

CLOSER Discusses "Bevond Safe Sex"

by Maria Fire

At the February 19 meeting of CLOSER, participants gathered to discuss personal issues that inhibit intimacy and safer sex. Jim Stout, WNCAP Education Coordinator, and Maria Fire, Appalachian Hall massage therapist, facilitated the meeting.

After brief presentations by both facilitators, the participants divided into eight groups of eight each for brainstorming and discussion. Each group reported back to the larger group.

Most groups tried to define intimacy and found that definitions were individual and sometimes conflicting. Some saw intimacy as "having sex." Others defined it as "trusting and caring behavior" or "being vunerable and honest" in a relationship that might or might not be

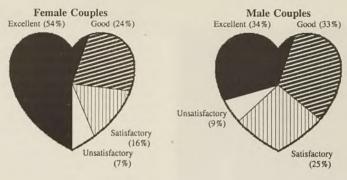
Many agreed that communicating with a partner about expectations around sex and intimacy was paramount to healthy sexual interaction, though talking during sex was viewed as difficult by some. Several persons stated that "anonymous sex" was not unhealthy as long as safer sex was being practiced. Each group dealt with this distinction between "physical and emotional sex."

Group participants discussed obstacles thought to inhibit fully intimate and healthy sexual relationships within the gay and lesbian community. Lists compiled in each group were similiar. Culturewide shaming of sexuality was seen as a deterrent to healthy sex. The lifelong experience of cultural homophobia internalized among gays and lesbians was seen to compound this sexual shaming.

Complaints were also voiced about the fact that participants had not received appropriate sex education in adolescence. In addition, they did not have visible healthy role models for gay and lesbian relationships.

Each participant was provided with a worksheet that included a short bibliography and suggestions for ways to overcome their own blocks to healthy sex. Particularly recommended by Maria Fire, for people "in and out of a committed relationship," was the book Permanent Partners: Building Gay and Lesbian Relationships That Last by Betty Berzon. ▼

Quality of Sex with Partner



Sex was rated most highly by couples who were more committed and those who rated overall relationship quality more highly. In contrast, older respondents and those caring for children rated sexual interaction lower.

The lesbian couples had been together an average of 4.9 years; the male couples averaged 6.9 years together.

A free summary of results from the national survey may be obtained by sending a self-addressed, stamped, business-size envelope to Partners. Box 9685, Seattle, WA 98109. A detailed analysis appears in the newsletter's May/June issue, which may be ordered for \$3.95. A year's subscription costs \$21. Telephone inquiries may be made to Stevie Bryant or Demian at (206) 784-1519.

SALGA Elects **Officers**

Members of the Southern Appalachian Lesbian and Gay Alliance (SALGA) elected new officers at the February meeting. These officers compose the core of SALGA's first Board of Directors. The new officers are: SALGA Chair: Carlos Gomez; Vice-Chair: Polly Ross: Secretary: Charlotte Goedsche; Treasurer: Ron Huskins; Directors of the Board: Ellen Hines, Ron Lambe, and Betty Sharpless.

In addition to these elected officers, SALGA's Board of Directors consists of the previous year's Chair, Teri Gibbs; the previous year's Vice-Chair, Peter Kendrick; and SALGA's representative to the North Carolina Coalition for Gay and Lesbian Equality (NCCGLE), Cynthia Janes. SALGA's representative to the Asheville Gay and Lesbian Community Council (AGLCC) is Teri Gibbs, so this seat is not filled. The two Board seats reserved for people of color, and the two seats reserved for differently abled persons are also not filled at present. ▼

CLASSIFIED

Cats looking for good homes! I am in desperate need of new, loving homes for several of my 21 cats. I have all ages and colors and can offer vouchers to help with neutering/spaying. If you would like a new cat to love, please call Kelly at 299-1129. Leave a message telling why you're calling, and include your name and phone number.

Used answering machine in good working condition for sale by Asheville Gay and Lesbian Community Council. Call Ron at 258-3318.

Legally protect you & mate. Living wills, powers of attorney, wills w/o lawyer costs. Two sets of forms, instructions. \$15. Freeflight Inc. 0-1 PO Box 372, Asheville, NC 28802.

