

AFFINITY

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FEBRUARY 1996

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Have you moved? Are You moving soon? Call (303) 771-7169 or e-mail: AlaninDen@aol.com

The Adventures of Two Lesbian Mothers-to-be

May 1993. This month marks our one year anniversary in "Affirmation". It also marks our one year anniversary of planning for an addition to our family. Last May a group called "Maybe Baby" was formed in Los Angeles. Those who attended that first meeting came from all walks of life, but we all had at least two things in common—we were all gay or lesbian, and we all wanted to be parents. We met in the patio area of a Santa Monica restaurant and shared our reasons for wanting to be parents. Little did any of us realize what that group would become. Monthly meetings have continued for the past year and some couples have adopted or become pregnant.

"Maybe Baby" was the springboard for us to formulate our own concrete plans on having a child. We have received some vital information and talked to other couples who have been successfully inseminated. We are so excited and even more so since we have contacted and received specific information from the agency we are going to work with. We've even chosen a donor! We've devised a time line and are more anxious the more we plan and talk about it.

There are very few people who believe our story of how we did not get along when we first met as missionaries in 1985. They see us now, after nearly six years of "coupledom," and find it difficult to imagine a time that we could hardly stand to be in the same room together! They are even more incredulous when they hear that we teach at the same school and are about to start the journey of becoming parents. "Tere and Jacki," they say in amazement, "how did you ever get to this point?" We often ask ourselves that very same question!

As we look back over our lives together, we realize that within the last year that we have encountered a tremendous amount of change. It has been exactly a year since we made our first phone call to Affirmation's Los Angeles chapter. They had just returned from the Pride Parade in Long Beach and wouldn't be having another meeting for a couple of weeks. We looked at each other and said, "There's no way we could ever go to a Pride Parade!" Almost a year later to the day, we were enjoying the sun, the music, the booths and the company of friends at the Long Beach Festival! We have learned to never say "never!" We attended the Affirmation General Conference in Santa Cruz, with the idea that "if we don't like it, we don't have to go to another one." We can hardly wait to go to San Diego! We were awed by the San Diego Temple when we attended the Open House with Affirmation, and we lead the Los Angeles Chapter's discussion nights every month!

See BABY on page 6

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor:

"Hi!" I wanted to drop a line to thank you for all the great work you are doing. I enjoy reading the newsletter and keeping up-to-date on what is happening. Your service is sincerely appreciated here in Mechanicville, New York.

I would like to share with you and your members a poem of mine, which was published this past year in a book titled "Between The Raindrop" that was put out by The National Library of Poetry. I am currently an associated member of that organization; and nevertheless, another poem of mine is slated to be published this year sometime.

Again, keep up the terrific work. I look forward to your work each month.

Your Loving Brother,
David T. Reid

Step by Step

One more day and one more time, I've made it through life's never ending rhyme.

The nights have been terrible dark and the days have been terrible dim, but I hold on to the sweet comfort of loving Him.

There behind His beautiful grace, He leads me on to a heavenly place. So step by step I stumble down the narrow way, where I try to do better than all of my yesterdays.

by David Reid

Dear Editor:

Every month I get the *Affinity* Newsletter and enjoy the articles and think how much I'd like to tell everyone what a wonderful 1995 Affirmation conference in Seattle. Before August, I had heard of them. Now that I have experience one, I'd like to attend again some time.

I have often searched for belonging and acceptance. Realizing I made agreements in the pre-existence that placed me in a circumstance here on earth that was hard to accept at times, I felt confused being outside of the norm and maybe outside of God's approval. There seemed to be no answer but to go with it. Therefore, I stopped resisting what persisted. My heart said one thing and people around me said another. Everyone has his or her truths to follow and most often the paths lead back to Heavenly Father and His Kingdom.

During the Seattle conference, I felt tremendous acceptance and love. There was a warm wonderful fellowship with those that were there, because people seemed to be on a spiritual journey. Their life had meaning because they believed in themselves. The Mormon Legacy had given them purpose.

My sheltered experiences with other gays had been of very worldly ways. Yet, total love abounded at the conference. I felt it was solid and would be greater and stronger at the next conference in 1996.

I have great appreciation for your struggles to be who you are

and feel total acceptance. My husband died of AIDS. When he realized it was time to come out of the closet, he was torn between staying with me and our son or go out on his own. That's when he found Affirmation. It gave him somewhere good to go for fellowship.

We were together until he died, which brought our family great unity and love. We are each other's teacher. We are still there for each other. I am grateful to have shared a remarkable life together. Although at the time of going through it, there was both joy and pain.

I love and support you on your individual journeys through life as you seek understanding and purpose continuing to reach for the Light of Christ that is within all of us.

