

LGBT History Project of the LGBT Center of Central PA

**Located at Dickinson College
Archives & Special Collections**

<http://archives.dickinson.edu/>

Documents Online

Title: *Dignity, Central PA Keystone*

Date: July/August 1979

Location: LGBT-001 Joseph W. Burns Collection

Contact:

LGBT History Project
Archives & Special Collections
Waidner-Spahr Library
Dickinson College
P.O. Box 1773
Carlisle, PA 17013

717-245-1399

archives@dickinson.edu



KEYSTONE

DIGNITY/Central Pennsylvania
P. O. Box 297
Harrisburg, PA 17108
Vol 4 No 5
July/August 1979

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

FROM THE PRESIDENT

"People don't get opportunity, or freedom, or equality, or dignity as an act of charity. You need organization to make the other side deliver." Saul D. Alinsky

These words of Saul D. Olinsky ring as true today as they did for gay sisters and brothers who, on June 28, 1969, decided that no longer could the other side not deliver in giving gay people opportunity, freedom, equality, or dignity. This tenth anniversary of the Stonewall Riots is important to us as lesbians and gay men because it signals a further coming of age in our struggle for our place in the sun. All anniversaries have important meaning, but there are certain ones which are more important than others.

A decade has passed since that hot summer evening in 1969 when gays fought the police in the streets of Greenwich Village and we announced that we no longer were politely asking for a measure of toleration; we were, from that day on, demanding full and equal rights as human beings. In reflection then, much has changed since then and I believe one of the significant things that has happened to us as gay people is that we have organized ourselves. Those organizations have helped us in informing the other side that it needs to deliver. This is not to be so naive to believe that all is well for you only to read gay publications to find that even after ten years of struggle we do not have a utopia. But we are at least organized.

Dignity is one such organization and ten years ago it did not exist nor did this chapter exist. While our goals are the seeking of our rights, Dignity is not a political organization per se, although individual members have many political interests. It is interesting to note that Dignity as a minority group within the Roman Catholic Church does attempt to use the politics of the Church and everyday life to improve the lot of gays within the Church.

Since 1969 there has been a proliferation of organizations for gay people to become active in. The list is almost endless and ranges from gay fireman, gay nurses, gay social workers, gay socialists, gay doctors, gay psychologists, gay public health workers and so on. On the local community level you have Gay Community Services, Gay Hotline, Gay Churches and denominational Gay Caucuses. No longer is it possible for gay people to be isolated from each other because of the lack of organizations. But these organizations fail without you. Your participation is important if they are to go forward.

In ten years we have seen many changes in our lives and my hope is that in the coming decade we will continue to move forward. Much has been done but much more needs to be done and it is our obligation, particularly if you have found your place in the sun to be a part of the solution. Your involvement in gay organizations is essential if you are to be a part of the solution and if you don't get involved, you are the problem.

Jerry B.

REFLECTIONS

Let me share with you a portion of a letter I received recently from a gay person. He writes:

"When I first began to realize that I am gay, I cried out in protest to God. I had always tried to be a good and decent person. Now something was happening to me that was alienating me from my parents and closest friends, something that I dare not reveal to them. I was certain they would reject me if they knew who I really am. I felt rejected by God and could not understand why He was allowing this to happen to me.

"I pleaded with God to take my gayness away. I tried everything I could think of. But it did not go away. I finally decided that my gayness was a cross that I would just have to live with. I could not imagine why God had laid this burden on me, but I knew that I would have to become resigned to it and accept it as the Will of God - or else lose my faith and my sanity.

"As time went on, however, I began to take a good look at myself and at other gay people whom I had come to know. I began to realize that often gay people have a heightened quality of sensitiveness and compassion. This sensitiveness to beauty often leads them to the arts; this deep compassion often leads them to fields of service: teaching, health care, ministry.

"Finally, the day came when I could recognize my gayness, not as a cross, but as a gift of God for which I can be grateful. I am no longer ashamed that I am gay. I am proud of my gayness. Now I see that I have an obligation to make good use of the qualities God gave me when He made me gay."

My brothers and sisters in Dignity, have you learned to appreciate your gayness as a gift of God?

Father Sawdy
Co-Chaplain

* * *

MOM, GUESS WHAT?

Mom, Guess What?
Well, I might as well tell you . . .
I have to tell you
If I'm to talk with you
About me, my life,
My highs, my lows.
Quickly, remember how you felt
About me
Before this phone just rang.
Remember your love and concern
Your caring, your support
I'm the same person
I was before this call.
Now, along with all that . . .
You know I'm gay.
I love you, Mom. Dad too.

by Jan Rudolf
Dignity/Wyoming

"SUMMER WITH DIGNITY" (UPDATE)

For further details on these events, please refer to the "Summer With Dignity" schedule previously mailed.

