has found that the gay/lesbian rite of union was not an obscure or illicit liturgical act, but was in very wide use, perhaps as early as the middle of the 5th Century, and as late as the 13th Century. It apparently was in use from as far west as Paris, to Jerusalem in the east. Although some evidence indicates its continued use to as late as 1940 in one place in Europe, it is certain that what had been an accepted rite to unite two men or two women--which antedated the development of any heterosexual Christian marriage rite by several centuries--was eventually proscribed for gays and lesbians, and dropped from late medieval manuscripts. In its fullest form, the rite is called "The Making of Brothers", and the text is filled with many prayers in which the couple being joined dedicate their relationship with the language of "unashamed faithfulness" and "honest love." The rite makes clear that they are joining together for the sake of love, and not for reasons of biology or property or other cause. The rite also refers repeatedly to St. Serge and St. Bacchus, two 4th Century Christian martyrs, who were soldiers and lovers, to whom many churches throughout Europe have been dedicated over the centuries, and whose passionate relationship has not been concealed in many standard works on the lives of the saints. Speaking at West Hollywood Presbyterian Church, for its Lazarus Project Fall Seminar, Boswell, who is devout Roman Catholic, did not speculate on the impact his research may have on the contemporary church scene, which recently shows evidence of anxiety about the occurrence of gay or lesbian Christian marriage ceremonies. (From the Concord, newsletter of Lutherans Concerned/North America)

FEISTY RECTOR BARS WEDDINGS UNTIL THEY'RE O.K. FOR GAYS TOO - The controversial rector of the oldest Episcopal parish in the Far West is refusing to perform any marriages until homosexual couples are permitted to have their relationship blessed in the church. "The compulsion for me is a very urgent sense that the church and this society doesn't understand the destruction it is doing to the homosexual people," said the Rev. Robert Cromey of Trinity Church on Bush St. in San Francisco. "We don't understand the damage we do as we continue to exclude homosexual people from the mainstream of church and society." Cromey performs about 15 weddings for heterosexual couples each year at Trinity Church. He estimated that each couple donated about \$300 to the church. He has also blessed on homosexual relationship while at Trinity and two other gay couples elsewhere, he said. Refusing to officiate at weddings is a dramatic gesture but I mean it," Cromey said. "I want to make clear to the community at large that I take marriage and relationships very seriously. I think a little drama in the church is not a bad thing. If you're going to have God become a man, well, that's not a bad start for drama." "One of the interesting notions about marriage in the ages is that the church does not marry a couple, they marry each other," Cromey said. "The church just says some prayers and signs some papers. The church is saying 'good luck and we'll support you.' But gay people can't have that opportunity. Then the irony is that the straight community complains because gay relationships don't last." Cromey contends that if gay couples had the opportunity to have their unions blessed, their relationships would last longer. Cromey plans to preach his views on the subject Sunday. He said he had not discussed his refusal to perform marriages with Episcopalian Bishop William Swing, and the bishop would not comment on it. Cromey, once an assistant to the last Bishop James A. Pike, is a longtime champion of homosexual rights and founded the Council on Religious and the Homosexual. A civil rights activist, he was arrested some 20 years ago during sit-ins on The City's auto row, and he supported the student strikers at San Francisco State University. He also called for the legalization of marijuana and prostitution and has defended topless dancers. (Parents Flag-San Francisco Newsletter)

Ben Jinks, a member of MCCR is organizing a fund raiser for Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays at E.J.'s on Wednesday, May 8, 1985, at 7:30 P.M. It is a "Family Feud" affair and should be lots of fun with teams competing against each other. We are pleased with the ideas Ben keeps coming up with. When we can see the bottom of the barrel it is time for a fund raiser so we can continue our outreach of education to parents and to the general public. We do continue to stay busy with our work. We send newsletters and information to so many people; not only parents but counselors, educators, doctors, clergy and the list goes on.

In response to letters from parents to Dear Abbey our National Office mailed letters local groups to answer. Freda mailed about 30 letters to parents in Houston and surrounding areas. Response is beginning to come in and they are wanting information. What a great way to reach parents and to educate them.

REMEMBER our meetings are always on the third Sunday of each month at the Presbyterian Center - 41 Oakdale at 2:00 P.M.



Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays

Meetings - 2 PM Third Sundays
Presbyterian Center, 41 Oakdale

Houston, Texas
(713) 464-6663
May 1985

Parents Flag-Houston held our monthly meeting at the Presbyterian Center with only four members present. James Beecker, M.S.W.A. Counselor from the Montrose Counseling Center and several other places and with several degrees, was our speaker. M.C.C. counsels many people including gays and lesbians and also their parents. He has referred parents to us many times. We just don't see them, perhaps contact is made by telephone only. He is a good speaker and we had many questions. Thank you Jim.