—Margine

Dear Editor:

I am writing to you about bearing children. I would like to thank the staff of Affirmation for their concern. I received a notice that my subscription has expired and a free copy of the October Issue of *Affinity* in the mail. Thank you for the reminder.

I am wondering if all of the Affirmation members know more than I do about bearing children. I myself being a homosexual, would like to have children of my own. I was born into a large family and appreciated growing up with my brothers and sisters and I am familiar with family life. How do I go about having my own children? The only thing that I can think of is to make an agreement with another worthy female Affirmation member. Is there a process already in place for such an agreement?

Editor's Note: Sorry, there is no process in Affirmation, though the concept is a good one. It would make a great workshop at a conference!

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Greetings Affirmation!

As I ponder this second and shortest month of the year I think about a Holiday which for some odd reason has always held a special place in my heart—Ground Hog Day. On the second of this month, our furry friend will peek out of his sleepy burrow and look for his shadow. If he sees it six more weeks of winter will follow; if he doesn't, spring is just around the corner. After a Winter like this let's hope it's cloudy up there in New Hampshire where the little guy lives.

Six more weeks of winter or an imminent Spring. I wonder where we are in this. Just when I allow myself a glimmer of hope that full civil and religious rights for gay men, lesbians, bisexuals and transgendered are within reach—that the triumph of a warm and accepting Spring is upon us—a wintry blast of bigotry and lies again reminds me that winter is far from over.

Just yesterday the California State Assembly passed a bill which, if passed by the state senate and signed by Governor Wilson, will force the State of California to not recognize gay and lesbian marriages performed in other states. This is an obvious reaction to the imminent same-sex marriage legalization almost certain to occur in Hawaii later this year. While many doubt that the law, if it passes, would be able to remain in force after a certain challenge in the US Supreme Court, still, it foretells a long and bumpy road toward total equality under the law for our people. In terms of acceptance by the Church—well, there can be little doubt that the bleak Winter landscape shows little potential of thaw in the near future.

I'm sorry if I seem angry and pessimistic, but frankly I am and to top it off, I'm just plain tired of it all. I see the suffering of many of our people; I know my own grief. I'm mad as hell that the marriage of Michael and I this coming summer, while not diminishing in any way the symbolic importance of this ceremony of our commitment and love or my gratitude to our two families for their support, will not be "legal" in the eyes of the "law." And yes, I'm angry that, if we wanted to, we could not get married in the Temple—no way, no how. It's hard for me to understand or accept this rejection since more and more I have come to accept and appreciate that this is what I was born to be—I know it and I know that God knows it (um, now who else said something like that)—and frankly I like it—and wouldn't want it any other way (no hetero pills for me). So people of the world—WAKE UP!

With all this frustration I at times feel thank God in this "Winter of My Discontent" that there is a shelter where warmth and acceptance and love reign, where I have friends and can be who I am—gay and of Mormon heritage. Thank you my Affirmation family.

So I hope you don't mind if I follow another February Holiday tradition and send a small Valentine and tell you—Affirmation, I love you!

—Scott

NOTICE: AFFIRMATION ACCEPTS MASTERCARD AND VISA

The Affirmation National Organization is now able to accept either MasterCard or Visa for payment of dues and Affinity subscriptions. Credit cards can also be accepted for other payments to Affirmation for such things as conferences, publication purchases or contributions.

To use your MasterCard or Visa, you should provide authorization by mail (P.O. Box 46022, Los Angeles, CA 90046), by phone (303) 771-7169, or email: AlaninDen@aol.com. State the purpose, dollar amount authorized, name of cardholder, whether MasterCard or Visa, card account number and expiration date.

Love to all,
Alan

California Alert—Dunn Diatribe

I was in Church Sunday, 28 January, when the "Political Action" announcement was read regarding the support of a California bill that would not recognize same sex marriages performed in other states. I sat there in church with my wife and kids and took it like a man—even winked at my bishop. He smiled back and shrugged.

My wife began to cry which surprised me. I would have thought it a perfect time for her to rub it in my face. She said that she realized there was no escaping it. I held her and reassured her that I wasn't angry at anyone (for their ignorance).

I was proud to be 'out' to many members of my ward as that piece of nonsense was read over the pulpit. I know they were thinking of me. It will be my pleasure to oblige the Area Presidency and write to my elected officials to tell them exactly how I feel.

—John

SPIRITUALITY

Last summer, I visited the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. One of the paintings spoke to me a thousand words: the Old Testament story of Hagar and her son Ishmael.

Hagar, a servant, and her son Ishmael are cast out of the house of Abraham (Ishmael's and Isaac's father) to ensure that Isaac (Sarah's son) will be Abraham's first born. In the dessert wilderness of Beer-sheba they run out of water:

"And the water was spent in the bottle, and [Hagar] cast [Ishmael] under one of the shrubs.

