

APPENDIX A: GAY FATHERS' GROUPS

Gay Fathers of Toronto is one of a growing number of gay fathers' groups developing across the United States and Canada. The fact of having children draws gay fathers together, for social support and because of concerns for their children in what is still to a great extent a homophobic world.

The following is the statement of objectives for Gay Fathers of Toronto, and could serve as a philosophical base for setting up such a group. Certainly the majority of homosexual fathers are either still in the closet or unaware that others such as themselves exist. Even knowing two or three other men in the same situation can be a help. No one else fully understands.

While a couple can split up, each going his or her own way (although not, certainly, without heartache and emotional stress) to make a new life for themselves, the man who has children unless he deliberately cuts himself off, has ties to the family that non-parent gays and non-gays cannot, or do not want to, understand.

We would like to think that groups such as ours will make themselves unnecessary or redundant by advancing their goals and the cause of liberation for all gays. That is the long-term goal — alongside, perhaps, the establishment of the Gay Fathers' Softball League and the writing of the "Gay Fathers' Cookbook and Guide to Organized Anarchy and Parliamentary Procedure." Until the day comes, however, that sees these long-term goals accomplished, and while young homosexual men continue to embrace both straight life and straight wife, and while they continue to have children, groups like ours must continue to exist because they fulfill a real need and perform a service that no other agency in society offers.

GAY FATHERS OF TORONTO

Basic Objectives:

Gay Fathers of Toronto has four basic objectives:

- Support
- Education
- Social Relations and Friendship
- Political Action

Support

The main function of the GFT at this time is to support all Gay Fathers, those already out, those in the process of coming out, and those still in the closet.

- Those already out, whether embroiled in litigation, still suffering the trauma of separation, or even well-established in the gay community, need to know that others sympathize and can help.
- Those in the process of coming out need a group to depend on for stability and encouragement, a way to reaffirm their gay identity in a positive way, and the knowledge that where they are going others have successfully gone.
- Those still in the closet need to be aware of the existence of a group such as GFT; aware that discreet, positive support is available, and that there is someone willing to listen, as

we all have our story to tell that needs to be told.

Education

Self-education. Apart from the more subtle educative process involved in joining any group, i.e., learning what being gay is all about and what other gay people are like, GFT can offer more practical education for its members — in topics such as legal rights, child custody, and child raising (e.g., how and when to disclose your gayness to your children, or how to counteract anti-gay propaganda repeated parrot-fashion by your children).

Public education. We all agree that the general public, while sometimes sympathetic to [t] problems of gay people, need to be made aware of the value of gay people in society, and specifically that being gay and being a parent are not mutually exclusive. Therefore, GFT, by its existence, can be a way of bringing this to the public. However, we must be aware of the implications of going public, and must only do so in accordance with the needs of the members of the group, and in relation to its other objectives.

Social Relations and Friendship

As a means of meeting others in the same circumstances, GFT fills a definite need socially, especially for those members still in family situations.

Political Action

GFT exists as a group within the larger gay community and as such can have some political weight. We are all engaged, whether voluntarily or not, in the struggle for gay rights, by the very fact of being gay. Thus we cannot deny the existence of political action. This is not the prime objective of GFT, nor should it be, but our interaction with other facets of the gay community can have a beneficial effect on gay society. What political weight we have comes not from radical pronouncements or angry manifestos, but from our being a stable, serious, and responsible group of people dedicated to both the open gay existence and to our children.

Long-Term Objectives

These can be as varied as the group members themselves. The ultimate goal for all gay people is a life free from repression and discrimination and as gay fathers we have an extra interest in forming a tolerant society, so that our children, in whatever form their individuality takes, can be sure in that individuality. We should, therefore, look beyond our immediate concerns to those of other discriminated groups — lesbian mothers, gays in general, women, racial minorities, the disabled — everyone whom society has disallowed their rightful place.

GAY FATHERS COALITION

Gay Fathers of Toronto is a member of the Gay Fathers Coalition, centered in Washington, D.C. and whose statement of purpose follows. (For the addresses of this group, see Appendix C).

Statement of Purpose

We are a group of fathers who are gay. Our experiences have been varied and we are united in our determination to integrate these two aspects of our lives. In the past our roles as fathers and gay men have been viewed as incompatible, both by society at large and, all too often, by ourselves as

well. We believe, on the contrary, that gay men can love and nourish children and provide a safe environment in which girls and boys can mature into loving and productive men and women.

We have founded this organization to help ourselves and others in similar situations to continue to grow and develop in ways which draw upon the rich experiences of both aspects of our lives. We intend to do this by forming mutually supportive groups for building a positive self-image and for creative problem solving, by locating other gay men who are fathers or are contemplating fatherhood and may be struggling alone, and by educating professionals and the general public both to our special strengths and our special concerns.