Freda was invited by Rev. Fernandez, the Presbyter, to give a presentation (twice) at a conference of Presbyterian Ministers and lay people at Saint Phillips Presbyterian Church in Houston on April 26th. There were many presentations that day. Dr. George Edwards of the Presbyterian Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky was the featured speaker. Dr. Edwards is a brilliant man and supportive of gay rights. Homosexuals Anonymous, an anti-gay Presbyterian group also gave a presentation. They claim to cure! Margaret, a Dear Abby lady attended. She will be coming to our meetings.

Freda has been instrumental in encouraging gays who are Southern Baptist to start a group in Houston. It seems that they are rapidly doing that and even amazing themselves.

It was decided at our May meeting that we would bring staples (canned) foods to our meetings each month for the McAdory House (a house for men with AIDS). They can also use toilet articles and bathroom tissue as well as paper towels. Remember this could be OUR sons so we need to help. They have parents somewhere. These men are very ill.

Congratulations to Zena and Jules Silverman in Plantation, Florida for starting a Broward County group there. I well remember when Zena was trying to get a group going in Dallas before moving to Florida and that was several years ago. I'm so proud of you Zena. It really is hard to get a group started in Texas anywhere and harder to keep it going.

Thanks to Ben Jinks for the "Family Feud" benefit for Parents Flag at E.J.'s Club. Ben and I worked to exhaustion but it was worth it. Nancy, Betty and George and Barbara helped that night. We all enjoyed the fun. Thanks to E.J.'s for hosting the event, thanks to Coty for being our M.C. Thanks to the many clubs who had teams there and the participants as well as the ones who cheered. Most of all thanks to the many businesses who donated prizes. Ben tells me that many clubs and participants want to make a regular thing of Family Feud. We can certainly use the money to continue our work. AGAIN, THANKS TO EVERYONE.

Houston - May 22nd on Channel 8 - "Silent Pioneers" focuses on aging gays and lesbians. Features interviews with several long-term couples.

People in 58 American and Foreign Cities are holding AIDS vigils. Houston ceremony, sponsored by CHE is 7:30-8:30 on May 27, 1985 in front of City Hall. Following the vigil is a benefit for KSAIDS Foundation at Rich's.

The simple fact is that if we do not act we will be oppressed. Not every situation works out to the benefit of the Gay Community (such as the January referendum in Houston) but even when the bigoted have their way, lesbians, gays, their families, and friends are heartened with the realization that they are NOT ALONE! As parents we must stand up to protect our children. We must

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The United States Supreme Court will soon rule on the constitutionality of an Oklahoma statute which authorizes the firing of teachers who promote gay rights or who discuss homosexuality in a positive light. The Oklahoma law was promoted by Anita Bryant (former Miss Oklahoma) and was patterned after the so-called "Briggs Initiative" which was defeated by California voters in 1978.

Parents Flag filed a friend-of-the-Court brief in the case arguing that the homophobic law violates the First Amendment because it: (1) discourages teachers from reprimanding students who harass or assault lesbian or gay students (2) interferes with freedom of religion because it can be used to fire teachers who stand up for gay rights in religious debates; and (3) infringes on the rights of teachers to engage in labor negotiations because, under the law, teachers could be dismissed for attempting to secure a sexual orientation non-discrimination clause in a union contract.

The Court heard oral argument in January and a decision is expected in June. Los Angeles attorneys, Thomas F. Coleman and Jay M. Kohorn represented Parents Flag in the case.

California Attorney General John Van de Kamp joined with New York Attorney General Robert Abrams on a brief which urged the Supreme Court to invalidate the statute. Please write to one or both of these courageous public officials thanking them for defending the rights of lesbians, gay men, and their supporters. Their addresses: Hon. John Van de Kamp, California Attorney General, c/o Emil Stipanovich, 3580 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles, Ca. 90010; Robert Abrams, New York Attorney General, c/o Rosemarie Rhodes, Two World Trade Center, New York, N.Y. 10047. (Parents Flag Newsletter, Los Angeles-April 1985).

Dear Abby - Any Parents Flag newsletter writer has Dear Abby on the list of required daily newspaper reading. Sure enough in the Sunday, March 24, Los Angeles Times, Dear Abby advised a "Worried Mom", "Send a long stamped, self-addressed envelope to: Parents Flag.." and that means lots-a-mail from lots a "worried" folk. (Parents Flag Newsletter, Los Angeles-April 1985).