And [Hagar] went, and sat her down over against [Ishmael] a good way off, as it were a bowshot: for [Hagar] said, Let me not see the death of [Ishmael]. And she sat over against him, and lifted up her voice, and wept.

And God heard the voice of the lad; and the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and said unto her, What aileth thee, Hagar? fear not; for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is.

Arise and lift up the lad, and hold him in thine hand; for I will make him a great nation.

And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water; and she went, and filled the bottle with water, and gave the lad drink.

And God was with the lad; and he grew, and dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer."

Genesis 21: 15-20

In this story we find fear and jealousy, abandonment, suffering, God's compassion and mercy, knowledge, action, survival, and prosperity.

For many gays and lesbians, we go through a similar process when we come out. Some of us never get beyond the fear and jealousy of others and stay in the closet. Some of us are abandoned and suffer as a part of the coming out process. Some give up hope and become blind to God's compassion and mercy. Some believe what they were taught: God's compassion and mercy only can be found in one place (the Church). And so they become the example of a man dying of thirst yet standing knee deep in a stream of pure fresh water.

But with the knowledge of God's unconditional love, we can open our eyes and realize that God goes beyond the buildings, dogmas, rituals and appointed leaders of religion. With that knowledge we can take action to first cope and then survive. In time and with peace of mind, we can prosper with the spirit of God with us...whether we find it in the LDS Church or elsewhere.

No matter who judges us with their standards of "righteousness" or their interpretations of the "will of God" we can both humbly and firmly reply, "I will answer for my own actions as you will answer for yours."

Have a good month

Love, James Kent

Newsbyte for Affinity

The Los Angeles Chapter of Affirmation established a site on the World Wide Web of the Internet late in November 1995. In the few months it has been up and running, there have been many thousand visits to the site. By the end of January, the count was up to over 4500. We have had requests for information from all over the world, and new requests come in daily. There have also been others which feel the terms gay and Mormon are an oxymoron (or is that oxymormon?) and haven't held back in telling us so. We respond to every post sent to us and it has had an interesting effect. Several of the initially negative messages come back softer and gentler, apparently the response they got back wasn't what they had expected. By this means, it has been a great educational tool.

After a month of operation, the new Internet World Wide Web site for gay Mormons has received 2,500 visitors.

"We have had a tremendous response, and look forward to serving the LDS [Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints] and Gay/Lesbian LDS communities with more enriched and extensive offerings on the Web," said site Webmaster, Jim.

This had appeared across the Internet in Europe and we are very excited to see that our site has had such an impact. If you would like to visit, the URL address is: <http://www.westworld.com/~tiburon/lasaints>. Drop us an e-mail from the page and let us know of any suggestions you might have. We look forward to seeing you on the Net!

Jim A.—Los Angeles Chapter

FAMILY ISSUES

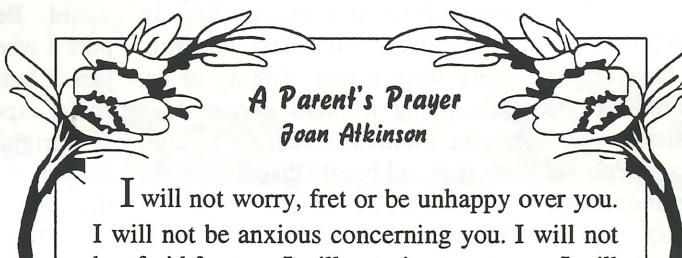
Family Focus (reprinted with permission from the Family Fellowship Newsletter, *Reunion*)
by Joan Atkinson

When I was just a young girl, I knew that I wanted to have a large family. I loved children, my biggest single goal was to be a mother. When I was ten years old, my family joined the LDS Church. I learned to pray, to serve others, and most important, to love unconditionally. When I was married and my children started coming along, I truly enjoyed each wonderful spirit. I was very busy with scouts, Primary, PTA, Little League, Relief Society, and church activities of our own, plus several foster children, and one beautiful Indian daughter from the Indian placement program. We enjoyed family home evenings, held family prayers, honored temple commitments, and filled church callings.

One day I got a call from my oldest son's school. The principal said that Dale was acting out of character. Our son had never given us any real problems, so we were shocked to find out that Dale had tried to kill himself on the way to school that morning, by jumping in front of a car. On the advice of the school and our bishop, we sent our son to a 24-hour lockup evaluation center. When we went to pick him up, we were told by the staff that he was "gay." Knowingly, I said "Yes, he has always been a happy child." The counselor then explained what gay meant. I was in a state of shock. I had heard about homosexuals, but my son was a wonderful boy,

how could this be?

