

OUT

1979

and

AROUND

Newsletter of the Bryn Mawr-Haverford Gay People's Alliance

Volume 2, Number 1, March 1979

The Bryn Mawr-Haverford Gay People's Alliance was founded early in the fall of 1975. Membership in the organization is open to all Bryn Mawr and Haverford students, faculty and alumni.

We are proud to present this, our fourth publication. In our first, the "Coming Out" pamphlet, which was distributed in the spring of 1976, we dealt almost entirely with the difficult issue of how a person recognizes that he/she is gay and begins to tell his/her family and friends. The "Newsletter" of the fall of 1976 dealt with a greater variety of gay issues, and included poetry, short stories, and information on local and national gay activities. "Out and Around", distributed during Gay Week in April of 1978, spanned both personal and political issues. With this newsletter, we hope to bring both ourselves and you up to date.

Tolerance vs Acceptance

A recent Time Magazine essay argued for tolerance as society's best solution to the "problem" of homosexuality, reflecting a general trend to avoid confronting issues directly. Toleration is a popular concept, but it is not approval and acceptance, in fact it is a front for unspoken disapproval.

It is also argued that "the wisest public policy towards homosexuality is no public policy whatsoever." But this is equally as bad as it asks that the law be blind to injustice. We, like every other group, demand protection of the law.

To live openly without fear we need approval and demand acceptance and justice.

GPA: Four Good Years

The Gay People's Alliance is now four years old, and I am a senior. When my class graduates, there will be no students here who remember the college without GPA. The founding and growth of GPA has marked a change for the better at Bryn Mawr and Haverford, better for gay students, staff, and professors, and better for the community as a whole. A few days ago someone asked how GPA got its reputation for being the most friendly, "together," gay student organization in the area. Here are some reasons.

We have drawn together out of common interest and need for support. Joining GPA (for our gay members) is a commitment, a statement, and a benefit, we each gain personally from the support of our friends.

The group has political as well as social aims and activities. Unlike many college gay groups, we're not a weekly disco. Our discussion sessions cover topics that concern us personally, and people speak with openness, sensitivity, and insight, sharing ideas and feelings in a way that is mature, not "confessional".

Our political activities have kept us aware of the need to inform the community about homosexuality and gay issues. Planning speakers, films and events gives us goals to work toward and structures our activities. And, as an organization we are well structured, with officers, committees and a constitution; we are efficient in our political activities, and have built in guidelines to aid us in being a support group.

The fact that we are a mixed group, men and women, also contributes to our strength. We form friendships, and contribute the perspectives and special concerns of lesbians and gay men; and of

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Bryn Mawr students and Haverford students. We are highly conscious of the dangers of sex-role stereotyping, and have gained a good feminist consciousness from working together.

The Bryn Mawr and Haverford communities too, have made us welcome. There are many bigoted individuals on campus whom we will never be able to reach; but on the whole we have been treated with respect as an organization. SGA and SC funding; aid from the counseling services; the calendar offices; enthusiastic student response to our newsletters and attendance at dances all contribute to our sense of belonging.

Finally, of course, it is the members of GPA as individuals, who have been and will continue to be the reason for our success. As long as our society stigmatizes gay people, there will be need for gay people to actively reach out in support of one another, and to educate straight friends and acquaintances.

For many Bryn Mawr and Haverford students it has been the loving concern of fellow members of the Gay People's Alliance that has helped us to accept ourselves and our sexuality in the face of a hostile society; helped us to make the decision to come out; and to move out into the "real world" with pride in ourselves as gay people.

--Martha Kaplan

S²IL²C at Bryn Mawr

The Seven Sisters/Ivy League Lesbian Conference (S²IL²C) will be held at Bryn Mawr on April 6, 7 and 8. The aim of the conference is to bring together a number of women with both similar and diverse experiences as lesbians and students; to exchange information, discuss strategies for personal growth and political change and to establish a network for further communication. Women from up to fifteen other colleges and universities are expected to attend.

Events at the conference will include a talk by lesbian-feminist critic and novelist Kate Millet, a concert by the Anna Crusis Women's choir, and a number of workshops. Kate Millet's talk and the concert will be open to the community. Workshops will be open to women only.