- July 4 - INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATION
2012 North Third Street, Harrisburg
2PM till 8:30PM
Paul and Michael (236-2005)
- July 12- BIBLE SHARING AND PRAYER GROUP
Refer to Summer schedule.
- July 15- FOURTH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION
Pine Grove Furnace State Park
11AM till Dusk
- July 24- DINNER THEATRE AT ALLENBERRY
Allenberry, Boiling Springs, Pa.
6PM till ???
Reservations: Jerry B. (232-2027)
- July 26- BIBLE SHARING AND PRAYER GROUP
Refer to Summer schedule.
- July 29- VOLLEYBALL
City Island Volleyball Courts
1PM to 5PM
John B. (233-8105)
- Aug. 2 - EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING
5215 North Front Street, Harrisburg
Rich H.
- Aug. 5 - LAWN PARTY
2304 Bellevue Road, Harrisburg
3PM till Dusk
Bill & Richard (Reservations: 238-0642)
- Aug. 16- BIBLE SHARING AND PRAYER GROUP
Refer to Summer schedule.
- Aug. 19- A SUMMER PICNIC
Pine Grove Furnace State Park
11AM till Dusk
Steve L. (232-6517), Rich H. (599-5991)
- Aug. 24- DINNER THEATRE AT ALLENBERRY
Allenberry, Boiling Springs
6PM till ???
Reservations: Jerry B. (232-2027)
- Aug. 30- BIBLE SHARING AND PRAYER GROUP
Refer to Summer schedule.
- Aug. 31 DIGNITY NATIONAL CONVENTION
Sept. 3- San Diego, California
Jerry B. (232-2027)
- Sept. 3- LABOR DAY PICNIC
3PM till 8:30PM
Contact Fr. Sawdy for Details.
(238-5380)

LOVE IS LOVE

Often as not, children possess a remarkably crystalline vision of human relations that most adults can buy envy. The following anecdote, overheard in passing, is perhaps indicative of a child's insight and might also serve to refresh our own perspective.

A friend of mine recounted the time she took her two daughters for a fast-food snack. En route, the girls got into a spat that quickly escalated into an angry shouting match with cries of "You're a real homo!" echoing from both sides.

My friend was mildly surprised not so much at the barrage but at the ammunition used. She quizzed her daughters as to the meaning of "homo." It was evident that they were merely mimicking a word they had heard without understanding its import. There it was - one of those made-to-order situations for a sensitive parent to teach instead of preach.

"Well," she began, "sometimes two men or two women feel the same about each other as Daddy and I do."

"Do they get married and have a house?" the younger girl asked.

"Yes, Karen, because it's important for everyone to share the love and caring they feel for each other."

By this time both girls were eagerly talking and asking questions. Sensing a need to synthesize the experience, my friend concluded, "After all, love is love."

Karen thought for a moment and replied unhesitatingly, "Well, I guess I'm a homo."

Puzzled that her daughter apparently had missed the point of the talk, my friend asked, "Why is that, Karen?"

"Because I love you, Mommy."

Karen's unabashed willingness to identify herself as a loving, caring person outweighs by far any real concern with adult preoccupations with gender or affectional preference. She has indeed reversed emotional polarity, transforming a negatively charged adult prejudice into a positively charged statement of self. Karen has accepted the "label" because she has grasped the basic premise that, after all, love is love, regardless of its source or its object.

Jack Varney
"The Carillon"
DIGNITY/Tucson

* * *

* * *

PENNSYLVANIA LESBIAN/GAY SUPPORT NETWORK
P.O. Box 4031, Allentown, Pa. 18105

PRIDE '79, the annual Pennsylvania Lesbian/Gay Conference, will be held the weekend of October 19, 20, 21, 1979.

PRIDE '79, is sponsored by the Pennsylvania Lesbian/Gay Support Network, and will take place this year, in Pittsburgh at the Airport Holiday Inn.

PRIDE '79, is open to all Lesbians, Gays and their friends in Pennsylvania and adjoining states. Child care and sign language translation for the deaf will be provided

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON PRIDE '79, CONTACT: Steve Leshner
(Harrisburg; Lancaster; York)
717-379-3416

Further, Dignity offers a vehicle to relate to the straight world, the Church and to the community as a group of mature Christians who have much to offer as they come to better understand themselves and the great opportunity to change their pain into gift, their rejection into acceptance. The Church desperately needs you to better understand its own function, its own limitations, prejudice and follies.