We brought Dale home, but he left again that same day. At age 16 he no longer wanted to live with us, saying that he could not measure up. We didn't know where he went and we couldn't find him. He had entered another world, one that we had no clues to. We began to study, read, and pray. We wanted knowledge about homosexuality. Dale contacted us several months later, and



I will not worry, fret or be unhappy over you. I will not be anxious concerning you. I will not be afraid for you. I will not give up on you. I will not blame you, criticize you or condemn you.

I will remember first, last and always that you are God's child, that you have His Spirit in you. I will trust that Spirit to take care of you, to be a light to your path, to provide for your needs. I will think of you always enfolded in His protective care.

I will be patient with you. I will have confidence in you. I will stand by you in faith and bless you in my prayers, knowing that you are growing, knowing that you are finding your own way.

I have only good feelings in my heart toward you, for I am willing to let you live your life as you see fit. Your way may not be my way, but I will trust the Spirit of God in you to show you the way to your highest good.

we began to converse over the phone. He still did not trust us enough to tell us where he was.

I went to the temple in prayer and fasting to find an answer as to how we could help our son. In the celestial room, as I sat in a chair pleading with the Lord, a voice came loud and clear: "Just love your children." I began to argue, and again the voice came: "Love your children." I knew

then that this was my answer. Over the next two years I truly loved my son unconditionally. We were close again as a family. He was welcome in our home and his friends were too.

Dale moved up to Auburn, CA, where he attended school and worked as a Nurse Assistant. On

January 18, 1990, he called me at work (I am a teacher). He said, "Mom, I want to come home." I said, "Of course." Are you coming for the weekend, or for the summer?" He said, "No Mom, I am coming home to die. I have AIDS." Once again I was in shock. "AIDS." I had heard about that somewhere on the news. I could not remember, my heart was beating so fast, tears were streaming down my face. "My son, my son, of course come home."

He came home the next week with his friend, Dan. But we later learned that if he left the Sacramento area, his insurance would be invalid, so he could not stay. We drove up as a family to help him move from his ranch house to a tiny apartment in Sacramento, where he could be near the hospital. He kissed each of his horses and animals goodbye as I stood by watching

See PARENT on page 10

BABY from page 1

It's obvious that Affirmation has been a turning point in our lives. Our lives are different in respect to the "closet," too. Jacki came out to her family in December, and they have been extremely supportive and loving. We couldn't have asked for more from them. As we look forward to starting our family, we face the question of being out to more and more people, especially Tere's family and our colleagues at work.

Our Family (Part II)

FAMILY... Of late I have mulled this word over countless times in my head. Parents, brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces, nephews, grandparents, great-grandparents, friends—they all make up what we call family. Not many of us in the gay community consider "son" or "daughter" part of that entourage, but those two words occupy my almost every thought. Many of you know Jacki and I are trying to have a child of our own to raise and to share our lives with. Every decision we make, every future plan we discuss revolves around that very goal.

We started our journey with such aspirations. We had it all planned down to the most minute detail. According to our original plan, Jacki would be almost ready to give birth by now... but as they say, "the best laid plans of mice and men often go awry." Here we are still trying to become pregnant. Our frustration levels rise almost daily, and it seems everywhere we go there are infants and happy (or exhausted, depending on how you look at it) parents. We even tried to get away from them all and see a movie, but even there a pregnancy test was involved in the plot. We looked at each other and said, "We've used that one!"

Many of you at our last national conference showed a great deal of in-



terest in our plans to start a family. Many wanted to know a little bit more about "Maybe Baby", the support group for gays and lesbians considering parenthood here in Los Angeles. The group has grown leaps and bounds. Back in May 1992 at its first meeting, there were a mere twenty of us. Occupying a small corner of a Santa Monica restaurant's patio, we met and briefly discussed what we wanted out of the group and what some of our common interests, goals and concerns were. Now two years later the group has expanded into a large conference room at the Gay and Lesbian Center and there are often over 100 people in attendance. We all have varying reasons for attending. Some are already pregnant, others are just "thinking" about it and want more information..., and some of us are waiting—"Are we pregnant?" or "When can we try again."

One of the most interesting "Maybe Baby" meetings included the involvement of children of gays and lesbians. In all cases these children were a product of previous marriages. Each child still has two parents, they just aren't the ones who were there at the original conception—some have more than two. The children's ages ranged between 9 and 16. We, the prospective parents, went into the meeting expecting horror stories of how the parents of their children's school friends don't allow their children to go to

THAT house, or how the children are ostracized from their peers. But we couldn't have been farther from the truth. All of the children were very articulate. They were happy, smiling, well-rounded kids...What a concept!