STATEMENT OF POLICY

1. Membership and Community of Interest

Our affiliates include gay fathers' groups, gay and lesbian parents' groups and individuals acting as local contacts in areas where there are no such groups currently in existence.

At the present time we believe that we can adequately represent only gay males in parenting situations. However, we have an active interest in the concerns of lesbian mothers and we want to assist and to cooperate fully with lesbian mothers who share our parenting concerns.

We support and welcome as members gay fathers, lovers of gay fathers, and gay men who are committed to adopting children or providing foster care. Delegates to the Gay Fathers Coalition are presently limited to these categories. We recognize that local groups will continue to observe their own requirements for membership.

2. Support for Children

We support lesbian and gay parents in helping their children to deal with the effects of homophobic attitudes and myths.

We are committed to bringing about changes in the attitudes of society that cause confusion in our children about our worthiness as parents and our ability to love and nurture them or that cause them to be anxious about their own sexual development.

We affirm without qualification that we can and do serve as positive role models for our own children, as well as for all children, whatever their sexual orientations.

We are strongly committed to a non-sexist upbringing of our children.

We affirm that all children have the right to develop their natural sexuality free from stereotypes, fear, or coercion.

3. Support for Local Groups

In order to provide support for existing groups and to act as a catalyst to form new groups, we will:

- Prepare a support packet for gay fathers groups that will provide encouragement, assistance, and information to existing, new and potential groups. This packet will later be expanded to meet the needs of other groups relative to gay parents, such as mental

health workers, judges, attorneys and legislators, children, social action agencies, etc.

- Act as a clearinghouse for the collection and dissemination of information on gay parenting.
- Establish a national network of local representatives to assist individualsⁱⁿ forming new groups or to assist them on a one-to-one basis if group formation is not feasible.

4. *Support for Individuals in Parenting Roles*

In order to provide support for individual gay fathers or those who otherwise find themselves in a child-nurturing situation, we will:

- Provide information on parenting, such as the previously-mentioned support packet.
- Put them in contact with other gay parents in their area.
- Act as a reference source for legal problems.
- Provide information, counselling, and support to fathers estranged from their children because of court orders, geographic distance, homophobic attitudes in themselves or in others, or any other reasons.

5. *Educational Outreach*

We plan to educate the general public as well as the gay community about the fact that there are substantial numbers of gay fathers and lesbian mothers and that we are fully effective parents.

To work toward educating professionals and the general public we will:

- Encourage valid research on gay parenting and disseminate the results of this research.
- Provide and support speakers for gay and non-gay groups.
- Engage in outreach to the gay and non-gay media.

6. *Legislation*

We support the passage of legislation designed to eliminate the effects of discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

We are particularly committed to support laws and rulings that forbid the consideration of sex or sexual orientation in matters of divorce, separation, alimony, child support, childcare, foster care, visitation, and custody.

APPENDIX B: A SAMPLE OF ANTI-HOMOSEXUAL HATE LITERATURE

The League Against Homosexuals and several other groups in Toronto were aroused during recent election campaigns into virulent and persistent attacks on gays. The preferred method of attack by these groups is to push fliers through citizens' mailboxes. This literature relies on the time-tested techniques perfected by Joseph Goebbels, Hitler's propagandist chief: if you repeat a lie often enough, some people, and sometimes many people, will accept it as truth.

The homophobic people who produce and tirelessly distribute this literature are undoubtedly motivated by the growing openness and success of the gay liberation movement. Although they are small in number, these people who hate and fear more than they love can significantly influence political events in a society that is vaguely hostile to, prejudiced towards, or simply ignorant of homosexuality. In some sense, then, such groups speak for society — at least for those parts of society that will not grant human rights to homosexuals. If the materials produced by such groups as the League Against Homosexuals were directed against other targets, such as women, Jews, Blacks, or other minorities and disadvantaged groups, the force of the law could be used to prevent distribution of the material. But no such protection is offered to homosexuals and so the League and other groups can continue to vilify and defame them with impunity.

In the fall of 1980, the homosexual community in Toronto tried to establish a special liaison with the Toronto Board of Education, as the Board had done with several other community groups. The public response to the Board's initial interest and support of the proposal was swift and abusive. The Board promptly withdrew its support from the proposal to establish the liaison committee.

Gay Fathers of Toronto was among the groups that approached the Board of Education to establish the liaison because we felt and still feel that education has a responsibility to our children and to all children to make the facts of homosexuality known to them. But the League Against Homosexuals thinks otherwise. They and similar groups want to know nothing of the facts. They prefer to live the fantasy that sees homosexuals as child seducers who reproduce by infecting children with the same sin and sickness that they revel in for themselves.