LETTERS AND NEWSLETTERS: Sacramento: reports that the local Lambda Community Fund is advancing money to fund a law suit against Falwell for remarks during a July 1984 broadcast of "Look Who's Talking".

San Francisco: reproduces, from The Advocate, an interview with Adele Starr President of the Federation of Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays... Also reports that The Office of Technological Assessment, an independent analytical arm of Congress, has criticized President Reagan and Secretary of Health and Human Services Margaret Heckler for not appropriating enough funds to fight the AIDS crisis."...

Colorado-Denver: reproduces, in full, a letter sent by one of the parents, to a local newspaper on the occasion of the suicide of a gay person...Reports that attendance at the December meeting numbered almost 200. The February meeting which marked the 5th anniversary had an attendance of almost 130.

Illinois-Chicago: reports that the voting strength of 17,000,000 lesbians and gays is greater than the total voting power of Hispanics, Jews and farmers combined. Also states that communication with elected representatives, thru the mails can be decisive in influencing an official's vote.

Louisiana-Baton Rouge: brand new and eager to grow - a newsletter each month, and geared for action calling on parents to express appreciation to the sponsors of the TV airing of "Consenting Adult." Write your thanks to the following sponsors: Ralph Ward, Jr., Cheseborough Ponds, 33 Benedict Place, Greenwich, CT 06830; J.E. Burke, Johnson & Johnson, One Johnson Plaza, New Brunswick, N.J. 08933; Gordon Stevens, Lever Brothers, 390 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10022; W.C. Wescoe, Sterling Drug, Inc., 90 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10016.

Missouri-St. Louis: cites an article from a Rochester, New York, newspaper reporting how a local town board adopted an ordinance banning discrimination based on sexual orientation, after a board member blatantly demonstrated his anti-gay prejudice and hatred.

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"The free person instead of submitting blindly to stereotypes, patterns and familiar ways, feels...called to develop new ways and new attitudes, and eventually to make new discoveries which change the world." (Thomas Merton)

WE NEVER CHANGE OUR MEETING DATE BUT IT FALLS ON FATHER'S DAY IN JUNE
SO REMEMBER-OUR NEXT MEETING WILL BE JUNE 23, 2:00 P.M. to 3:30 P.M. AT
THE SAME ADDRESS-THIS TIME ONLY. SEE YOU THERE!

THE BIG THING RIGHT NOW—AND IMPORTANT
IS THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF PARENTS
AND FRIENDS OF LESBIANS AND GAYS, INC
NATIONAL MEETING OF ALL THE...

CELEBRATED BY LESBIANS AND GAYS AND THEIR FRIENDS. NO ONE COULD CRITICIZE ANY PART OF IT. WE HAD A BEAUTIFUL PARADE OF OUTSTANDING FLOATS, MOTORCYCLES, HORSES AND SOME VINTAGE CARS. I WAS PROUD TO BE, ALONG WITH TERRY, ONE OF THE GRAND MARSHALS. IT WAS SO EXCITING.
X
ARMSTEAD MAUPIN, AT MCCR'S 10th ANNIVERSARY BANQUET, SAID IF GAYS WAITED FOR POLITICIANS TO GIVE THEM THEIR RIGHTS THEY WOULD NEVER GET THEM. HE SAID GAYS THEMSELVES MUST STAND UP AND DEMAND THOSE RIGHTS NOW AND KEEP ON DEMANDING UNTIL THEY GET THE SAME RIGHTS AS EVERYONE ELSE. HE WAS A TERRIFIC SPEAKER AND A NICE PERSON.
X X

POLITICS IS BEGINNING TO GET IN GEAR. DR. STEVEN HOTZE, ONE OF HOUSTON'S MOST VOCAL ANTI-GAY RIGHTS CAMPAIGNERS, AND ABOUT 150 SUPPORTERS APPEARED BEFORE THE CITY COUNCIL WED. JUNE 6 TO URGE COUNCIL NOT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ANNUAL GAY PRIDE WEEK PARADE AND RALLY. HOTZ CONTENDED THE PARADE IS IMMORAL AND SHOULD NOT BE SUPPORTED BY THE COUNCIL. NO COUNCIL MEMBERS DID SUPPORT THE PARADE. HOTZ LEADS A POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE CALLED CAMPAIGN FOR HOUSTON, WHICH HE SAYS IS ORGANIZING A SLATE OF CANDIDATES FOR NOVEMBER'S CITY ELECTION. HOTZ IS NOT VERY POPULAR IN THE GAY COMMUNITY THEREFORE MANY IN THE GAY COMMUNITY WOULD LIKE TO SEE CITY COUNCILMAN GEORGE GREANIAS BECOME A CANDIDATE FOR MAYOR OF HOUSTON. I CERTAINLY WOULD BE DELIGHTED.
X X