Most of us will agree that "Mormon" is often synonymous with "family", in any community. We can also agree that "gay" is often associated with "non-biological family", especially in the straight world. Being Mormon and gay puts a whole new twist on the subject of family. The religious versus social expectations of the two were so intriguing to a USC film school student that he decided to make it the topic of his documentary entitled, "Rocking the Cradle." The director of the film came to a "Maybe Baby" meeting to find and talk with prospective gay and lesbian parents. After interviewing countless couples he decided to focus on the angle of our story. He too, as a Catholic, is experiencing the desire to have children of his own, but his story takes a different turn because his parents cannot agree with that idea. Jacki and I were consultants on the film and will soon see the finished product. Through introducing the director to other friends of ours who already have two children and through his other contacts he was able to put his ideas on film.

Our desire to have a family has not diminished in any way. In fact, we find it increasing on a consistent basis. Funds are dwindling a bit, and our time line has been shot to pieces, but how could we let such tiny distractions get in our way? We can't!

Editor's Note: Stay tuned—next month will read all about Jacki's perspective on the whole issue.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Palm Springs '96 International Conference October 11 - 13

AFFIRMATION - Gay and Lesbian Mormons
P.O. Box 46022 • Los Angeles • CA • 90046 • USA
(213) 255-7251



East Coast Affirmation Retreat

The Chapter-at-Large, with assistance from the New York City and Washington DC Chapters, will be hosting an East Coast Affirmation Retreat in the latter part of April 1996.

Please stay tuned as plans are developed and a location is selected.

For information, call anyone of the above mentioned chapters. (See Directory on the last page *Affinity*)

GAMOFITE Retreats

If you're interested in joining Gamofites, please know that you are welcome to join us. You'll find we offer an opportunity to associate with Gay Mormon Fathers in an environment of unconditional Love and Acceptance. For information about our next Utah retreat, please contact Duane Jennings at (801) 534-8693 (or email :Wasatch@aol.com). For information about our next East Coast retreat, please contact Rob Killian at (716) 232-3149 (or Email: RobKillian@aol.com). For information about our next California retreat, please contact Mark Ziegler at (415) 334-4576 (or Email: mzieg91912@aol.com). For general information about Gamofites, please contact Scott Mackay at (714) 998-2052 (or Email: smackay@dhvx20.csudh.edu).

April 26 - 28 in Washington, DC.
July 19 - 21 in San Francisco, CA

Parents Conference May 3 - 4 1996

Family Fellowship is planning a Parents Conference which will be held on May 3-4 in Salt Lake City, scheduled tentatively at the Doubletree Inn. It will be Friday evening and Saturday. This meeting will provide an opportunity to bring other new parents into our group and will be a time where we can have some open discussion. It will end with a brunch and an open mic opportunity on Saturday morning. For more information call (801) 272-3806.

National Women's Retreat

Scheduled For June 28 - 30

The first national women's retreat for lesbian Mormons and lesbians of Mormon heritage has been set for June 28-30 in San Francisco.

The retreat will coincide with San Francisco's Gay Pride weekend so there will be much to see and do as we share experiences, insights and fun in the city by the bay!! This is a unique opportunity to build a community of support with women who share similar experiences and heritage.

So, don't miss this experience!!! There is a nominal charge of \$20 for food. Housing and transportation details will be provided in further announcements. For additional information, or to RSVP, please contact Jennifer or Suzie below:

Jennifer Hatch
P.O. Box 86469
San Diego, CA 92138
e-mail: Kymera1@aol.com

Suzie Ripperton
e-mail: Suzrip@aol.com

AFFIRMATION NEWS

GAMOFITE UTAH I: Gay Mormon Fathers

By Ken Taylor

Now that the Gamofites have been meeting for four years, and have grown to well over 100 members (including 233 children, and 48 grandchildren), we have felt the need to begin local groups on the East Coast, and now in Utah. Our first Utah Gamofite retreat was held December 1-3 at Dave H.'s family cabin near Heber, Utah. What a fantastically perfect place for 26 Utah Gamofites to meet!! We extend our appreciation to Dave H. and his family for allowing us to use their warm and cozy cabin. This first Utah retreat was organized by Duane J., Steve W., and Paul T. Other key individuals who helped included Dave H., Scott M., Ray F., and Shaun H. And, the all-important food committee consisted of Dave K., Beau C., and Ray F.

On Friday evening, we met at various Salt Lake City Locations, where we were shuttled by local members up into the Wasatch mountains, to Heber City. But our ride wasn't over yet. In his four-wheel drive jeep, Dave H. led us farther into the snowy wilderness, winding up and down slippery mountain roads, until we finally arrived at the cabin. The first order of business was to shovel away the snow and warm up the cabin. With four large bedrooms and ample living room space, complete with fireplace and frosty windows, we felt as if we were in Gamofite heaven.

