

LGBT History Project of the LGBT Center of Central PA

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Title: *Dignity, Central PA Keystone*

Date: September 1979

Location: LGBT-001 Joseph W. Burns Collection

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KEYSTONE

DIGNITY/Central Pennsylvania
P.O. Box 297
Harrisburg, PA 17108
Vol. 4 No. 6
September, 1979

Remove
Oct 14

"The Stone Rejected by the Builders Has Become the Keystone." (Acts 4:11)
The newsletter of DIGNITY/Central Pennsylvania

FROM THE PRESIDENT

"If you treat a person as he is, he will stay as he is; but if you treat him as if he were he ought to be and could be, he will become what he ought to be and could be." GOETHE

I am constantly surprised at how many gay people continue to stereotype themselves, and other gays as well, and persist in regarding themselves in the same light year after year. Yet I am convinced that we all have a residual capacity to rise to new levels of expectations and to become more than we are. To work in DIGNITY is to realize this to an even greater degree. The seeds sewn months and even years ago take time to grow and become, but with persistence and patience they flourish. Time after time we find people who take cursory interest in DIGNITY but do nothing about it for a long time. These people have stereotyped themselves into believing that there is nothing to be gained from satisfying that deep hunger for spiritual growth and personal development.

If we are to be true to our calling to be members of DIGNITY, and its ministers, then we have to not just look at who we are but what we are becoming. We have to realize our own potential for growth and development and when it comes time to be of service we ought not stereotype ourselves into believing we are not up to the job. After all, if everyone thought that way, there would be no DIGNITY.

When others come to DIGNITY we have to see not just what is, but what is to become. DIGNITY works with potentialities, not just with actualities, and must recognize that the desire to develop and improve is a vital part of the person. This capacity is easily discouraged and people will sink back into themselves when they perceive that we are rejecting, not supporting or rejecting their efforts to shed the old stereotypes. Only the most aggressive and determined can accomplish this against these odds, and the rest need our help. For it must be remembered that DIGNITY is not a process of stuffing people like sausages, but of eliciting from people their potentialities hidden even from themselves. Leo Cardinal Suenens put it very succinctly when he offered this: The Greatest Good that you can do for another is not just to share with him your riches, but to reveal to him his own." I believe this is the special service that each and everyone of us is called to in DIGNITY.

In Dignity,
Jerry B.

I'd Like to Come
Out of the Closet
But I Can't
Find the Door!

"See how they love one another."

This was reaction of ancient pagans as they witnessed the love expressed by early Christians. That love seems to be an endangered species these days. The following appeared in *Time* magazine's "Letters to the Editor."

Call them homosexuals, call them gays [April 23], call them anything you wish. Here in Anita Bryant country we call them queers, and that's what they are.

Dee Keeton
Kingston, Okla.

The Bible spells *homosexuality* with three letters: *sin*.

Arlena Hasel
Cincinnati

Why has such a pleasant, happy, descriptive word as *gay* become a synonym for sex and perversion?

Wesley W. Wertz
San Diego

As the human race descends into the pit of immorality, your articles can only grease the cables.

(Mrs.) Focell Powell
Arlington, Texas

A disgusting, frightening story. Homosexuality and decadence led to the destruction of Rome. I foresee a dark future for your country.

Gunther Haug
Saarbrücken, West Germany

REFLECTIONS

Several months ago, in a midwestern state, a priest took his own life. At his funeral more than a thousand shocked friends jammed the church. His bishop declared: "Father was a good priest in every sense of the word".

When I heard of his death, I grieved for him - even though I did not know him. I could not help thinking to myself that if only his bishop and his friends had shown their support of him while he was living, he would still be alive today.

Every one of us knows moments of loneliness and despair. Each of us cries out silently for the support of a friend. All of us have known the sorrow of seeing others pass us by without a word of encouragement or a touch of supportive love that would have done so much to ease the loneliness and fear.

Of course, our friends can say to us: "You know that I am only a telephone call away. You know that you are always welcome at my home, my apartment". But when the devil of loneliness and discouragement takes hold of us, he convinces us that our friends are too busy, that we should not be intruding into their lives and their time. So, we struggle alone in the dark shadow of spiritual and emotional death. Fortunately, we have always managed to be victorious in the struggle. But, there lurks in the back of our minds the awful fear that some day we may not win the battle.

As followers of Christ, you and I must go out of our way to be supportive of one another. Jesus identified Himself with the Good Samaritan who immediately suspected that something was wrong when he saw the traveler lying by the side of the road - who was moved with compassion when his investigation showed that this stranger was in need of help. May others find in us a tender heart, a loving hand, a soothing touch, a sympathetic ear.

- Father Sawdy

Treasurer's report

FINANCIAL REPORT - April 1 - July 31, 1979

Balance brought forward, 4-1-79	\$161.59
Receipts	925.60
Expenditures:	
DISCOVER Weekend	\$382.68
All Other Expenses	300.91
	683.59
Balance, 7-31-79	\$403.60

MEMBERSHIP REPORT - April 26 - August 10, 1979

The following did not renew their membership:
-Dale E. -Pat C.