THE BIG THING RIGHT NOW — AND IMPORTANT IS THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF PARENTS AND FRIENDS OF LESBIANS AND GAYS, INC NATIONAL MEETING OF ALL THE CHAPTERS IN THE USA AS WELL AS THOSE CHAPTERS IN OTHER COUNTRIES TO BE HELD IN ATLANTA GEORGIA IN OCTOBER.

I AM ON THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND MUST ATTEND. I WILL HAVE TO ASK THE HOUSTON GAY COMMUNITY TO HELP ME AGAIN WITH MONEY THIS YEAR. I KNOW WHO MY FRIENDS ARE.

THE NEW INFORMATION WE GET THERE AND THE BOOST COMING HOME STAYS WITH US FROM YEAR TO YEAR MAKES ME REALLY COMMITTED.



*Parents and Friends
of Lesbians and Gays*

1323 WITTE # 232
HOUSTON, TEXAS
77055

713-464-6663

Meetings - 2 PM Third Sundays
Presbyterian Center, 41 Oakdale

July, 1985

ROCK HUDSON is heroic to confirm that he is suffering from AIDS. It is tragic for anyone to have AIDS. Hopefully the Pasteur Institute in Paris will develop a cure soon and that the U.S.A. will be more positive about people in this country with AIDS. The Monroise Voice weekly gay newspaper in Houston states that President Reagan has phoned ROCK HUDSON. Perhaps more funds will be allowed for research and treatment now.

Gay Aggies

As an Aggie, I must disagree with R. Ross Jr.'s criticism of TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY's Gay Student Services Organization. I feel that a majority of students do not oppose the recognition of the GSSO.

We do not accept the homosexual lifestyle for ourselves but we do support the rights of GAYS to practice their lifestyle.

Unfortunately we moderates remain quiet while Pro- and anti-homosexual forces argue. I'm glad the GSSO was finally recognized and that after their fight they were still proud enough of A&M to represent us in Houston. Hopefully by the fall, the GSSO will be just one of many student groups, and the controversy will end.

Jeff Christianson

From the Houston Post News Paper - sound off.

WHERE ARE THE PARENTS ? ? ? ? ?

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From the Houston Post News Paper - sound off.

X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X

It seems that a city as large as Houston would have a large and active Parents Flag Group but we do not. We have tried everything we know to attract parents to no avail. Now we ask the gay community to get your own parents and friends wherever they may be to support your homosexuality by becoming involved in Parents Flag. We have chapters in every state and if your family is not near one they can be put on a mailing list. If you are ever to get full rights you are going to need the support of your families. Be as courageous as Rock Hudson or be a second or third class citizen.

LET ME SEE YOU ALSO AT OUR MEETINGS



Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays

Houston, Texas
(713) 464-6663

Meetings - 2 PM Third Sundays
Presbyterian Center, 41 Oakdale

September, 1985

Parents Flag - Houston met at the Presbyterian Center for our September meeting. We had eight parents present and it nice to have John and Edith return. They are our Dear Abby parents.

We had about 50 Dear Abby letters this month. Quite a lot of them called in response to our letters to them but none of them showed up at the meeting this month. The majority of the ones who were contacted did not have a gay person in their family and only wanted information about homosexuality which they got. Perhaps this is a good way to educate the public about sexual ORIENTATION. We are dissapointed that none of the parents and other family members were moved to come out and learn about personal support for their gay and lesbian children and friends.

Michael and Jim from Gay Fathers were our guest and shared with us their experiences of marriage, fathering children, separations and divorces, custody and non-custody, making a happy home (with a lover) for them and the children. They were asked many questions and it was an education for all of us. We really do admire these men for wanting their children even though there is continual agitation from ex-spouses and there is the day by day expected and unexpected occurrences that happen in every family. We do thank Michael and Jim for sharing with us.

There are also Lesbian Mothers in Houston so perhaps we can get them to share with us also. I'm sure that their experiences would be quite different from the men and the Mothers and Fathers who are nurturing their children and they are to be commended.

