

LAVENDER

VISIONS

Volume 1, Issue 2

June/July 1989

Civil rights for Lesbians, Gays coming but slowly

Civil rights for Lesbians and Gays, like civil rights for racial and religious minorities before them, are creeping begrudgingly into laws and regulations. To date, the Lesbian and Gay civil rights movement has met with the most success in the state and local levels of government.

Discrimination based on sexual orientation (note that "sexual orientation" is defined as homosexuality, heterosexuality and bisexuality) is banned most completely in 13 cities (including Baltimore, Boston, Detroit and Minneapolis) and one state (Wis-

consin). In these locales, laws that "prohibit discrimination based upon sex, race, color, creed and national origin" have been amended to include "sexual orientation." The result of such amendments is the prevention of discrimination based upon sexual orientation in public employment, housing and public accommodations. Additionally, 12 states (including California, Illinois, Ohio and Minnesota), 16 counties and 70 municipalities prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation in public employment.

In addition to legal gains made at the state and local level, there have also been some advancements made in other conservative organizations concerning discrimination against Lesbians and gays. Recently the American Bar Association (ABA), a national organization for lawyers, passed a resolution urging "federal, state and local governments to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in employment, housing and public accommodation." (from ABA Report No. 8, 1989, Resolution Adopting Nondiscrimination Policy Towards Gays and Lesbians). The resolution also contains a provision that acknowledges

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Pride Week 1989 Calendar

INDIANAPOLIS

Fri. **The Dyketones**
6/16 50's Rock & Roll Dance
Branching Out Prod.
(317) 637-2906

Sat. **Justice Annual**
6/17 **Meeting & Open**
House, 3-5 PM
1534 E. 10th St.

Sat. **Tea Dance**
6/17 Tomorrow's
2301 N. Meridian
(317) 925-1710

Sat. **Pitch-In Dinner**
6/17 Sponsors: Fellowship &
Dreams and Swords

Sun. **Justice Pride Week**
6/18 **Picnic, 12-6 PM**
Westlake Park, 238 N.
High School Rd.

Wed **Interfaith Service**
6/21 Sponsor: Indianapolis
Gay/Lesbian Interfaith
Alliance, 7-9 PM

Thu. **Roller Skating**
6/22 **Party, Sponsor:**
Indianapolis
Gay/Lesbian Youth
Group, 8-10:30 PM
USA East

INDIANAPOLIS (cont.)

Sat. **Garage Sale**
6/24 Sponsor: Switchboard
(317) 253-GAYS

EVANSVILLE

Sun. **Pride Week Picnic**
6/25 **& Volleyball**
Sponsor: Tri-State
Alliance, 4 PM
Wesselman Park
(812) 867-3956

FORT WAYNE

Fri. **Coffeehouse**
6/16 Sponsor: Up the Stairs
Community Center
(219) 744-1199

Sun. **Picnic**
6/18 Sponsor: Open Door
Rock Hill Park
(219) 744-1199

ELKHART/GOSHEN

Sun. **Potluck Dinner**
6/11 Sponsor: GLEAM
(219) 522-0102

BLOOMINGTON

For Pride Week information,
call the Switchboard at (812)
336-4299.

Make time to celebrate; plan to continue struggle

Throughout the year, Gays and Lesbians struggle to build a life for themselves which includes such basic human rights as the ability to love whom we want, when we want and where we want. Once a year, in June, we celebrate the accomplishments our struggles have granted us. And we have accomplished much.

Before 1969, Gays and Lesbians were harassed continually by police. It was nearly impossible to gather socially or to live openly without public outcry. In the '60s, however, the Gay and Lesbian community began to join together. Tentatively they started to fight back against their oppressors until finally a spontaneous, non-organized group of drag queens refused to take the abuse. It was 20 years ago, at the Stonewall Inn in New York, that the first major struggle took place. And it is this struggle that we celebrate this week of June 16-25.

Out of that struggle, groups and organizations such as the Gay Liberation Movement and The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, began to form across the nation. They provided support, encouragement and a voice to our needs and concerns. We now

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Civil rights

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that there may be situations when discrimination on the basis of the sexual orientation may be appropriate. Although this resolution was initially proposed several years ago, its passage remains a significant breakthrough because of the ABA's influence in lobbying Congress for changes in federal law.

Much like pro-choice laws (which are currently in jeopardy), advancements in increased civil rights for Lesbians and Gays are often endangered by backlash movements. A form of backlash can be seen in House Bill 3211 which is currently pending in the Oregon legislature. House Bill 3211 relates to the licensing of foster parents and specifically prevents Lesbians and Gays from becoming licensed foster parents. (As of this writing, this bill is still pending.) The bill would allow Lesbians and Gays to become foster parents when their "certification as a foster parent is consistent with the interests and rules of providing foster care." Presumably this exception would allow Lesbians and Gays to provide foster care for homosexual teenagers or when no other appropriate placement could be obtained. House Bill 3211 is quite frightening because this law consciously promotes discrimination and specifically excludes Lesbians and Gays from obtaining a privilege available to all other persons.

As the Oregon bill illustrates, legislators are enacting laws that foster the belief that society needs to be protected from

Lesbians and Gays. So long as elected officials are allowed to maintain these assumptions, Lesbians and Gays will continue to be denied basic civil rights.

Some courts of law have recognized the breadth of this prejudice that exists in our laws. Justice William Brennan of the United States Supreme Court has noted "that Lesbians and Gays have been the object of some of the deepest prejudice and hatred in American society." In fact numerous judges have acknowledged that Lesbians and Gays are such a "discreet and insular" group that they need the same type of protection by the courts and legislatures that have been given to racial and religious minorities. In spite of these judges' acknowledgements, the federal government and the United States Supreme Court have yet to truly embrace this truth.

However slow the process appears, organizations such as Lambda (a Gay/Lesbian legal defense organization), the American Civil Liberties Union and Justice continue to challenge the system by filing lawsuits and lobbying legislators for change. Progress is being made one community at a time.

From a Lavender love note: "... it [*Lavender Visions*] gave me some of those precious moments of be-in-touch-with-me ..."

Bestsellers at Dreams & Swords

Lesbian Studies

Lesbian Sex
Lesbian Passion
Permanent Partners
Color of Light: AIDS Meditations
Inn Places 1989

Fiction

In Every Port
Raging Mother Mountain
In Her Day
Choices: A Classic Lesbian Love
Daughters of Copper Woman

Recovery

Escape from Intimacy
Healing the Child Within
Healing the Shame that Binds You
When Society Becomes an Addict
Codependent No More

Non-Fiction

Courage to Heal
Search for the Beloved
Dance of Anger
Dance of Intimacy
New Peoplemaking



Statement of Purpose

Lavender Visions is
for me and for you,
for all Lesbians,
for us to connect within
our larger community
so that together we may increase
our respect and support
for each other and ourselves,
affirming, celebrating and
honoring the women we are.

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Technical Consultant Candace Shearls

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Bulletin Board

Branching Out Productions Presents:

The Fabulous Dyketones, an all female rock 'n roll 50's dance band! Come dressed for the occasion! June 16, 8 PM to midnight, at Dawson Lake, 6707 Westfield Blvd. Tickets are available at Dreams & Swords Bookstore or call (317) 637-2906. Tickets are \$10 in advance or \$12 at the gate.

Breaking Free from Overeating & Compulsive Eating, an intensive one-day workshop, October 28. For further information, call (317) 637-2906.

Claudia Black, Adult Children of Alcoholics, a day-long seminar for adult children of alcoholics and other dysfunctional families, November 3, 9 AM - 4 PM. For further information, call (317) 637-2906.

Ferron in concert, June 9 at 8 PM, McKinley Foundation, 809 S. 5th St., Champaign, IL. Tickets \$8 in advance, \$10 at the door. Tickets available by mail from Wild Patience Productions, 705 E. California, Urbana, IL 61801. Make checks payable to Wild Patience Productions.

Women on the Water: A one-day canoe trip down Sugar Creek, June 10th. \$17 for two women in a canoe, \$5 for each additional woman. Contact Dreams and Swords for more information.

Older Women's Network (O.W.N.) regularly meets the third Tuesday of each month, usually beginning at 7:30 PM. Evelyn Herbetz, an Indianapolis astrologer will speak at the June 20th meeting. If you want her to do your birth chart and a 3-month projection at the meeting, please send \$10 and the exact time and location of your birth (before June 10) to Sue Click, 5602 Wagon Wheel Trail, Indianapolis 46237. Karen Billings, a professional folk-singer and storyteller is the featured speaker for the July 18th meeting (a \$2 donation is requested for travel costs). MaryAnn Steinhart will be teaching and demonstrating message therapy at the August 15th meeting. For more information, call 786-5845 or write O.W.N., P.O. Box 2528, Indianapolis, IN 46206. Sue and Sherry are hosts.

"Something's Brewing": "Something's Brewing" Women's Coffeeshouse meets the first Saturday of each month at 7:30 PM at 615 W. 43rd St. (Unitarian Universalist Church). For information about programs, cost and schedule changes, call 274-2585.

RESOURCES

Indianapolis (317)

Aids: Living the Journey Together: a family therapy group for persons with AIDS and a care partner, parent, sibling, lover, friend. Sponsored by Courageous Living Counseling Services, located in Westview Hospital Professional Bldg., 925-0043.

Dignity meets at St. Thomas Aquinas Church, 46th & Illinois, Sundays at 6 PM; 253-1461 (Larry).

Friends for Lesbian and Gay Concerns (Quaker); 635-8646 (Diane or Perri).

Gay AA meets at Bethlehem Lutheran, Sundays at 7 PM; 632-7864.

Gay/Lesbian Switchboard: 253-GAYS (7 - 11 PM).

Gay and Lesbian Codependents Anonymous meets at Winona Hospital, 3232 N. Meridian St.; 925-1135 (Don), 636-4986 (Joe), 297-0386 (Pam).

Gay Parents Coalition of Indianapolis meets at Holy Eucharist Church, 38th & Illinois, 2nd Sunday of each month at 7:30 PM; 253-2280 (John).

Indianapolis Youth Group for Lesbian and Gay youth ages 23 and under meets bi-weekly. For more information call

Lesbian/Gay Switchboard at 253-GAYS and ask for the organization's contact person.

Indianapolis NOW meets at Planned Parenthood, 3219 N. Meridian, 2nd Wednesday of each month at 6:30 PM; 925-4641.

Indianapolis Pitch-In: Our monthly pitch-in dinners provide social and networking opportunities for all Lesbians. Generally, the pitch-in is scheduled for the second Friday of each month, beginning at 7 PM. The location (and directions, if necessary) usually is available at Dreams and Swords at least a week before each pitch-in.

Integrity meets at All Saints Church, 16th and Central, Mondays at 6:30 PM; 635-3744.

Justice, Inc.: Lesbian resource for issues regarding state laws, community/police relations, civil rights, Lesbian/gay conferences, other special events. 1534 E. 10th St., Indianapolis, IN 46201, 634-9212.

Lesbian Discussion Group meets last Thursday of each month, 7 - 8:30 PM, at 6360 N. Guilford; 253-5160 (Nancy VanArsdall Jones).

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Think you are a Draggin? You're not alone

It was May, 1988. The sign in Dreams and Swords Bookstore read:

*** Attention Klutzes ***

Are you out of shape, out of breath, and totally lacking in athletic self-esteem? Were you always the last one picked for ball teams when you were in grade school? Do you still nurse a sneaky desire to be a jock, accepted and admired by your peers?

*** Have We Got A Team For You! ***

If enough losers, whiners, tired old ladies and sissies apply, we are now forming a softball team which will outshine all others ...

Thus, the year-old ball club, The TLC Draggins, was formed. The TLC Draggins is a (dis)organization of womyn who share a common philosophy of sport and a great appreciation of after-the-game camaraderie.

The letters TLC can be decoded as The Lesbian Community when speaking with "family;" however, when addressing the general public TLC is most often translated as Tough Luck Crones. The picturesque term, Draggins, is a situational derivative of "losers, whiners, sissies and tired old ladies" trying to be Dragons. Although mentally willing, quite often various body parts are left "draggin" a bit behind (note the team picture).

The Draggin philosophy is simple. The object of Draggin play is to have fun. A team member must not know "real" softball rules. If knowledge of softball is suspected, the perpetrator is subject to probation. More serious infractions constitute expulsion from the team.

Occasionally, rules are stretched and a former league player will be permitted to infiltrate the team membership. One such player, Lefty, RSP (Recovering Softball Player), has admitted that she is powerless over her addiction to hitting home runs. Lefty is playing with her non-dominant hand and taking it "one practice at a time."



Draggins turn their backs to the camera.

✠ WE ARE EVERYWHERE

The method of play is intrasquad scrimmage. Team members play only with themselves. To discourage any other interactions, partners and other strangers are split into opposing scrimmage teams: the 7's and the 13's.

Scientifically, Draggin play can be compared to Newton's Law of Relativity. Frog, the team's library scientist, explains, "The ball is going to hit the ground sometime. It will stop. There is no reason to go running after it."

Owning and wearing the team T-shirt promotes a great sense of team unity and Lesbian pride. Butch nicknames on the back of these shirts are a must. Members are given a choice of choosing their names or being stereotypically and appropriately labeled. The team is populated with names such as Babe, Wuss, Toots, Fuzzy and Spike.

Thursdays (game days) Draggin members can be spotted about Broad Ripple sporting light blue shirts with TLC printed on the left shoulder and a dragon logo emblazoned across their chests. Color coordination in softball playing is important. Quite often a batter is advised, "Pick the purple bat. It's pretty."

Team loyalty is rewarded: Bubba, the official team captain and matriarch was chosen because she remembered to show up for all of the practices, "even one that was cancelled." Way to be, Bubba.

Length of practice is determined by the completion of 5 innings or the announcement of hunger by any team member. Hunger, most often, is the contributory cause for the cessation of play.

After Draggin competition, the members retire to Noble Roman's for obligatory carbohydrate packing (beer and pizza) and socializing. Conversation topics range from existentialism to, "Have you noticed the cute teller at the drive-thru window?"

Official team action photographs can be seen at Dreams and Swords. One such picture reveals J.E., an outfielder, sitting in center field in a lawn chair eagerly awaiting a pop-up. In fact, at press time, no one has seen J.E. Perhaps she is still out there, sitting in her lawn chair, mentally repeating her affirmations and waiting for her moment of glory. Of course, first the team must find a player who can hit an outfield fly.

Wouldn't you like to be a Draggin, too? New members are welcome. Time: 6:00 PM. Where: Broad Ripple Park. When: Thursdays.

From Lavender love notes:

"Lavender Visions is inspired! From logo to layout to the subject matter and quality of the writing, this publication is first-rate. I am sure the 'We are Everywhere' column will be the first one I read each issue. We are everywhere, and we do enjoy reading about ourselves!"



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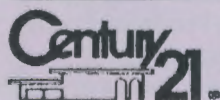
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Women's Equality - Women's Lives march empowering

More than 600,000 women, children and men assembled in Washington, D.C. on Sunday, April 9th, to participate in the March for Women's Equality-Women's Lives.

The massive demonstration, called the largest ever in support of women's rights, brought together a cross-section of people from all 50 states and several foreign countries. An estimated 2,000 persons journeyed from Indiana to join the march.

Fear that the right to legalized abortions may be overturned precipitated this giant outpouring of sentiment for pro-choice. In one of the last acts of the Reagan administration, the attorney general asked that the Supreme Court consider Webster vs. Reproductive Health Services, an appeal of a lower court decision that struck down Missouri's restrictive abortion law as unconstitutional. The Missouri case is seen as an opportunity for the Supreme Court to reverse Roe vs. Wade, the 1973 decision that granted abortion rights to women.

"The lives of American women, the control of their lives, is at stake," said Molly Yard, president of the National Organization For Women. Actress Whoopi Goldberg told the crowd, "If you [the Supreme Court] overturn this decision, a cry of murder is going to come up in this nation and tumble the Capitol."

Although abortion rights were the immediate concern, marchers and organizers voiced strong support for the larger issues of a woman's right to control her own body and the rights of privacy. In the words of one oft-repeated chant, "Not the church, not the state — women will decide their fate." Kate Michelman, president of the National Abortion Rights Action League, said, "This march is about the right of the individual to make personal, private decisions."

Among those assembled on that cold, blustery spring day were groups concerned that a reversal of the Roe decision, which paved the way for other court decisions on women's rights and



rights to privacy, might effect more than just abortion. Rev. Jesse Jackson told the crowd, "We fight for the civil rights of all human beings, [for] equal rights for all women, unequivocally."

Several Lesbian and Gay groups participated, from a small group marching under the banner "Ithaca [N.Y.] Dykes for Choice" to a large contingent from the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. The crowd clearly favored Lesbian/Gay rights as evidenced by the cheers for the Task Force group and the warm receptions given to singer Holly Near and to Karen Thompson. Both spoke of the need to confront homophobia in our society and to fight for the civil rights of Lesbians and Gay men.

Karen also gave an update on her recently successful fight to regain access to and win proper medical care for Sharon Kowalski, her partner of nine years who was severely disabled in an auto accident in 1983. Donald Kowalski, Sharon's father and court-appointed guardian, had denied Karen visitation rights since 1985. As a result of the legal actions Karen has been pursuing since 1984, Sharon was moved by court order in January from a nursing home to a medical facility for a period of rehabilitative care.

After Karen spoke, other speakers and entertainers addressed the assembly before the march stepped off. It took more than four hours to move the masses of people from the Washington Monument to Capitol Hill.

In contrast to the feelings of mutual respect, caring and positive energy that characterized the marchers, the handful of anti-abortion demonstrators along the parade route were an angry, hate-mongering lot, bent on confrontation by accusing marchers of being "baby-killers." "We aren't killing babies," said Ellie Smeal, president of the Fund for the Feminist Majority, "We aren't killing anyone. We're saving women's lives."

If measured by sheer numbers, the March for Women's Equality-Women's Lives was a resounding success. But one sentiment was echoed by many speakers: a right is something you have to protect or you lose it. The crowd was urged to lobby their local, state and congressional representatives and express their support for abortion rights, women's rights, the rights of privacy and the civil rights of all citizens. As one button read, "Wearing a button is not enough."

Celebrate

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have civil rights organizations, religious groups and parent coalitions. Gays and Lesbians have run for election openly and favorably effected campaigns and legislatures. We are a strong community that can instigate social change.

We have accomplished a great deal in 20 years, and we have developed a pride in ourselves that will carry us far beyond the next 20 years. Yet we must not forget that our struggle is not over. We are still harassed frequently, rejected severely and condemned unjustly by the community-at-large, but we have built a foundation that will support our struggle to gain the equality we deserve. As long as we continue to build, we will survive.

This one week in June is our time to celebrate. Don't be idle the week of June 16-25: find a party; get involved. Elkhart and Fort Wayne, enjoy your pitch-ins; Indy, eat heartily at your picnic; Evansville, remember that volleyball is meant to be fun! Gays and Lesbians everywhere — enjoy!

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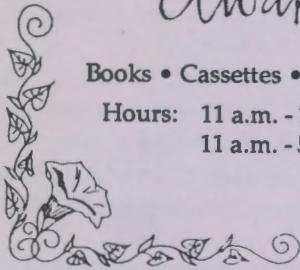
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
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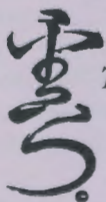
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Unity, wholeness are strong themes for author Alice Walker

"I have come to understand my work as prayer." This statement by Alice Walker aptly describes her latest collection of essays, *Living By The Word*. Two themes emerge clearly in this book. The first theme is that there is unity in all living things — from people (all shapes, sizes, colors and persuasions) to horses, trees, rivers and rainstorms. The second theme is that we must tell the whole truth, despite the fact that it sometimes displays a facet of ourselves of which we are not proud.

The second theme comes alive most readily in the two essays which discuss the controversy over *The Color Purple*. Folks objected to the incest, its explicit description, the Black dialect, the negative image of Mister, the Lesbianism and a multitude of other "wrongs" in the book. Ms. Walker simply says about the incest, "I remember actually trying to censor this passage in Celie's voice as I wrote it. Even I found it almost impossible to let her say what had happened to her as *she* perceived it, without euphemizing it a little." And yet Ms. Walker goes on to say that incest is a horror in children's lives and until now they have never been permitted to tell it from their eyes and in their voices. Celie's voice in Ms. Walker's head was insistent and the absolute horror of the rape of a child was told in her own words — even though that presents a negative image of a Black man.

Ms. Walker's discussion of objections to *The Color Purple* is done in almost a tone of wonderment. How could people, especially other Blacks, not know that all this is authentic, she seems to ask. Statement by statement, she describes the reality of the novel's incidents and the authenticity of its vocabulary. "Mammy," she states, was originally an African word and continued to be used by Blacks who had no knowledge of the perjorative meaning given to it by whites. Using the word "mammy" and others like it in their original contexts *exposes* stereotypes rather than perpetuates them. And using the language of the ancestors helps keep alive the ancestors in all of us, she contends, Blacks and whites alike.

Ms. Walker contends that it is not the depiction of a brutal



Alice Walker, author of *The Color Purple*

Black male character that is the essential problem for critics, despite what they say. She cites too many other books and movies describing even more brutal behavior by and toward Blacks. The essential objection is the behavior of the women in the book, she says. The book (*The Color Purple*) is full of women with their own agendas who refuse to be dominated by abusive men and who freely express their love of women. "If you are not free to express your love, you are a slave," says Alice Walker speaking of the love between Celie and Shug, two women in *The Color Purple*. And this love she defends as authentic.

Ms. Walker writes at length in these two essays of the need to incorporate all of herstory into ourselves: "We are the African and the trader. We are the Indian and the settler. We are the oppressor and the oppressed ... And when all of us and all of the old ones are hugged up inside this enormous warm room of a world we must build very quickly, really, or die of a too shallow mutual self-respect, you will see with me, through the happy spirits of our grandchildren, such joy as the planet has never seen."

Alice Walker might be talking directly to present day Lesbians who tend to look down at our foremothers as being stereotyped into heterosexual roles, who deride those who remained in the closet or turn pale at the flaming radicals, who scorn the early openly Lesbian writings as depressing and homophobic. For it is from our ancestors that we come and on their shoulders that we stand and because of them that a publication such as *Lavender Visions* is possible.

In those two essays and in several others, Ms. Walker unites all human beings as one. The remainder of the book chronicles her growing belief that "Everything Is a Human Being," to quote the title of another essay. She describes her communication with a neighbor horse named Blue and her understanding of his real emotions. She concludes that those of us who have never considered animal's rights are also those who believe small children love to be frightened and women love to be mutilated and raped. And finally, "It is not so much a question of whether the lion will one day lie down with the lamb, but whether human beings will ever be able to lie down with any creature or being at all."

The book concludes with an essay entitled "The Universe Responds" in which Ms. Walker describes her experience of this phenomenon. She has observed it in positive ways — the wild flowers on her hill double in profusion and brilliance when she admires them, and animals encamp on her land when she expresses welcome in her heart. And she has observed the negative effects — that the leaders of the military-industrial complex have shown a greater faith in the response of the universe than those who seek peace. Those who fear others or seek war have asked the Earth for its deadly substances, and the Universe has responded. We can turn this around, believes Ms. Walker. People of peace need only seek and the Universe will respond. Her message concludes with this statement of faith: "We are the world. Only if we have reason to fear what is in our own hearts need we fear for the planet. Teach yourself peace. Pass it on."

Alice Walker's book of essays, *Living By The Word*, and her new novel, *Temple of My Familiar*, are available at Dreams and Swords Bookstore.

RESOURCES

continued from page 3

Lesbian Incest Survivors Therapy Group. Contact Linda Gensheimer, (219) 426-5778 (Fort Wayne).

Older Women's Network for Women Over 40 meets at 5602 Wagon Wheel Trail, 3rd Tuesday of each month; 786-5845.

Overeaters Anonymous (for men and women) meets at Dreams and Swords, 828 E. 64th Street, Fridays at 6:30 PM, 253-9966.

P-FLAG (Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) meets at Butler University in Atherton Center, Room 312, 2nd Sunday of each month at 2:00 PM; 251-9307 (Donna).

University Gay/Lesbian Alliance meets at 3754 N. Illinois St. (Lambda Center). Call 274-2585.

Women's Chorus meets Friday nights at 8 PM. Contact Dreams and Swords for more information.

Women's Open Network: 274-5041 or 274-2585 (Sue Moenius).

Womenspired: 274-5041 or 274-2585 (Sue Moenius).

Bloomington (812)

Bloomington Switchboard: 336-4299.

Gay/Lesbian Alliance: 332-1847.

SPARKS: A social/educational forum for Lesbians. Contact Marcia, 334-0414, or Carolyn, 339-4283.

Columbus (812)

Pitch-In: For information, call 376-0784.

Switchboard Concern: 293-8671 (24 hours).

Evansville (812)

Tri-State Alliance Meeting meets at Unitarian Universalist

Church, 856 S. Kentucky Ave., 4th Sunday of each month.

Fort Wayne (219)

Dignity/Fort Wayne, P.O. Box 12151, 46862.

Drop-In meets at Up the Stairs Community Center, 3426 Broadway, Fridays at 7:30 PM.

Fort Wayne Women's Bureau: 303 E. Washington Blvd., 424-7977. Peer Counseling: 9 AM - 2 PM, 426-0023. Rape Awareness Program Hotline: 426-RAPE.

Liberty (812)

The Pearl: Feminist resource/journal. Contact: Natalie Isaac, editor, 304 South Fairground, Liberty, IN 47353.

Mishawaka (219)

Open Arms: Monthly newsletter for Michiana Lesbians. Contact: P.O. Box 845, Mishawaka, IN 46544. Yearly subscription: \$10.00; sample copy: \$1.00. Make check payable to Roberta Miller.

Muncie (317)

Ball State Gay/Lesbian Alliance, P.O. Box 354, Pittenger Student Center, 47907; 743-6675.

South Bend (219)

Help Line: 232-2522 (9 AM - 5 PM).

Hot Line: 232-3344 (24 Hours).

IUSBU Womyn's Center: 929 Greenlawn, 237-4494.

Monthly Lesbian Potluck: call 256-6572.



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**Ms. T, Kathleen, Dianne, Stacey,
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THE LAVENDER PAGE

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Candace L. