

WNCAP Growing

The AIDS epidemic is growing in Western North Carolina, and along with it an increasing demand for services. Fortunately, the Western North Carolina AIDS Project (WNCAP), with the help of active fundraising and successful grant applications, has been growing, as well.

A \$20,000 grant from INSURE, plus some United Way funds, has allowed WNCAP hire a half time support services associate. Elaine Ferguson has been hired for this position.

The Kate B. Reynolds Health Care Trust has granted WNCAP \$21,400 to help fund WNCAP's support services program.

Feminist T-Shirt Show in Boone

A feminist T-shirt show will be featured at the main gallery at Jones House, on Kings' Street in Boone during the month of March. (March is Women's History Month.) The show is produced by the Appalachian State University Women's Study Program. Over one hundred T-shirts related to feminism will be displayed, and the story behind each T-shirt provided. ▼

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campus mailboxes, telling all students about SAGA. "We're very happy because we're getting a lot done," commented Majors.

SAGA meets every Thursday night at 8:30 PM at the ASU Student Union. For more information, call John Majors at 262-8327, or write SAGA, ASU Box 8979, Boone, NC 28608.

Adult group off and running

The efforts of a heterosexual woman who has a lesbian sister led to the initiation of a new group in Boone for adult lesbians and gay men. The group, to be named soon, met for the first time in late January. Around 40 people attended each of the first two meetings. Ages ranged from twenties to fifties, and roughly equal numbers of gay men and lesbians attended.

Terry Taylor is a married woman who is acutely aware of the need for support for gay men and lesbians. She is a registered nurse whose sister is a lesbian. As a nurse, says Taylor, she has "seen the near misses and pumped out stomachs, and seen the results of abuse," particularly among teenage gays and lesbians. "I feel that it's an emotional abuse issue," Taylor said.

Having grown up with a lesbian sister, Taylor knows firsthand the need for education on gay issues. "No one ever helped me to understand," she said.

Taylor has been concerned for years about trying to change societal attitudes

towards gay men and lesbians in the Boone area. She has approached school administrators, school counselors, churches and civic groups in an effort to share information she has gotten from Parents-FLAG and other sources. She has tried to start a Parents-FLAG group in Boone, but so far parents have preferred to stay closeted, even to each other. She has settled for sending them materials and trying to counsel them by phone.

Taylor's phone number appears in the *Watauga Democrat* and on the public access TV channel as a resource to contact for Parents-FLAG and HIV+ support. Because of this Taylor is often the first person contacted when a gay man or lesbian moves into the Boone area. She gets lots of calls.

Taylor had hoped that some of the gay men and lesbians in town would help with education efforts, but with all the calls she was getting about the need for support, it became clear that first there needed to be a gay/lesbian community in the Boone area.

A turning point came when Taylor talked with Kim Hardin, a local psychologist who moved to Boone recently from Durham. He has been helping with the HIV group. "Terry called me about what could be done," said Hardin. "We decided to get together with five or six other people and have a brainstorming session." Those assembled decided to see if there was community interest in starting a gay and lesbian group in Boone. Taylor agreed to use her phone number to publicize the first meeting.

At the first meeting "the energy was incredible," said Bridget and Anita, two women who attended. Hardin said that "it was very encouraging that the attitude was that most people had been waiting for this opportunity--it was long anticipated. There was a sense of relief to finally meet people that they knew existed, but had never met."

The group's first order of business is to get to know one another, and to develop a supportive gay community. "Once the groundwork has been laid and a sense of cohesiveness has developed, the group will probably tackle community service projects, such as a documentation project" to keep track of incidents of discrimination, harassment, and violence to lesbians and gay men, said Bridget. Hardin mentioned another aim: "We hope that we can help young people who are struggling, to provide role models. We hope to be able to give them local support."

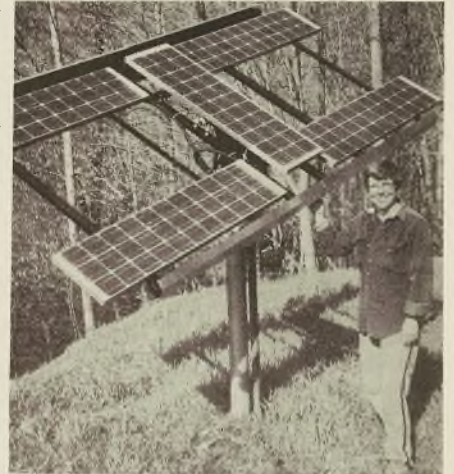
The group meets the fourth Wednesday of each month at 7:30 PM at Jones House, a community center in Boone. The building is wheelchair accessible. In addition, the group has a monthly social function; date, time and place announced only at the monthly Wednesday meeting. ▼

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This spring her house may be featured on a tour of homes like hers by the North Carolina Solar Energy Association (if the sponsors can figure out how to get a 45 ft. bus to it). For further information you may write the North Carolina Solar Center Box 7401, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC 27695; or call 1-800-33NCSUN.

Betsy is convinced that protecting our environment is a task for each of us individually. "If we wait for the government to do it, I'll give you a guess as to how long that will take. We must care as individuals and each do what we can," she said. Betsy added that there is a great deal that individuals can do to save energy, even in an ordinary home. For instance, there are energy saving light bulbs which perhaps cost more initially, but last longer and save energy dollars.

Betsy's embracing of all that is natural includes acceptance of herself as a lesbian. Betsy's is a philosophy of live and let live carried out to an unusual degree. She asks simply to be accepted as who she is, and returns the compliment. But at the same time, Betsy's life-long love affair with nature consists of more than admiration. Betsy revels in her interaction with the natural world. This is best exemplified by her passion for kayaking. On a wall of Betsy's new home are two very similar color photos of raging, boiling rivers. In each river is a kayak, not speeding downstream, but standing on end, one with front tip only in the water, the other with rear tip only in the water. The kayaks are completely vertical, as a pencil poised over paper, their motion frozen, not only by the photographer, but also by the skills of the kayaks' paddler. And in each photo, protruding out the side of the kayak as an appendage, one recognizes Betsy's head and shoulders, paddle held triumphantly aloft, grinning to the sky. ▼



Photovoltaic system generates electricity for house. Three panels will be added to these five.

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will tell me how to clean needles and how to get help for my addiction. They will not threaten or demean me. Perhaps they will get through to me, perhaps not. However, the chance is zero if I don't walk in the door by my own free will. That's just how I am.

We need to inform people at risk. However, the people most at risk have very strong reasons to avoid revealing their membership in risk groups. These reasons are valid: this state has a "crimes against nature" law which, curiously

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enough, doesn't even mention air or water pollution. This state, and every other state, considers intravenous drug abuse to be a crime as well as a disease. Who would want to be on a list of purported criminals?

This is not the time or the place to discuss the wisdom of the various statutes covering sexuality and intoxicants. However, we all must realize the statutes exist and that the statutes have their effects. We must also realize that certain prejudices also exist. Our purpose is to decrease the spread of a dangerous infectious disease. In an ideal world, perhaps it makes sense to consider HIV to be the same as syphilis. Unfortunately, we do not live in an ideal world.

If we approach HIV like we approach

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syphilis, we will fail. We cannot counsel those who do not walk in the door. We cannot trace contacts if we have no one to ask. We cannot get the co-operation of an infected person if we scare him away instead of helping him to deal with his real situation.

(Edited for length. For a copy of the complete text, call Art Polansky at 253-2344.)