We began getting acquainted by putting up our Personal Posters, complete with bios and photos of ourselves and our families. The bio sheets included the basic background information you would expect (residence, birthplace, age, marital status, etc.). One in-

teresting question was, "What do you expect from this Gamofite Retreat?" Well, there were some pretty interesting answers, ranging all the way from "I have no idea what to expect" to "Friendship, Fun, Food, Flirting, and Frolicking." And I suppose that to some degree, these expectations were met. Another blank to fill in was "Occupation." Among the answers to this question were: *Consultant, Computer Technician, Biochemist, Lab Technician, Computer Training Director, Software Sales Manager, Legal Administrator, FDIC Manager, Utility Manager, Employment Specialist, Customer Service, Systems Programmer, Engineer, Realtor, Network Engineer, Educator, and Legal Educator.* (WOW!) Throughout the evening, we ate the food (hamburgers and baked potatoes) and snacks provided, and interacted through Steve W.'s mixer game, 'Guess the Truth.'

Saturday morning we all jet-lagged downstairs to the welcome aroma of breakfast cooking (the Kansas contingency woke up early while the California contingency slept in). Scott M. reminded us of some basic Gamofite guidelines, and then introduced a new tradition: A lighted candle to burn throughout each Gamofite weekend retreat, in memory of those Gamofites who have passed away. Breakfast was soon followed by a workshop on "Overcoming and Healing Hurt." This session was facilitated by Glen L., who gave us many thought-provoking and insightful ideas on how we might be 'stuck'. The afternoon session included discussions on healing, forgiveness, grieving, and supporting loved ones. He concluded with a summary focusing on the importance of integration of all aspects of life. Our reward, he stated, is

unity with self, others, and the universe. We thank Glen for joining with us and for teaching us; I'm sure for many Gamofites, he provided a catalyst for change. Later that afternoon was free time, then dinner. We were all wondering what unusual events might take place during the talent show and game time planned for the evening by Shaun H. Gamofites can boast in having some real talent among us! We had stand-up comics, magic tricks, readings, organ music, jokes, a visit by a very special Relief Society Spiritual Living Specialist, and many more (sometimes painful) jokes. The show was followed by a very interesting game called "Fact or Fantasy," in which we found ourselves "inter-acting" in some most unusual ways.

Sunday morning again brought a wonderful breakfast, and a few of us sitting around the kitchen table singing like we were in an Irish pub. (I still don't know what that was all about.) Paul T. then led us in a Spiritual Activity, which consisted of three exercises. The first one, *Lifting and Trusting*, was truly a physical exercise. It allowed each of us to experience trust and love given by the rest of the group. The second was the *Angel Walk* with a musical mantra, "I honor thee Divine Within" as background. And the third was a gift-giving experience in which we were encouraged to let go of what

See RETREAT on page 11

POLITICAL

Press Release:

National Gay and Lesbian Task Force 2320 17th Street NW, Washington, DC 20009, (202) 332-6483 voice, (202) 332-0207 fax

Groundbreaking Manual for Campus Organizing Released New Tool for Gay and Lesbian Students, Faculty, Staff & Alumni

January 25, 1996—A major organizing manual for campus activists—one of the most comprehensive and exhaustive of its kind in the gay movement—is now available from the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Policy Institute.

"Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Campus Organizing: A Comprehensive Manual," contains resources, strategies, suggestions, tips, photographs, charts, lists and other information for gaining anti-discrimination protections, forming support groups, increasing visibility and securing equality in higher education.

The manual is based on extensive research conducted by leading educators and activists, including National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF) Campus Project Director Curtis Shepard, who co-produced the publication. The 335-page manual features contributions by students, faculty, staff and alumni from campuses and organizations nationwide.

"The user-friendly manual is designed to help campus activists transform colleges and universities into safe and welcoming places for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered people," said Shepard. "The manual is revolutionary because a vast array of information now exists all in one place."

The publication is divided into three main sections: Building a Healthy Organization; Practical Applications; and Resources. Chapters include "Educating Your Campus," "Building Your Group," "Organizing for Non Discrimination Policy," "Organizing Against Hate," "Responding to AIDS," "Establishing a LGBT Resource Center," "Ending ROTC Discrimination," "The Radical Right," "Organizing Floors in Residence Halls," "LGBT Studies," and more.

The manual costs \$24 plus \$6 shipping and handling (\$30 total) and may be ordered by calling NGLTF Publications at (202) 332-6483, ext. 3327.

NGLTF's Campus Project has built a network of more than 1,200 campus organizations representing nearly 1,000 different universities and colleges—almost one-third of the total number of higher education institutions in the U.S. At least 240 campuses have non discrimination policies that include sexual orientation. Some 30 campuses offer health benefits for the domestic partners of lesbian and gay employees. And nearly 40 campuses, more than double just two years ago have l/g/b/t resource centers operated by paid staff members.