Joe, I'm proud to have you as my son. I love you deeply and unconditionally. It is with a deep joy and humility that I continue to see your ongoing growth and development, your ever increasing spirituality, deeper love of Christ and commitment to Christian community. I believe that you have found a real vocation in loving and serving your fellow brothers and sisters of the gay community.

I'll close now, and thank God for giving me such a beautiful son and person.

With all my love and support,

-Dad

Bay Area Dignity
San Francisco

ON BEING "OPEN"

What do you mean by allowing bad things to happen?

If you are open, if you trust, if you believe in tomorrow, then you also allow a lot of disappointments because you believe so much in tomorrow. But if tomorrow turns out wonderfully, it's because you've allowed tomorrow to be completely open and full of faith. To me that is the positive aspect of innocence. And maybe the negative is when you take the wrong train because you believe too much in people who say this train goes to some wonderful place. You know you have a lot to learn, so you take the train and you get off the tracks for a long time, and you have to walk back home. It happens in everything we do, because every day is a choice of living.

You make use of the bad train trips or the bad experiences?

Yes. Actually what I've found, and I don't think it's an act of rationalization, is that I've learned more on that train ride and the walking back than I have with the happy moments, though they were wonderful and I wouldn't do without them. But you didn't have to struggle in them, you didn't have to think or wonder. They filled you with joy, but in the other experiences you had to struggle, overcome, cry, fight, and that is very positive. You understand I'm talking about troubles you've brought on yourself.

An excerpt from an interview with actress Liv Ullmann.

I LIVE INSIDE A SHELL



BY FELP LEONARDI FOR PULCHON, NY

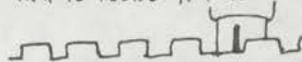
THAT IS UNDER THE SEA

THAT IS INSIDE A WALL



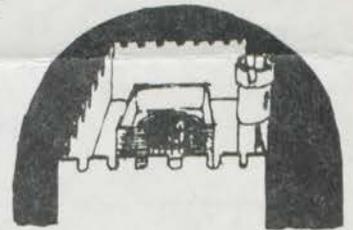
WHERE I AM SAFE

THAT IS INSIDE A FORT



FROM YOU.

THAT IS INSIDE A TUNNEL



IF YOU REALLY LOVED ME YOU'D FIND ME.



2-22

© 1976 ALB TOTTEN



IS THE HOMOSEXUAL MY NEIGHBOR?

Yes, the homosexual is our neighbor conclude Letha Scanzoni and Virginia Ramey Mollenkott in their book, Is the Homosexual My Neighbor? Another Christian View. These accomplished authors have written a book based on extensive study of the Bible and some of its more difficult and most misunderstood passages dealing with homosexuality.

Too often are gays and lesbians called sinners by priests, ministers, rabbis and other religious people who base their views on distorted misinterpreted, mistranslated and narrow concepts taken from the Bible. Too often is the Bible, which is the word of a loving God, used as a mighty sword by those who feel justified in judging others to earn the love of God. God's love is not earned, it is. We can do nothing to lessen God's love for us. It is not our place to earn God's love but rather to return it.

Challenge

Gay Activist Alliance in Morris County
New Jersey



The opinion of gay Catholics has been around for sometime, and is growing more and more articulate and diverse. **INSIGHT**: was started two years ago to open a forum of discussion between the gay and non-gay community, to make the gay experience understandable.

Each issue of **INSIGHT**: is focused on a subject, explored on many levels, from many experiences and insights. Our authors are both gay, and non-gay: concerned, militant, and outside the movement looking in. All are articulate, probing, questioning, and deeply concerned with the issue of being gay in today's society.

INSIGHT: A quarterly of gay Catholic opinion
\$8.00 a year

Write: P.O.Box 5110
Grand Central Station
New York, New York 10017

If you are interested in joining DIGNITY, please fill out the membership application.

I wish to become a member of DIGNITY/Central Pennsylvania.

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

Dues are as follows: \$15.00 Single Membership
\$25.00 Couple Membership
\$25.00 or more Generous Person

Mail to DIGNITY/Central Pennsylvania
P.O. Box 297
Harrisburg, PA 17108

The KEYSTONE is an educational and communication feature of DIGNITY/Central Pennsylvania, Inc. All opinions expressed are those of the individual author and not necessarily of DIGNITY. Your letters, remarks, and suggestions are welcomed. The KEYSTONE is available free to members and friends of DIGNITY, and to others at a nominal charge of \$3.00 per year. Write: DIGNITY/Central Pennsylvania, P.O. Box 297, Harrisburg, PA 17108.