Metropolitan Community Church in Houston has a new Pastor, Rev. Gill of Fort Lauderdale, Fl. and his lover will be living in Houston soon. Parents Flag in Ft. Lauderdale will miss him. He has been so much help to them and they love him. We in Houston will treat him good Zena. We are delighted to have him in Houston and at MCCR-Houston. Welcome Rev. Gill.

The Hindu Upanishads

He who thinks God is not comprehended by him God is comprehended; but he who thinks God is comprehended knows Him not. God is unknown to those who know Him, and is known to those who do not know Him at all.

Wisdom of Insecurity-----Alan W. Watts

Ye suffer from yourselves, none other holds you that ye live and die and whirl upon the wheel, and hug it and kiss its spokes of agony, it's tire of tears, it's nave of nothingness.

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From Parents Flag National.....

You, yes you, whether you are a parent, a friend, a gay or non-gay, YOU are important to us. Your participation, your reactions, your actions are the life and blood of Parents Flag.

Speakers who share, with us, their feelings, thoughts, and knowledge, give us purpose and direction and an opportunity to learn directly from motivators and experts.

For the National Parents Flag September meeting their speaker will be Dr. Leonard Felder, a psychologist and author who will discuss "What Do We Expect from Our Parents/What Do We Expect from Our Children?" How do we relate to our children and how can this be

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YOUR MEMBERSHIP IS NEEDED

Your membership in Parents FLAG will help support monthly programs, publicity, community education, and dues to National Parents FLAG. Please join if you have not done so.

Annual individual membership - \$15.00
Annual family membership - \$25.00



Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays

Meetings - 2 PM Third Sundays
Presbyterian Center, 41 Oakdale

Houston, Texas
(713) 464-6663

SEPTEMBER, 1985

Homosexuality continues to be an issue in Houston, with the majority of heterosexual people. A young man's employment was terminated by Randall's Supermarkets when another employee told management that the young man is gay. Another avowed homosexual has sued Safeway and a Houston man for \$2.66 million, claiming he was fired when false rumors that he has AIDS circulated among his co-workers. He was a pharmacy technician there. Houston Gay Political Caucus' Ray Hill is investigating the Safeway firing.

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Reflections by a Methodist Pastor; (WNC Parents FLAG Newsletter August 1985) Not long ago Dr. Edward W. Bauman, senior minister of Foundry United Methodist Church in Washington, D.C. presented a television program and preached a sermon on "The Gay Life." The intensity of the expressions of anger and hatred which resulted prompted further reflection which we quote:

"The thing that impressed me most, however, and move me deeply was the discovery of the incredible amount of suffering experienced by homosexuals. For centuries the church refused to serve them Holy Communion. They were often stripped, castrated, marched through the streets and executed. In Hitler's Germany they were exterminated by the thousands in the furnaces and gas chambers.

"In our own country, gay persons are disowned by their families, ridiculed and rejected by society, made the object of cruel jokes, and forced to laugh at the jokes lest their "secret" be revealed. They are barred from jobs and housing, often living in loneliness, seeking companionship in sordid places and in devious (and dangerous!) ways. They have become the "lepers" of our society. How many young people are there who lie awake at night, terrified by these "feelings," with no one to talk to? Is this one of the reasons for the increase in adolescent suicide?

"One young man told his parents he was a homosexual. His mother said, 'Son, I have made only one mistake in my life.' 'What is it?' he asked. 'I should have had an abortion when I was pregnant with you.' From that time she spoke to her friends as if her son were dead.

"A high-school boy told his parents he was gay. On his graduation day his father gave him his graduation gift--an envelope with a one-way train ticket and twenty-five dollars. 'Start packing,' he said. He drove the boy to the station in total silence and said to him as he got out of the car, 'I never want to hear from you again.'

"I would like to believe that these are exceptional situations. They are not. It has become increasingly clear to me that homosexuals are the ridiculed and rejected persons of our society, as they have been for centuries. It is also clear that Jesus came to minister to the ridiculed and rejected. He ministered to them so completely that he became identified with them and was ultimately crucified as one of the ridiculed and rejected himself. He came to bring God's love to them to tell them that they are loved, that they are accepted.

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was a pharmacy technician there. Houston Gay Political Caucus' Ray Hill is investigating the Safeway firing.

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TAKE TIME: Take Time to think...It is the source of power. Take Time to play...It is the secret of perpetual youth. Take Time to read...It is the fountain of wisdom. Take Time to pray...It is the greatest power on earth. Take Time to love and be loved...It is a God-given privilege. Take Time to be friendly...It is the road to happiness. Take Time to laugh...It is the music of the soul. Take Time to give...It is too short a day to be selfish. Take Time to work...It is the price of success. Take Time to do charity...It is the key to heaven.