The outcome of the November 1980 election in Toronto was that Mayor John Sewell, who had supported the notion of human rights for homosexuals, was defeated by the narrow margin of 2,000 votes across the entire city, and George Hislop, a gay activist, running for alderman with the endorsement of a progressive community organization in the downtown ward that includes Toronto's Gay Ghetto was defeated by a similar margin. Although neither Sewell nor Hislop had been involved in the proposal to establish the liaison between the Board of Education and the gay community, they were held responsible for the growing presence of open homosexuals in society and therefore for the increased risk to children. The hate literature was a response to the simple idea that homosexuals are citizens like other citizens and are worthy, therefore, of all the civil rights that other citizens enjoy.

Read the following tract carefully and remember that it was at one time available to anyone who wished to pick it up from the general information desk of the largest police station in downtown Toronto. Ask why some people write such tracts, why some distribute them, and why others accept them as true.

"Appendix A & B" and "References" are from the book *Gay Fathers*
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LEAGUE AGAINST HOMOSEXUALS

(L.A.H.)



QUEERS DO NOT PRODUCE: THEY SEDUCE!

QUESTIONS FOR TODAY'S PARENTS AND FUTURE PARENTS:

- DO YOU WANT YOUR CHILDREN TAUGHT BY QUEERS?
- DO YOU WISH TO HAVE YOUR CHILD TURN INTO A QUEER?
- DO YOU WISH TO HAVE YOUR CHILD MARRY THE SAME SEX?
- DO YOU WISH TO KILL OUR FUTURE?

OUR CHILDREN ARE TOMORROW'S MOTHERS AND FATHERS.

IF OUR SCHOOLS ALLOW QUEERS TO TEACH OUR CHILDREN, OUR CHILDREN WILL BE ENCOURAGED TO TURN QUEER AND QUEERS DO NOT PRODUCE: THEY SEDUCE! REMEMBER WELL LITTLE EMANUEL JACQUES: YOUR CHILD COULD BE NEXT!

QUESTIONS FOR ALL NON QUEERS TO CONSIDER:

1. DOES OUR SOCIETY NEED QUEERS?
2. WHO SUPPORTS QUEERS?
3. WHO WANTS OUR CHILDREN TAUGHT BY QUEERS?
4. WHO WANTS OUR CHILDREN TO TURN INTO QUEERS?
5. WHO WANTS QUEERS TO SEDUCE OUR CHILDREN?
6. WHO NEEDS THE SUPPORT OF QUEERS?

HERE ARE THE ANSWERS TO THESE QUESTIONS:

Any sane, rational, healthy society does not need queers for anything. The remaining questions can all be answered by the following list, who in one fashion or another are pro-queer and therefore are a threat to you and your family. These pro-queers for whatever perverted motives are: queers themselves, and; John Sewell, dis-honourable mayor of Toronto; who promotes queers at every opportunity; "Georgie" Hislop, queer from Ward 6 currently seeking election on the platform of being a "super queer"; many left-wing Liberals; the so-called "Human Rights Commission", who would consider it a violation of a queer's "civil rights" if it wasn't allowed to seduce your child; all communists, and other rabble and mis-fits; the Toronto City Council, who by their cowardice in taking a public stand against queers, are advocating queers by their silence, in direct opposition to the vast amount of voters in the Toronto area; the Toronto Star, who seem to favour the forced inclusion of queers and other perverts in our society as essential; Mr. Roy McMurtry, who refuses to publicly outlaw queers from joining our Toronto Police and who has just helped to drop height and weight restrictions from our police recruiting criteria; and Pierre Trudeau, who, it will not be forgotten, as Justice Minister in 1967 legalized homosexual acts between "consenting," one of the many objectionable parts of his "Ombibus Bill." Trudeau, a father of 3 children, was the main architect of this pro-queer legislation. One wonders whether he encourages "consenting acts" in his family: after all, one should practice what he preaches. The same goes for John Sewell.

SOME FACTS ABOUT QUEERS:

- QUEERS ARE AGAINST GOD AND THE CHRISTIAN BIBLE.
- QUEERS ARE AGAINST HUMANITY.
- QUEERS ARE AGAINST EVERY RACE AND RELIGION.

DOES OUR SOCIETY NEED QUEERS?

NO!

WHO IS AGAINST QUEERS?

- ALL DECENT CITIZENS.
- ALL NORMAL, HEALTHY HETEROSEXUAL FAMILIES.
- ALL COUPLES THAT PRODUCE CHILDREN.
- ALL RIGHT-WING POLITICAL PARTIES.
- ALL THOSE WHO BELIEVE IN CHRIST AND HIS TEACHINGS.

DO YOU WISH TO SEE QUEERS ON OUR TORONTO POLICE FORCE?

