



CLOSER Discusses "Beyond 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.

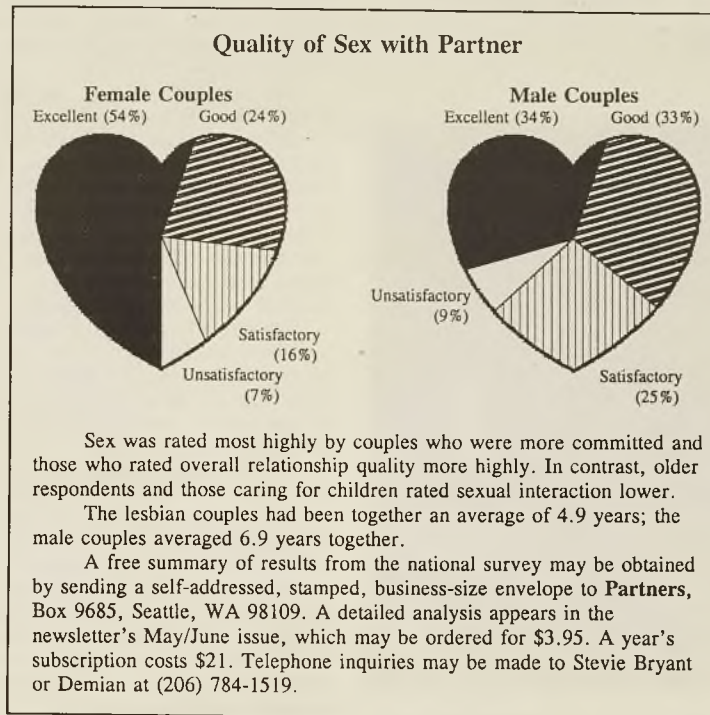
Most groups tried to define intimacy and found that definitions were individual and sometimes conflicting. Some saw intimacy as "having sex." Others defined it as "trusting and caring behavior" or "being vulnerable and honest" in a relationship that might or might not be sexual.

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 similar. 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. ▼



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 254-2080.

National Lesbian Conference Registration Form

CONFERENCE APPLICATION

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Phone(am) _____ (pm) _____

I am a woman of color yes no

I am a woman with disabilities yes no

I am a deaf woman yes no

I am a woman over 50 yes no

I am a lesbian yes no

I do NOT want my name on a mailing list

ACCESSIBILITY: I have the following needs: _____

TRANSLATE: I Need I can volunteer to do

Sign _____ Oral

Spoken

CHILD CARE: for children up to age 10
name _____ age _____ special needs _____

REGISTRATION FEES: Determine according to income and circumstances. No woman will be excluded because of inability to pay.

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	\$250 or more	_____

Suggested fee schedule

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 take _____ others.

I can contribute \$ _____ I need \$ _____

I am part of a cost-sharing group yes (please submit all applications together).

*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

If so, how many people? _____

Nights needed: Mon. 22 Tues. 23

Wed. 24 Thur. 25 Fri. 26 Sat. 27

Sun. 28 Mon. 29 Other _____

Please submit all applications by March 31, 1991. Registration will be taken at the conference. Make all checks and money orders payable to NLC. Mail registration to: **S.A.S.E. A.S.A.P.**

NLC
P.O. Box 1999
Decatur, GA 30031

(404) 373-0000
TTY/Voice _____

COMMENTS: _____