Women interested in further information about the Conference, or who would like to help with organization and publicity, or who can offer housing for visiting participants should contact Denise Kulp (Rhoads) or Martha Kaplan (Pem West).

--Martha Kaplan

News Flashes: 1978

Nov. 7: California voters rejected a state-wide proposition which would have banned the hiring of homosexual teachers in public schools. A broad based coalition of gay, straight, liberal, and conservative organizations was instrumental in the defeat of Proposition 6.

Nov. 7: In Seattle, Oregon, the city's voters rejected an initiative which would have overturned the city's gay rights ordinance. Seattle's anti-discrimination bill is hailed as one of the toughest in the nation.

Nov. 9: The New York City Council voted to reject a bill aimed at outlawing discrimination against homosexuals in housing, employment, and public accommodations. The rejection sparked angry protest from spectators and led to a spontaneous City Hall demonstration by several thousand supporters of the bill.

Nov. 27: San Francisco. The nation's first openly gay public official, City Supervisor Harvey Milk, and Mayor George Moscone were assassinated in their City Hall offices. Milk, who represented the predominately homosexual Castro and Haight-Ashbury districts, had been a leading exponent of the liberal Moscone administration, and was recognized as one of the country's most important gay rights leaders.

Dec. 7: The Supreme Court ruled unanimously that the Defense Department could no longer automatically discharge homosexuals from the nation's armed forces without offering "some reasoned explanation" or specific reasons. In effect, the ruling says that homosexuality per se is insufficient cause for automatic dismissal.

--compiled by Noel Evans--

GPA NOW

This semester GPA plans to expand our roster of events in an effort to include more members of the bi-college community in our activities. Since its inception over three years ago, GPA has worked for acceptance and toleration within the community, and has offered many programs and activities to benefit everybody, such as "Gay Week" and open dances.

A problem has arisen in that GPA has not been perceived as the voice of the gay community. This is not true, as there are many gay people at Bryn Mawr and Haverford who do not associate themselves with GPA, who do not wish to politicize their personal feelings. (See "Out and Around", Spring '78)

In an effort to better serve these gay members of the community, as well as benefit and inform all members of the bi-college community, GPA is now attempting to broaden our scope of activities. Our bi-weekly speaker series, begun in February, offers someone from the area speaking on topics of gay concern. Recent guests have included Mary Ann Scott of the Haverford firm, who discussed various forms of sexually transmitted diseases, and Spenser Lee, of the American Civil Liberties Union, who spoke on "Homosexuality and the Law." Future guests will include people involved in the gay political movement. In Philadelphia, a gay psychologist, and a lawyer very active in lesbian mother custody cases. These programs occur every other Thursday during the discussion portion of the GPA meeting at 9:30pm in the College Inn. All are welcome.

The Second Annual Seven Sisters/League Lesbian Conference, to be held April 6th and 7th, will include a talk

Kate Millet, a poetry reading by Susan Griffin, and a concert featuring Ruth Latham and the Anna Crusis Women's Choir. These events will be open to the public. IL²C II offers an opportunity for women from various colleges to get together and discuss issues relating to lesbianism.

There is also an event which is of interest to many women in the community who generally do not involve themselves with GPA activities.

GPA would like to become more accessible to a greater number of people, but to do this we need your input. If you have any ideas or suggestions, please let us know. Come to a meeting. Drop us a note. Let us know how GPA can better serve you, as a member of the Bryn Mawr-Haverford community.

--Denise Kulp

"Our voices are our most powerful weapon; we will destroy the heterosexual myths about us and their domination over us."

-Activist Karla Jay



Homosexuality: Academic Research

Until the emergence of the gay liberation movement in the late 1960's, most academic research on homosexuality was done within the psychiatric tradition from a "mental disorder" perspective. Sociological and psychological research centered on patterns of homosexual causation and effective heterosexual conversions.

Gay activists have called for a new approach geared toward questions of social restraint and psychological pressures that mold the homosexual lifestyle.