Right now plans are underway, to be sure, as the question is being raised in public to possibly condition the people of Toronto to accept as a foregone conclusion, that blatant queers will be allowed on our police force. If this proceeds, are we then to see police officers sashaying down the streets hand-in-hand on their beats? Will queers in blue give you and your family confidence in the police force, or on the city streets???

Today, the once great police force of San Francisco is rapidly becoming a queers "boys in blue" circus. Just recently, a notorious lesbian was given the task of "helping oversee" the San Francisco Police Force by that city's pro-queer mayor, who in fact had a "bizzare ceremony" of marriage performed in her garden between this new "director" and her own press secretary. Now these two lesbians help "oversee" that city's police!

With the inclusion of queers on the Frisco police and queers helping "oversee" it queers have flocked to that modern day "Sodom and Gomorrah." The queer population there now is estimated to be at 60%! Is this what we want Toronto to become? We say NO! HELL NO!

REASONS FOR LEAGUE AGAINST HOMOSEXUALS, (L.A.H.)

If you are revolted and sickened by the very subject of queers and their perversions, if the thought of having your child or any child kidnapped, tortured, raped repeatedly and finally murdered by sexually depraved deviates that now prowl our schools, theatres, shopping malls, public parks, steam-baths, public washrooms, and taverns, then you will support L.A.H.

If you feel yourself isolated or restricted in your movements, because as a concerned parent you worry about where your child goes, or because of fear from being assaulted by queers yourself, then hopefully you too will join and support the League Against Homosexuals.

The League Against Homosexuals calls upon every normal, healthy heterosexual Canadian, regardless of Race or Colour to join and support our effort and our common fight to establish and maintain a free society free of queers and their perverted anti-human morals.

Queers exist to seduce and pervert our children. Queers are sexually depraved vampires.

If queers are allowed to have "equal rights", then they MUST be allowed to seduce your child. Do you want a queer calling at your home to see if your little boy "can come out to play"? If you had to give up your child for adoption, for whatever reason, would you like it if a queer had an equal right to adopt it...? If you look for a baby sitter and a queer responds, asking for the job, would you feel safe having your child in the hands of a queer...? If not, why not; queers are after all "equal". They will remain so unless L.A.H. and you join to stop the queer from any and all social influence whatsoever. Its time they be put back into their closets and have them nailed shut by having their "equal rights" to practice their perversions revoked. It may also be a good idea to have queers and their perversions declared a crime against nature, with stiff mandatory prison terms.

REMEMBER, THE GAY RIGHTS MOVEMENT WANT THE LEGAL RIGHT TO SEDUCE OUR CHILDREN!

What are you going to do about it... will you help us, even if you yourself do not have children, think of us that do, and please, above all, think of the poor young children. Would you want them to be the "blood" of sexually depraved vampires...??

It's bad enough already with child molesters, our society doesn't need either. Society may be going to the dogs, but let's not let our children go to the queers!!

STAND UP AND FIGHT FOR CHILDREN: THEY ARE OUR FUTURE!

698 JOIN AND/OR SUPPORT THE LEAGUE AGAINST HOMOSEXUALS

905-2886
P.O. BOX 275,
STATION D
TORONTO, ONT.
M6P 3J9



KARL VON GOETZ-CHAIRMAN
CARROLL VON GOETZ - SECRETARY
MIKE KELLER - VICE CHAIRMAN
NORMAN SMITH - PUBLICITY

**The League Against Homosexuals is a registered non-profit organization seeking co-operation and/or amalgamation of any and all individuals and organizations concerned with the welfare of all children.
Any donations toward defraying the costs of printing supplies, public media ads etc., will be gratefully acknowledged.*

APPENDIX C: WHAT DO I DO NOW?

In general there are three things you can do if you have read this book and wish to take some steps on your own. First, you may look for peer support and advice; second, you may seek out trained, professional help that some doctors, lawyers, and psychiatrists can give; third you may want to form a gay fathers' group in your own community. Here are some ways of doing these things.

SUPPORT AND CONTACT WITH PEERS

Look up listings beginning with "gay," "lesbian," and "homosexual" in the telephone book. Calling the groups so listed may put you in contact with individuals and groups who can help, advise, and give support. Look up a listing for the Metropolitan Community Church, as this group ministers largely to the gay community and offers counselling and help without pressing its own religious views upon those it tries to help.

Agencies of these kinds will be found most frequently in larger cities. If you happen to live where there is no such groups or agencies, go to a library and look up the listing in phone books for nearby larger cities. Or when you are travelling through such centres, give a call and make contact.