Two-bedroom farmhouse for rent in country setting. Weaverville, \$400 per month, available after March 1. Call 658-3081 and leave a message.

Persons interested in learning about meditation, psychic experiences, astrology, understanding dreams, or other mystic things, contact Al Bouchard 254-

National Lesbian Conference Registration Form

CONFERENCE APPLICATION	REGISTRATION FEES, D.	tormina according to		
	REGISTRATION FEES: Determine according to income and circumstances. No woman will be excluded because of inability to pay.			
Name				
		Suggested fee schedule		
Address	INCOME	FEE ENCLOSED		
	Unemployed/no income			
City	to \$5,000	\$ 25		
	\$ 5,00 1 - \$ 10,000	£ 00		
StateZip	\$10.001 - 20,000			
	\$20,001 - 30,000	\$100		
Phone(am)(pm)	\$30,000 - 40,000			
		0 or more		
I am a woman of color [] yes [] no	323	o of more		
I am a woman with disabilities [] yes [] no	TRAVEL ELBID I	ND ASSISTANCE*		
I am a deaf woman [] yes [] no				
I am a woman over 50 [] yes [] no	To apply for travel fund, p	rease indicate below:		
I am a lesbian [] yes [] no	I need a ride [] yes. Numl	per or people		
I do NOT want my name on a mailing list []	I can drive [] yes. I can tal	Keother		
, , , , , ,	I can contribute 5			
ACCESSIBILITY: I have the following needs:	I am part of a cost-sharing	group [] yes (please		
	submit all applications tog			
	*The deadline for assistar	ice is March 15, 1991.		
	001000			
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Sign [] Oral []	I would like community he	ousing with: (names)		
Spoken[]				
				
CHILD CARE: for children up to age 10	(please send forms togethe	r for shared housing)		
name age special needs				
"Me special needs	Please check all that apply			
	[] wheelchair access [] n	o smoking [] I smoke		
	[] no cats [] no dogs []a	dl female household		
	[] bed only [] flo			
	[] I have other allergies/n	eeds re: housing		
- I am enclosing \$ as a contribution to	Are you planning to camp	?[] yes [] no		
assist other women in travel costs.	If so, how many people?			
- I live in the Atlanta area and can provide hous-				
ing for women and children.	Nights needed: [] Mon. 22			
I live in the Atlanta area and chuldren.	[] Wed. 24 [] Thur. 25 []			
- I live in the Atlanta area and can provide	[] Sun. 28 [] Mon. 29 [] (Other		
camping space fortents.				
- I can volunteer my skills as a	Please submit all application	ons by March 31, 1991		
and will be available (dates)	Registration will be taken a	at the conference.		
- I can assist in these other ways	Make all checks and mone	y orders payable to		
	NLC. Mail registration to:	sase asar		

COMMENTS

excluded because of inability to pay.					
Suggested fee schedule					
INCOME	FEE	ENCLOSED			
Unemployed/no income	0				
to \$5,000	\$ 25				
\$5,001 - \$10,000	\$ 80				
\$10.001 - 20,000	\$100				
\$20,001 - 30,000	\$150				
\$30,000 - 40,000	\$200				
over \$40,000 \$256	or more	2			
TRAVEL FUND AND ASSISTANCE*					
To apply for travel fund, please indicate below:					
I need a ride [] yes. Number of people					
I can drive [] yes. I can tak	e	others.			
I can contribute 5	_ I nead :	\$			
I am part of a cost-sharing group [] yes (please					
submit all applications together	ther).				
"The deadline for assistance is March 15, 1991.					
COMMUNITY HOUSING					
I would like community housing []yes [] no					
I would like community housing with: (names)					
(please send forms together for shared housing)					
Please check all that apply:					
[] wheelchair access [] no smoking [] I smoke					
[] no cats [] no dogs [] all female household					
[] bed only [] floor sleeping					
[] I have other allergies/needs re: housing					
Are you planning to camp? [] yes [] no					
Mre you planning to camp?	[] yes [Jno			
If so, how many people?					

(404) 373-0000 TTV/Vicin

Mail registration to: 3238

P.O.Box 1999

Decatur, GA 30031