"Gains such as these have not come easily," says NGLTF's Shepard. "On many campuses attempts to institute policies and programs supportive of l/g/b/t students, faculty and staff have been opposed, if not thwarted, by politically conservative or radical right forces."

Shepard points out that at Notre Dame the l/g/b/t student organization has been banned by university officials from meeting on campus, despite nearly a decade of visibility and presence. And at Ole Miss, the Christian Right-controlled student government has denied student fee

funding to the l/g/b/t organization, despite that group's official status.

"The manual is a tool to help groups organize, grow and secure equal educational opportunity for gay, lesbian bisexual and transgender people," said Shepard. "This has profound implications for higher education."

Financial support for the publication was provided by The David Geffen Foundation; entertainment industry lawyer Alan Hergott; film and television producer Leslie Belzberg; Texas physician Clark L. Carroll, M.D.; Skip Paul and Van Fletcher; entertainment executive Stanley Newman; Sam Watters; and OUT Magazine. Main contributors, besides Shepard, include Felice Yeskel, Ed.D., long-time activist, author and educator; and Charles Outcalt, director of UCLA's LGBT Resources Center, plus others.



Frequently Asked Questions about Affirmation

Q. What is the organizational structure of Affirmation?

A. Each Chapter is independent and the National Organization has an Executive Director and board. All leaders serve voluntarily.

Detail: Chapters have a great deal of independence and determine their own structure. The national organization has an Executive Director who is elected each year by the paying dues members of Affirmation. The Executive Director then selects his/her board to consist of a Senior Assistant Director and a Executive Assistant Director. The board is also made up from representatives from each chapter.

CULTURAL HALL

OPEN LETTER

By MEL WHITE

[Permission granted to circulate, post widely and to publish] (An Open Letter faxed to Pat Robertson on January 25) from Dr. Mel White

Dear Pat,

There is a growing spirit of intolerance in our land. Since the 1600s, when fundamentalist Christians chased Roger Williams to Rhode Island and burned 'witches' at the stake in Salem, similar cycles of intolerance have littered the nation with broken bodies and ruined dreams. Now, it's happening again. And that's why we're writing you.

We are convinced that your relentless campaign against homosexuality is a primary cause of the growing spirit of intolerance towards lesbian, gay, and bisexual Americans. We have monitored every 700 Club broadcast since you came to visit me in the Virginia Beach City Jail in March, 1995. And though you condemn violence, we are also convinced that your false and inflammatory anti-homosexual rhetoric leads indirectly to the very violence you condemn.

On February 5, in Virginia Beach, we will present to the media and to the general public a sixty minute video tape of blatantly intolerant statements made by you and your guests on recent broadcasts of the 700 Club. Since you have not responded to our invitations to meet with you to discuss this matter privately, we are asking thoughtful Americans to look at this video tape and decide for themselves.

However, you, too, are invited to view and discuss the videos with us. You or your representative will have the opportunity to defend your case in the midst of a frank and open dis-

cussion of this question: Is Pat Robertson's anti-homosexual campaign a primary source of the intolerance being experienced by gays, lesbians, and bisexuals in America; and how should we respond to his anti-homosexual campaign?

Following our February 5 discussion, we will be sending the video tape of your anti-homosexual remarks, a transcript of the tape's contents, and an official petition of complaint to the F.C.C. asking commissioners to decide if you should be censured for your intolerance.

In all fifty states, the TV stations and cable systems that carry the 700 Club will receive the video, the transcript, and similar petitions of complaint from local clergy and lay leaders. Again, we will ask those managers to decide if you should be censored for your intolerance.

We are also sending video and transcript copies to the national media, to editorial writers and publishers, to the President, to leaders of the Senate and the House, to the Chairs of the National Governor's and the National Mayor's Conferences, to the US Council of Catholic Bishops, the National Council of Churches, the National Association of Evangelicals and to other clergy and lay leaders across America. We are asking that each person or organization who receives the tape look at it carefully and decide

See WHITE on page 11

PARENT from page 5

from the window. When I had dreamed of being a mother, I never knew what heartache would lie ahead. I began my weekly trek back and forth from L.A. to Sacramento.

He came home again in May to celebrate his 25th birthday. His nephews and nieces all adored him and he loved them so. Dale was very thin and had to walk with a cane. He looked tired, my heart ached as I watched him. I knew that this would be his last trip home. Soon after, his remaining health failed him rapidly. He lost the ability to speak and was completely bedfast. I could pick up his small frame and rock him as I did so often as he was growing up. I would sing church songs to him, and I saw peace in his eyes. I told him about his funeral plans and he picked his songs. I never felt so alone in all my life. I knew God was there, I could feel his love, but my whole being cried out "Why?"