Response to this need has come from the homosexual community and slowly from the academic world as well. The American Psychiatric Association removed "homosexuality" from its list of personality disorders and many pioneering studies were done. Most notably, Bell and Weinberg, of the Kinsey Institute, published Homosexualities in which they argued for a "sexuality as natural human diversity" viewpoint.

A new "sociology of sex", within the Symbolic-Interactionist perspective, is also developing. The meanings of sexuality and the ways in which social forces shape behavior are the foci of research. Adaptation and stigma management are main areas of inquiry. The Journal of Homosexuality is a new periodical entirely devoted to research in this area.

Some interesting work has been done by Bryn Mawr and Haverford students. Last year a Bryn Mawr sociology student studied political involvement and a Bryn Mawr and Haverford student team researched dyadic gay relationships. Last semester, work was done in general sociological theory and this semester sociology students are studying lesbian friendships and gender role identification.

--Mary Lou Soczek

(Adapted from an article in The College News, February 20, 1979)

Politics and the Luxury of Love: The Other Side of Liberation

The Views of a Gay Activist

Over the past ten years, the gay liberation movement has grown in numbers and support. National gay rights organizations have organized to work for social, cultural, and political change in our society. Gay politicians acknowledge that "in unity there is strength" and urge all lesbians and gay men to "come out of the closets" and fight oppression.

Coming Out (actively expressing the fact that one is gay by: telling friends and acquaintances, participating openly in gay social and political activities, and signing manifestos!) is a personal expression of joy in our lifestyle-- but it is also a political statement in which we label ourselves and form a revolutionary power group. Coming Out is a process and strategy we use both to cope with and to change our society.

For many Coming Out is a difficult if not impossible move. Accepting the label of homosexual, which so many in our society consider negative, means inviting oppression and conflict. Many lesbians and gay men both in the college community and in the larger society never fully come out. The personal sense of liberation which comes with aggressive self-assertion sometimes cannot compensate for lost jobs and alienated friends and family members.

There are other reasons, however, for hesitation. Coming Out is a personal dilemma. In politicization we often are forced to give up the luxury of our private lives. Personal lives are the bases of our struggle, so our relationships naturally come out into our political actions. In developing theory, love becomes subject to analysis. Many of us come to feel that we are deprived of the privacy that a personal emotional life usually offers.

But we go on. Through political involvement we open ourselves to severe questioning. We are pressed to defend our views. We experience comradeship with other gay activists. Yet, we also meet many non-political gay individuals and come to appreciate-- and even envy-- their relatively private existence. And we must learn to respect their choice not to be politically active.

It's hard being "on stage" all the time. We bear the responsibility of representing the entire gay population and presenting a blameless example of homosexuality to the viewing public. We vie for political correctness in our personal

lives. We try, perhaps too hard, to prove that our relationships are perfect.

Some of us bear the increased pressure of having lovers who are not as "out" as we are and who, for various reasons, would suffer if our relationship were to be made known. We are often caught in the middle, but we cannot remain there very long.

Every lesbian and gay man must make a decision about politics and the luxury of love. Privacy is appealing, but even if we could choose to take back our political statements, I believe few of us would choose to do so. To free ourselves and our friends, a human right to love is a statement we cannot afford not to make.

--Mary Lou Soczek

"Faggots & Faries & Dykes! Oh My!"

"2,4,6,8 Gay is just as good as Straight! 3,5,7,9 Lesbians are mighty fine!"

"Our Bodies, Our Lives, Our Right to Decide!"

Up to Date

GPA meets on Thursday evenings on the second floor of the College Inn, BMC. Business meetings are at 8:30pm, followed by discussion at 9:30pm. All are welcome to attend.

GPA's Office is located in Jones Basement, HC. During Office Hours, our collection of books and periodicals is open and a member of GPA is available for questions or discussions.

OFFICERS

Chairperson:	Political Committee:
Denise Kulp	Noel Evans
Ass't Chairperson:	Publicity Committee:
Anne Lafferty	Mary Lou Soczek

OFFICE HOURS

Monday 7-9pm	Wednesday 7-9pm
Tuesday 7-9pm	Saturday 1-5pm

NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE

Judy Calhoun, Martha Kaplan, Denise Kulp, Anne Lafferty, Mary Lou Soczek