Community resources are also listed in publications of the gay press. In Canada, the largest publication is *The Body Politic* and it lists agencies and groups across the country. *TBP* is available in gay book stores, in many baths, and in some "straight" bookstores that are brave enough and are strongly enough devoted to free speech to carry it. *TBP* may also be purchased (\$1.25 a copy) from Box 7289, Station A, Toronto, Canada M5W 1X9.

In Britain, *Gay News* carries similar information. The United States has many gay publications with the *Advocate* being the "leading gay newsmagazine," but it does not feature the community resources pages that are carried by *TBP* and *Gay News*. Many smaller publications in the US do carry such information, but they are too numerous to list here. Specifically, you may want to contact the following groups:

Gay Fathers of Toronto
730 Bathurst Street
Toronto, Canada
M5S 2R4
(416) 532-2333 or (416) 967-0430
Gay Fathers Coalition
P.O. Box 50360
Washington, D.C. 20004
USA
(301) 984-9449

(This group will advise you where the gay fathers' group nearest to you is located.)

Organizations trying to help the spouses of gay fathers and lesbian mothers are now beginning to develop also. Two of these are:

Spouses of Gays

c/o Caryn Miller
260 Carlton Street
Toronto, Canada
M5A 2L3
(416) 967-0597
Straight Partners
P.O. Box 1603
Hyattsville, Md. 20788
USA

PROFESSIONAL HELP

The stress of the transition to a gay identity from the former apparently straight reality can be very great, as some of our stories have shown. Peer counselling and support is of great importance in helping the individual to cope with this stress, but it alone may not be sufficient. Professional help is often needed too. But be careful where you get it. Many straight professionals do not understand the facts of homosexuality, let alone the subtleties of the gay life style. (Many of us have indeed struggled through situations that were made worse by the "help" given to us by ill-informed or biased professionals.) In the guise of therapy or good advice, such persons simply inflict further unnecessary pain.

But fortunately, there are professionals who are well intentioned, sympathetic, and in command of the facts. Some, but by no means all, of such professionals are gay themselves. Gays often feel most comfortable in dealing with other gays about professional problems, but many straights in these professions also offer sound advice and effective help.

Find these professionals in the same way you look for peer support and contact. The same sources that have information about gay groups and individuals can give referrals to competent and sympathetic professionals. Individuals in peer groups may also be able to give such referrals out of their own experience.

FORM YOUR OWN GROUP FOR GAY FATHERS

If there is no group near you, form your own. The following advice on how to form your own group is based on the experience of the people who helped to found the Gay Fathers Coalition. The Coalition links together a dozen or more groups in the United States and two in Canada. This is what they say are the essentials of getting a group off the ground.

First, you need a place to meet regularly. It can be a community center, church hall, or someone's living room. Actually, a more personal situation such as someone's home seems to work out best. Meeting places can rotate among various members' homes.

Second, there has to be one person (or a small group) who will send out meeting notices and act as a contact for people to call. Ideally, he should be out enough so that his name, address and phone number can be disseminated. Another possibility would be to use the local gay hotline or MCC number, especially in any publications. But talk to them about it first!

Some groups have begun by placing ads in the personal columns of the local newspapers, although persuading the managers of advertising departments to accept such ads can sometimes be a problem. And handling the abusive calls that follow from the publication of a telephone number in the public press is another problem. Note, however, that both of these problems can be avoided by placing notices in gay publications, although these media may not be read by the people you want to get your message. Placing notices in gay steam baths is another good way of reaching gay fathers. A notice in gay bars is likely to reach fewer of them. If you can persuade a local newspaper or radio station to do a story, you will certainly get responses, but this method has obvious drawbacks — the response can be too great and, of course, somebody has to appear in print or before the microphones and cameras.

The third essential is patience and persistence. Your group will start out small and stay small for a while. Then, just when you're sick of the same faces, half-a-dozen new people will show up out of nowhere, with half-a-dozen new stories to tell, and you're on your way!

That's it: start small, keep with it, and stay open to developing possibilities. It also helps to visit another gay fathers' group and to see how they have managed. It's good, too, if someone with experience in another group can come to a few of your early meetings and guide you along. And the Gay Fathers Coalition, of course, is always available for consultation and guidance. Just drop them a line or give them a call.

Here are some questions often asked in gay fathers' groups and here too are some thoughts in answer to them.

Should we introduce our children to the group? Picnics or other outings with the kids are great fun, and very liberating for you. It feels good to be with your gay friends when you have your kids for the weekend. We're nice people. You may want to set limits on greetings and expressions of affection among members in order to allay anxieties. Best not to be doctrinaire, one way or the other.

What about coming out to the children? Same principle. Do what feels most natural. So much depends on geography, politics, and just plain individual differences. Many of us have done it, and the results have been excellent. Gay fathers groups should not try, however, to enforce a group standard of behaviour on this or other critical points about the way their members lead their lives. These are very personal decisions. We can learn from each other, but no one should try to tell someone else what to do. Differences of approach and tolerance for others' opinions, situations, and sense of what they can do are essential ingredients of gay fathers' groups.