On Friday, July 13, as I was holding him, with his favorite church songs playing in the background, I talked him through this life and into the next. As Dale gasped his last breath, a peace came over me. I felt two strong arms around me, the love of my Heavenly Father. I flew home early in the morning to finalize the arrangements for his funeral. As a family, we pulled together in love and unison.

My heart still aches for my son. But I am thankful for the journey, I have learned so many important things. I learned that we must always be thankful for life and the beauty it offers us. I learned that I must reach out with love and understanding to others who are in need, and I must teach others to love unconditionally, to truly see the spirit of God in each person. Each person is like a great novel, and if we are sometimes turned off by the cover, we may fail to open the cover and see the special beauty that lies within.

Parents, "Just love your children."

PEN PALS

If you would like to correspond with other Affirmation members, send an ad (100 word maximum) describing yourself and your interests to:

Pen Pal Coordinator
P.O. Box 46022
Los Angeles, CA 90046

(Please - No sexual explicit ads)

Each ad will be assigned a number and will run in three issues of *Affinity*. Respondents should address a letter to the Pen Pal coordinator, **referencing the ad number on a letter-sized envelope with a stamp and returned address**. This will be forwarded unopened. Any further correspondence will be directly between pen-pals.

RETREAT from page 8

ever was blocking our progress in life, and to wish for each other whatever we were moved to wish. After such uplifting experiences, it was hard to accept that our weekend retreat was coming to an end. We all had such strong spiritual and emotional feelings, and wanted them to continue indefinitely. Many of the new Gamofites expressed their feelings at how wonderful it felt to be totally accepted by true friends in a loving environment. Eventually, and very reluctantly, we switched gears, and set about cleaning up the cabin. And clean up we did, as only Gamofites can! I believe the cabin took on an extra glow after we were through. After all was in order, we locked up the cabin, headed to Midway, where we had our brunch at the Homestead Resort. This brought back memories for two Gamofites who had been there years earlier for their wedding receptions. The food was great—a beautiful buffet that provided almost every type of food imaginable.

Thanks again to all who helped make our first Utah Gamofite weekend such a success. As we brought this retreat to a final close, we passed the responsibility for the next retreat (scheduled for April 1996) to a new Gamofite: Steve, Shaun, and Dwight. ▽

WHITE from page 10

for themselves: Should Pat Robertson be censured for his intolerance?

At this moment, you are threatening lawsuits against any local station that airs the P-FLAG ads that demonstrate your intolerant anti-homosexual campaign. Parents, Friends, and Families of Lesbians and Gays produced those two public service spots because they were alarmed by the growing hate crimes against their own children. They don't blame you for those hate crimes. But they do blame your anti-gay rhetoric for helping to create the hostile climate in which those hate crimes are committed.

On that P-FLAG spot you say: "Homosexuality is an abomination. Many of those people involved with Adolf Hitler were Satanists, many of them were homosexuals. The two things seem to go together." You said those words, Pat, on the 700 Club. You didn't show pictures of the Christian churches in Germany goose-stepping with the Third Reich. You didn't talk about the innocent European gays and lesbians who died in Hitler's concentration camps. You didn't tell of the brave homosexuals who fought and died to protect your freedom during that bloody world war against the Axis Powers. You were so caught up in half-truth and hyperbole that you missed the truth completely. And on February 5, we will show that you continue to miss the truth in your relentless, irresponsible, and intolerant campaign against us.

If you knew that a factory was pouring toxic pollution into your beloved Chesapeake Bay, you would send a TV crew to investigate and report immediately. We are convinced that a toxic stream of anti-homosexual intolerance is flowing out of your CBN/700 Club studios in Virginia Beach, helping to pollute the nation's moral environment. Again, we appeal to you. Hear our case. Reason with us. Help us stem that flow.

You are sincere, Pat, but you are sincerely wrong about homosexuality. Your intolerant words and actions are harming God's gay and lesbian children. Again, I must quote Jesus's warning: "Whoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea." ▽

(G-1) GWM, 34

Attractive and wants a friend that has very HIGH standards. Interests include: Bike riding, electronics, and photography. I do not understand why some gay people throw away their life long beliefs just because they are attracted to men. I can transfer if necessary. Please write.



(G-2) Tengo 22 años, nacido el 20 de febrero de 1973. Mi signo es piscis. Soy soltero (sin compromiso). Me gustan mucho las fiestas, mi carácter es alegre y NO SOY CELOSO. Me gusta mucho mantener relaciones con amigos de todos lugares y escribir tanto es así que todo el que tenga interés en escribirme lo puede hacer que será bien recibida su carta y a la vez las responderé con inmediatés.



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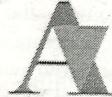
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