The following have renewed their membership:
-John B. -John O. -Sister K.
-Father S.-Maurice C.

We welcome the following new members:
-Eugene A. -Tom G.
-Robert S. -James A.
-Bernard B. -Edward S.
-Dennis S. -Donna G.
-Karen R.

The total membership of our chapter is 34.

- Father Sawdy
Treasurer

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- Sept. 4 - Volleyball, PAL Bldg., 1110 N. 3rd St., Harrisburg, 6:30 P.M.
 - Sept. 7 - First Friday Mass, Friend's Meeting House, 6th & Herr Sts., Hbg., 6:30 P.M.
 - Sept. 11 - Volleyball, 6:30 P.M. (See Sept. 4).
 - Sept. 13 - Bible Study & Prayer Group, 920 Green St., Hbg., 7:00-9:00 P.M.
 - Sept. 13 - Lesbian Rap Group.
 - Sept. 14 - Dinner Night, Harding's Rest., Reservations to Fr. Sawdy by Sept. 12th, (238-5380).
 - Sept. 16 - Mass for the Gay Community 5:30 P.M.
Pot Luck Supper 6:30 P.M.
Rap Session 7:30 P.M.
Friend's Meeting House, 6th & Herr Sts.
 - Sept. 18 - Volleyball (See Sept. 4).
 - Sept. 23 - Sunday Mass, St. Patrick Cath., 5:30PM.
 - Sept. 25 - Volleyball (See Sept. 4).
 - Sept. 26 - Executive Board Meeting, 920 Green St. 7:30 P.M.
 - Sept. 27 - Bible Study & Prayer Group (See 9/13).
 - Sept. 30 - Bike Hike & Picnic. Depart Friend's Meeting House at 1:00 P.M. for Stoney Creek Valley.
 - Oct. 2 - Volleyball (See Sept. 4).
 - Oct. 5 - First Friday Mass & Dinner Night.
- REFER TO THE "FALL-IN" WITH DIGNITY PROGRAM FOR DETAILS OF THESE AND FUTURE EVENTS.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

A Gay Alcoholic Group meets every Friday evening. For time and location contact the Gay Switchboard at 234-0328.

A Lesbian Rap Group is forming and will begin meeting on Sept. 13th at 7PM, Friend's Meeting House, 6th & Herr Sts., Hbg. For more information contact Rap Group, c/o DIGNITY, P.O. Box 297, Harrisburg, PA 17108.

Election of Officers for the coming year will be held at the Annual General Membership Meeting on Oct. 28, 1979. Nominations are being accepted. If you desire to run for President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, or to be one of two Members-at-Large Representatives on the Board, contact the Vice-President, Steve L. at 232-6517 before noon or after 9PM.

Central Pa. Gay Alliance located in Harrisburg meets the last Sunday of the month at 7PM(?) at the Friend's Meeting House, 6th & Herr Sts. The Executive Board will be planning the "Wintering with DIGNITY" Program. If you have an idea for a project and are willing to see it through, bring it to the attention of one of the officers. We are presently interested in anyone who would be interested in hosting a Christmas gathering as part of our "12 Days of Christmas" Program.

The Gay Switchboard of Harrisburg needs volunteers. For information call 234-0328.

FROM A FATHER TO HIS SON

Dear Joe,

I want to take this opportunity to thank you and Tom for your welcome, hospitality, and concern to me during my visit. I have never seen you happier, or more alive. You are more open, more mature, self-fulfilled, loveable, and freer than ever before. It was great to see you looking and feeling so good.

I was pleased to meet Tom. You are good for one another. All relationships require the best of us for continual growth and development. The gay relationship is even that much more demanding because of the enormous amount of hurts, pain and rejection in the past and the tendency to be introspective, to ingrowth etc. It seems to me it would be easier to offend and quicker to be upset. I'm guessing that there is even a greater need for outside nurturing, and affirmation outside of the normal gay relationship so that one doesn't feel so drained, exhausted, and pessimistic. There is a real need for inspiration which I believe in your particular case of Tom could best be fulfilled in an ongoing relationship with a spiritual confessor - someone who would be an external source of affirmation, a special help for spiritual development and growth. Of course you both would have to search to find the right kind of priest or sister to fill that role.

There is one thing that I believe that I observed about the gay community: it is their over concern about themselves; their needs; their sexuality and in general their overreaction to the straight world. This of course is quite natural for to be gay is to be in pain and a yearning for greater understanding, acceptance and approval of one's own self-worth.

The potential of Dignity is mindboggling, not just for the San Francisco community, but for its natural leadership role for the country, and even for the world.

Dignity speaks to each gay's need for self-worth, for his spiritual hunger, for affirmation and acceptance in his and her own Church, to be nurtured, to be understood and to be prized as a child of God - it offers a deep sense of community to those who need it most and to members who cannot but help to feel abandoned by their own families, their church, their community and their country.

(continued)