Do you have to publicize the group? Some publicity right at the start is probably essential. You must do something to get the word out. We've talked about some of these ways already. These include posting a flyer in local bars and baths, putting a notice in the local gay paper (or straight paper, if it's not run by Neanderthals), an announcement by the local MCC or other gay organization. But it's not necessary to go to a lot of expense. The word will get out.

What can we talk about when the group meets? Anything and everything. A good place to start is simply to let those who want to talk tell their stories. When you've exhausted these you might want to turn to specific topics such as custody, visitation, legal proceedings, cruising, VD, pot,

adolescent rebellion, diapers, gay politics, personal problems, emotions, ex-wives, wives, lovers, loneliness, recipes, school boards . . . Just be sure everybody gets a chance to talk who wants to, and beware of conversation monopolisers. It is often helpful to appoint a coordinator or discussion leader who keeps a gentle order and ensures that everyone who wants to gets a chance to contribute. Change the coordinator or leader for different meetings, even as you change the topics of discussion.

What about men who are still married? They often feel left out and/or pressured to get a divorce. They are in a very special situation and you should go out of your way to make them comfortable with you. Similarly, be sensitive to the problems of fathers with full-time custody. They may need help with babysitting, for example, and special consideration in scheduling meetings and parties. Also, be sensitive to the situation of fathers who don't see their children often, for whatever reason. They have special needs and a special outlook. Be sure, for example, to make them welcome on outings with children.

Should the meeting times be consistent? Yes. The same week night every other week has worked out best for a number of our groups.

What about meeting size? Groups of seven to fifteen seem best, but larger groups can be accommodated, as they do in San Francisco, by dividing into sub-groups for discussion around different topics. Whatever the size of the group it makes a pleasant evening to combine the discussion with a pot-luck supper and perhaps a little wine or beer. Guest speakers from time to time are also good to give variety and new perspectives.

Should we get involved in gay politics? Our advice is to stay out of high-profile gay politics, at least until you're a solid group. New members are often turned off by what they see as "radical" politics. But *do* take stands on what is important to you. Sometimes part of the group will want to act while others do not. Compromise is necessary. Individual action is often the answer. And as members get greater confidence in themselves, they will be surprised to find themselves doing things they would have condemned in others but a short time ago. You should also consider marching on Gay Pride Day, if you're anywhere near a big city, and can take the chance. Make a banner. You'll be applauded like crazy — especially by women — and you'll be high on it for days.

Should we join the Gay Fathers Coalition? Definitely! And send a delegation to the next regional or national meeting. If it's a long way, you can help defray the delegates' expenses by taking up a collection, or maybe having a bake sale. Or how about a Gay Fathers' Car Wash?

How can we share our experiences with others? Write articles; send speakers to local gay groups, perhaps even to sympathetic community organizations that are predominantly straight. In New York City, for example, members have spoken at meetings of Dignity, Integrity, the Gay Synagogue, and other groups, with uniformly good receptions.

So, to sum all this up, if you feel the need for a support group — start one! Take a chance. That's how most of us got started.

You'll love it!

SELECTED READINGS

Sources Containing Materials About Gay Fathers

Babuscio, Jack. **We Speak for Ourselves: Experiences in Homosexual Counselling**. SPCK 1976.

See especially Chapter 4 "The Halo of Marriage," which addresses the subject of why gays marry.

Cameron, Stevie. "When Someone in Your Family is Gay." *Chatelaine*, July 1981, pp. 35, 98-110.

An article that looks closely and sympathetically at what happens when a husband, wife, parent, or child announces that he or she is gay. It finds that such an announcement is likely to send family members into "shock and bitter alienation" unless lines of communication among them are kept open. The article also lists Canadian groups that offer support for the special needs of various family members. The editors here follow the common practices of the popular press that illustrates homosexuals only in shades of grey, lavender, or purple.

Clark, Don. **Loving Someone Gay**. New York: Signet Books, 1977.

Don Clark is a gay psychologist who was married and has three children. He writes with insight and compassion and uniquely reveals the struggles of gay people as children and adults.

Clark, Don. **Living Gay**. Celestial Arts, 1979.

Another fine account of the problems and joys of living as a gay person.

"The Daddy Issue." *Christopher Street* 7(10) (April 1977).

"Gay Fathers Struggle for Acceptance." *Hamilton Spectator*. 15 July 1980, p. 49.

Godley, Elizabeth. "Lesbian Mothers: Living a Lie — or Living in Fear." *Vancouver Sun* 26 May 1981, Sec. B. p. 3

"A Homosexual Father: Many Consider Him Unfit But 'I Love My Son.'" *Toronto Globe and Mail*. 30 March 1978.

Jay, Karla and Young, Alien, eds. **After You're Out: Personal Experiences of Gay Men and Lesbian Women**. New York: Pyramid Books, 1975.

A collection of writings that evoke the direct experiences and reflections of those who struggle with a straight world from within the gay reality. The range of lifestyles and experiences is wide indeed and includes separate statements by "a lesbian mother" and "a faggot father."

Jones, Clinton R. **Understanding Gay Relatives and Friends**. The Seabury Press, 1978.

Clinton Jones is a canon of the Episcopal Church. He discusses relationships in families where one of their members is gay — son, daughter, father, or husband.

Latham, Jack Purdom. "Tender Mornings: Progress of a Faggot Father." *Gay Sunshine* (San Francisco), Summer/Fall 1979, pp. 10-12.

An excerpt from a book-length manuscript in which Latham writes about his experiences as a gay father. It deals with practical realities, but in a style that is imaginative, vivid, and deeply felt. He discusses the time his son slipped into his bedroom and watched silently while he and his lover had sex. He talks about facing his son's decision to leave him and return to his mother. "Without him I would be 'just another faggot' with nothing to distinguish me, purposeless and wasted. I saw myself in Buena Vista Park, where all the men had beautiful pedigreed dogs on leashes, and I no longer had John, the Ultimate Pet, the Final Credential."

Lynch, Michael. "Forgotten Fathers." *The Body Politic*. April 1978, p. 1.

Miller, Brian. "Unpromised Paternity: Life Styles of Gay Fathers." In *Gay Men: The Sociology of Male Homosexuality*, pp. 239-252. Edited by Martin Levine. New York: Harper and Row, 1979. Sometimes sociology forgets its obsession with big words and vague ideas that explain the obvious. Miller's article makes a bow in the direction of "clinical objectivity" that makes it a little painful to read, but there is no doubt he has gotten to the heart of the matter here. His descriptions of what gay fathers do — the tearoom trade, their struggles with fear and anxiety, and finally the greater openness and acceptance — all have the ring of truth about them and suggest hope for the future as well. Other articles in the collection have value as well, especially Michael Riordan's "Capital Punishment: Notes of a Willing Victim" describing the use of electric aversion therapy to "cure" homosexuality.

Riddle, Dorothy. "Relating to Children: Gays as Role Models." *Journal of Social Issues* 34 (3) (1978).

Scrivener, Leslie. "The Anguish of Marriage to a Homosexual." *Toronto Star*, 2 July 1981, sec. D, p. 1. When a mass circulation paper talks about "the trauma of discovering your partner's hidden proclivities," it is unlikely to do more than exploit sensational stereotypes, but at least this article gets the clear message across that there are homosexuals who marry and have children.

"Wives of Gay Men Struggle to be Happy." *Hamilton Spectator*. 15 July 1980, p. 49.
Materials of Interest to Gay People

Fisher, Peter. **The Gay Mystique**. Day Books, 1972.
A classic book by a gay man about gay life. A readable panorama of gay male life.

Galper, Miriam. **Co-parenting: A Source for the Separated or Divorced Family**. Running Press, 1978. Although this book is not directed to gay parents, it is very helpful to the separated or divorced gay parent and his or her former spouse. For the gay parent it provides a variety of options in child-rearing after a separation or divorce. For gays and non-gays alike.

Goldstein, Joseph; Freud, Anna; and Solnit, Albert J. **Beyond the Best Interests of the Child**. New York: The Free Press, 1973.

_____. **Before the Best Interest of the Child**. New York: The Free Press, 1979.
These two books recognise that "the state is too crude an instrument to become an adequate substitute for 'flesh and blood parents.'" Yet they argue that the state must intervene in certain instances to decide matters that parents themselves cannot agree upon or to safeguard children whose well-being is threatened by their parents. The books give insight into the ways courts and childcare experts think about these issues. While the authors argue that the child's interests are best served within "the intact family," they recognise also that the needs of children can be met in any situation where the child has a "feeling of

being wanted and therefore valued." They declare that the essential elements for satisfactory child development are found in a continuing relationship of "reciprocal affection between the child and ... at least one caretaking adult." They recognize too that these caretaking adults can be other than the biological parents of the child. The books unfortunately make no reference to circumstances in which one or both of the caretaking adults are homosexual.

Hodges, Andrew and Hutter, David. **With Downcast Gays: Aspects of Homosexual Self-Oppression**. Toronto: Pink Triangle Press, 1977.

McNeil, John J. **The Church and the Homosexual**. New York: Pocket Books, 1976.

A Jesuit theologian examines homosexuality in the light of ancient teaching and modern thought. He reviews the long-standing anti-homosexual bias of society and finds that it has suppressed information and corrupted the very channels of enlightenment that might lead to understanding of the topic. He examines the grounds on which the Church has condemned homosexuality and denies the validity of each: that homosexuality is against the will of God, that homosexuals are a menace to the community, and that the union of homosexuals is a sinful love. A clear, strong statement and one of great support to gays who seek a place of love and respect in the Church.

Nahas, Rebecca and Turley, Myra. **The New Couple: Women and Gay Men**. New York: Seaview, 1979.

An exploration of friendship, sex, and love between women and gay men. Based on a large number of personal interviews, the book describes various couple relationships — some married, some lovers or roommates, others platonic friends. Though sex is often part of these relationships, emotional commitment is said not to be an essential part of them. Though the book examines at length what it calls "traditional" married couples, there is no suggestion that any of them have children. So the book deals not with gay fathers, but with male homosexuals who marry or otherwise form relationships with women. This makes clear that commitment and children define the essence of the gay fathers' relationship to women.

Rosenfels, Paul. **Homosexuality: The Psychology of the Creative Process**. Roslyn Heights, N.Y.: Libra Publishers, 1971.

Rosenfels finds that traditional concepts of human nature stifle creativity and that homosexuality is a key to the process that fashions vividly new values, fashions, and meanings. He argues that the dynamic of this creativity lies in "the fact that the making and dissolving of human attachments is the basic instruments of self-development."

Tripp, C.A. **The Homosexual Matrix**. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1975.

An in-depth study of male homosexuality from religious, anthropological, political, and biological viewpoints. Tripp also examines the question of psychotherapy to cure homosexuality and shows why therapy has never been able to cure anyone of homosexuality. Since homosexuality is not a disease, homosexuals are not sick, so there is nothing to cure them of.

Vanggaard, Thorkil. **Phallus: A Symbol and Its History in the Male World**. New York: International Universities Press, 1972.

The erect penis as symbol is the Phallus and its history is long and deep in human consciousness. Only in recent centuries has veneration of it been obliterated from public ceremony with its suppression being led first by the Church and then by secular authority. The power of the symbol can serve either aggression or love. It is associated with a homosexual radical that was once recognized to exist in some degree in all men and that was therefore widely accepted. When his beloved Antinoiis drowned in the Nile at the age of twenty, Hadrian proclaimed his grief in monuments throughout the realm and poets wrote verses to

console their emperor. Vanggaard points out that people, even as late as the Elizabethan Age, could accept the idea of naked men sleeping with each other. So Iago's betrayal of Othello and Cassio hinges on suppressed homosexuality and his words are those of a frightened and envious closet case:

I lay with Cassio lately,
And being troubled with a raging tooth,
I could not sleep.
There are a kind of man so loose of soul,
That in their sleeps will mutter their affairs,
One of this kind is Cassio:
In sleep I heard him say "Sweet Desdemona,
Let us be wary, let us hide our loves:"
And then, sir, would be gripe and wring my hand,
Cry out, "O sweet creature!" and then kiss me hard,
As if he pluck'd up kisses by the roots,
That grew upon my lips, then laid his leg
Over my thigh, and sigh'd, and kiss'd, and then
Cried "Cursed fate, that gave thee to the Moor!"

It still happens today, but now the betrayer besides poisoning personal relationships may also go to the police.

Weinburg, George. **Society and the Healthy Homosexual**. Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, 1973.

BACK COVER

The man who is both homosexual and a father often stands alone. Behind a well-managed facade, he lives a secret life that turns on a painful combination of desire and denial. If the straight world recognizes him at all, he is regarded with an attitude that hovers between derision and contempt. For the publicly gay father, the politest reaction that greets him is usually silence with the face turned away. The most wounding responses regard him as a social and biological impossibility. The fact of the matter, however, is that a large number of men who are homosexual do establish continuing relations with women — usually within marriage — and do father children. Many of these men seek out such relationships as proof that their darkest fears about themselves are untrue. Their unions often appear to work for a time, but ultimately the dream turns to a nightmare. Escape seems impossible, for now in addition to the enormous social pressures that made the union in the first place, there is also the bond to a woman and above all there are the children.

This book is written by men who know the special joys and fears of being gay and being fathers. They have at last faced a fact that they for so long denied. They speak here in their own voices about their experiences. In doing so, they do not try to wish away the past; they acknowledge the love they offered and the children that sprang from it. They seek only to understand better what happened in their lives and to share that understanding with others — with their families and with their children. Here they speak chiefly to those many fathers who are homosexual and who still try to deal with their torment alone. They have something to say to such men. *You are not alone. Others have gone this way before and found release in self-acceptance and greater honesty with others.*

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