* * * * *

SEPTEMBER, 1985

Page -2-

We had three first-time parents at our August Meeting. The all found us through our national office. We are most happy to have them join us. Marguerite was already accepting and wants to be supportive. John and Edith only needed to learn about homosexuality and to be supportive. These are beautiful people. Kelly and Alex from Dignity met with us and Kelly showed a video tape of the Harvy Milk School for gay youth. Kelly and Alex were also helpful to the new parents. We ended by everyone embracing each other. Gays and lesbians are helpful at our meetings.

* * * * *

Freda spoke very briefly to the counselors of Houston Independent School District, at their In Service session, about counseling of gay and lesbian students in secondary classes. They seemed to be interested and were pleased that there is a good possibility of a lengthier time slot later. Brochures were left for the counselors and they all took our contact phone number and name. We thank Ms. Collins for arranging the time for this.

* * * * *

ABOUT PARENTS & FRIENDS OF LESBIANS AND GAYS: The first group of parents of Gay persons was formed in New York in 1973. Shortly thereafter groups formed in Los Angeles and in other parts of the country. In 1981 the Federation was formed, with the acronym Parents FLAG. Although members are mostly mothers and fathers of Lesbians and Gay men, other relatives and friends, and Gays, are also active members. Everyone is welcome. Each parents group is a local organization, but each group is concerned with national and international issues as well. Each group's primary objective is to help parents and their Gay children to understand and love one another, and to offer mutual support wherever it is needed.

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OUR NATIONAL CONVENTION IS OCTOBER 25 to 28 IN ATLANTA, GA.

* * * * *

YOUR MEMBERSHIP IS NEEDED

Your membership in Parents FLAG will help support monthly programs, publicity, community education, and dues to National Parents FLAG. Please join if you have not done so.

Annual individual membership - \$15.00

Annual family membership - \$25.00

* * * * *

Parents FLAG was very upset and disappointed to learn that the Federal Appeals Court in New Orleans voted to uphold the Texas sodomy law, "outlawing homosexual activity and making the private sexual lives of gay Texans illegal." Parents FLAG does not accept the fact that their children are criminals! This will have to change!

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Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays

Meetings - 2 PM Third Sundays
Presbyterian Center, 41 Oakdale

Houston, Texas
(713) 464-6663

November, 1985

XX

Ray Hill, Gay Activist, met with us to plan ways to put some life into Parent Flag Houston. We have so few members for a city the size of Houston. Ray says that we will grow many times the size that we are now. He also suggested that we get Rev. John Gill of MCCR Houston to help us. I talked to Rev. Gill and he will be working with us after the holidays, much to my delight. He was so much help to the Fort Lauderdale group and I know that he will be here also.

XX

We were pleased that Ray brought his Mother and sister to our meeting and hope that they will come back.

XX

Now - Convention news..... Each convention gets better than the previous one and Atlanta was no exception. The Atlanta Gay Center hosted a cocktail party Saturday evening for Parent Flag then we had a sumptuous barbeque and buffet at the Cove; a Gay club. We also stayed and danced. We enjoyed the evening. From there we went to the Library, another Gay club and discoed for some time before going on to Illusions, a Gay Drag show with beautiful men. We then would "Convention" all day until about 10 P.M. then make the clubs again.

XX

We were entertained by the Atlanta Gay Center Sunday evening- such wonderful music, so much talent. The Lambda Chorale was excellent also.

XX

Dr. James Curran, Center for Disease Control gave a good presentation on A.I.D.S. research and we agreed with most everything he had to say except the confidentiality of the HTLV-III test. He is a very knowledgeable person and we were pleased to have him. He stayed for our banquet and I had the privilege of sitting by and talking to him so I asked him a lot of questions.

XX

Mayor Andrew Young proclaimed October 25-28 as Parent Flag Days in Atlanta welcoming and offering support to over 100 parents of Gays and Lesbians who were in Atlanta for our fourth annual National Convention. Our convention next year will be in Portland, Oregon.

The theme of this years convention was "What will the Neighbors Say?" We hope they do "Say." That gives us the opportunity to educate them about homosexuality.

XX

Our Convention closed with all of us taking the over 1000 colorful balloons from the ceiling of the banquet room and releasing one of the ten that we had for one in ten who are gay; then we let the others fly for the many parents and friends of gay people. What a thrill to see them floating off together. The next morning we saw some hanging to trees and wires and they were for those gays whose parents refuse to accept their gay children. These parents miss so much.

XX

It was good to again see the friends at the convention that we had not seen since last year even though some of us contact each other through the year. Many friendships are made each year and they will continue to grow as new ones attend each year. They are blessings to us all.

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We get back to work now and do everything we can possibly do to support the rights of gays and to educate everyone we can about the fact that there is nothing wrong with our children and friends.

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Freda is no longer Director of the Southern Region. Molly Webster of New Orleans was elected the Director and Freda was moved up as one of the National Vice - Presidents.

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We wish for all of you a thankful Thanksgiving and a Merry Christmas as well as a Happy Hannaka and to all whatever you may celebrate.

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And I hope that I learn to type better.



Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays

Houston, Texas
(713) 464-6663

Meetings - 2 PM Third Sundays
Presbyterian Center, 41 Oakdale

December, 1985

We in Houston, Tex. believe that these two articles from the Asheville, North Carolina newsletter are important enough to repeat in the Houston newsletter.

California Rabbi pleads case of Persons with AIDS

By Steve Rosenberg

SAN FRANCISCO — Senior Rabbi Robert Kirschner stunned members of Temple Emanu-El with his sermon on Yom Kippur, the holiest day in the Jewish calendar. He pleaded for compassion and help for the victims of AIDS. The congregation members responded with over \$15,000 for medical services for persons with AIDS.

On the evening of September 4th, at each of two services filled to capacity with 2,000 members, Rabbi Kirschner asked his congregation to "Imagine if a few... were fired from his job, or evicted from his apartment, or expelled from a hospital, because is Jewish disease was fatal and no one wanted to work with him, or live near him, or care for him. Imagine the outrage of the Jewish community if, God forbid, such things were to happen. Then imagine what the gay community must feel at this moment, and

imagine what they must think of our silence."

Rabbi Kirschner quoted from the Book of Leviticus which tells of lepers being stoned and sages shouting at them to "Stop contaminating us and go back to where you came from!" Kirschner continued by telling the congregation that he was not proud of this passage, but rather that "I think it has something to teach us." He explained that the hostility of the quote arises not only from the fear of contagion. It comes also from the rabbinical literature where lepers are accused of everything from murder to incest, idolatry to robbery, perjury to blasphemy to slander. A leper in biblical days was not only to be afflicted with a disease in punishment, but to be despised because of it. "It was not only to die a horrible death, but to be accused of deserving it."

In comparing leprosy to AIDS he said "Like the ancient rabbis, we

prefer to keep our distance from the victims of this illness. Like them, we are afraid of catching it. Our aversion, too, goes beyond the fear of infection. We shrink from people with AIDS not only because they are sick but because we don't like how they got sick. When it comes to homosexuals and drug addicts, our sympathy for their affliction is diluted by the suspicion that they deserve it. Like the ancient leper, the AIDS patient suffers not only the torment of his illness but the stigma of it. He is shunned not just for what he has but for what he is. His life, and now his death, are alike regarded as a kind of disgrace."

The Rabbi finished his sermon by telling his congregation that "Tomorrow afternoon, traditional (Orthodox) Jews around the world will read the 18th chapter of Leviticus. This is where homosexuality is described as an abomination punishable by death. But Reform Judaism departs from

the Torah on occasion. We do not stone adulterers; we do not ostracize children of forbidden marriages; we do not sprinkle lepers with blood. Such biblical legislation, we believe, is the work not of divine but of mortal and fallible hands, and we consign it to the antiquity from which it came."

His final thought to the assembled congregants was, "The God we revere is the One who... sides not with the might but with the forlorn, who hears the cry of the helpless and defends the defenseless. The God we revere is the One who loved us when we were unwanted, the unwelcome, the exiled and the outcast. A belief in this God, to my way of thinking, simply cannot be reconciled with a judgement of anathema upon homosexuals, or lepers or any other of His children."

(EDITOR'S NOTE: These quotes were taken from an article appearing in the October 10 issue of the Bay Area Reporter.)

THE NEW YORK TIMES, MONDAY, AUGUST 26, 1985

Panelists Cite Biological Roots for Homosexuality

By SANDRA BLAKESLEE

Special to The New York Times

LOS ANGELES, Aug. 25 — Many parents of homosexual children believe homosexuality is rooted in biological rather than psychological causes, according to participants in a special discussion today at the annual convention of the American Psychological Association.

These parents reject the widely held belief that domineering mothers and absent fathers are the reason a child becomes homosexual.

The discussion was held in a panel, "Parental Support of Gay Children: Empirical, Experiential and Organizational Perspectives," with parents who had set up a nationwide peer counseling network to help other parents of homosexual children to cope with guilt and fears. In talking with thousands of families, the panelists said, no

Many parents have found great relief in talking to one another, said Adele Starr, who found out 17 years ago that one of her sons was homosexual. "In those days," she said, "the law said my son was a criminal, the church said he was a sinner and the medical profession said he was sick. Books implied that I caused it all."

Today Mrs. Starr is president of Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, an organization of 86 groups that help parents of homosexual children.

Peer Counseling Is Advised

While there are able psychologists around, Mrs. Starr said, "I will say that nothing can take the place of parent to parent peer counseling." Over the years, she said, many parents have come to realize "that we do not have a problem, that the problem is with a misinformed society." Several lessons have come from the organization's

Another speaker, Betty Fairchild, recalled that 15 years ago, when her son told her he was homosexual, she was stunned, devastated, and disbelieving. "In the days and weeks following my son's revelation, I wanted to talk with him about it endlessly, so I could 'understand' it and him," she said. "Of course, what I really wanted to hear was that it had been just a phase, that he was over it and was going to be okay."

Today, Mrs. Fairchild is a leader in the movement to help parents come to grips, as she did, with the news that their child was homosexual. After the shock of disclosure, she said, most parents need counseling.

Outdated Misconceptions

Dr. Helena Carlson, a professor of psychology at Lewis and Clark College, said most parental anxiety was based on outdated misconceptions and misun-

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The discussion was held in a panel, "Parental Support of Gay Children: Empirical, Experiential and Organizational Perspectives," with parents who had set up a nationwide peer counseling network to help other parents of homosexual children to cope with guilt and fears. In talking with thousands of families, the panelists said, no consistent psychological patterns had emerged in the parents of homosexuals.

Psychologists Support View

Some psychologists at the convention, which ends Tuesday, also embraced this view. In a panel on homosexuality and psychology, Dr. Judd Marmor, a psychiatrist from Stanford University, said that the roots of gender identity were not well understood. "There may be some prenatal source," he said. "Familial patterns, if they exist, could be a reaction to, not a cause of, gender distortion patterns."

This year the association established a new division for the homosexuality and psychology. In 1973 it reclassified homosexuality from mental illness to psychological disorder. The parents said that the current classification may one day be revised to reflect their findings.

Many parents have found great relief in talking to one another, said Adele Starr, who found out 17 years ago that one of her sons was homosexual. "In those days," she said, "the law said my son was a criminal, the church said he was a sinner and the medical profession said he was sick. Books implied that I caused it all."

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Peer Counseling Is Advised

While there are able psychologists around, Mrs. Starr said; "I will say that nothing can take the place of parent to parent peer counseling." Over the years, she said, many parents have come to realize "that we do not have a problem, that the problem is with a misinformed society." Several lessons have come from the organization's meetings, she said.

For example, about 10 percent of the population is naturally attracted to the same sex, Mrs. Starr said, "just as it is natural for the rest of the population to be attracted to the opposite sex." She added, "It is extremely important to parents to understand that concept."

Second, she said: "We have learned there is no choice. No one chooses to be gay. We believe our gay children were born that way, that homosexuality, like heterosexuality, is innate. Some of us think it is inherited and that it runs in families."

Finally, she said, there appears to be no pattern to the kind of family that has a homosexual child. "We come from every kind of background — racial, ethnic, religious, economic, political — and every kind of family model — divorced, absent parent, devoted parents, weak or strong mother."

Another speaker, Betty Fairchild, recalled that 15 years ago, when her son told her he was homosexual, she was stunned, devastated, and disbelieving. "In the days and weeks following my son's revelation, I wanted to talk with him about it endlessly, so I could 'understand' it and him," she said. "Of course, what I really wanted to hear was that it had been just a phase, that he was over it and was going to be okay."

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Outdated Misconceptions

Dr. Helena Carlson, a professor of psychology at Lewis and Clark College, said most parental anxiety was based on outdated misconceptions and misunderstanding. "A significant amount of research suggests that parents are not responsible for their children's sexual orientation," she said. The stereotype that mothers cause their sons to be homosexual, she said, is false.

"Families of homosexuals frequently believe that they must hide the fact that they have a homosexual child from friends, neighbors, relatives and close associates. In this way, parents become closeted. Such secrecy only produces the same pain their children felt when they were hiding their sexual orientation," Dr. Carlson said.

She said that although parents frequently reject their homosexual child initially, "the love for their child usually prevails. And once understanding and acceptance have been achieved, most families report a richer and more loving relationship."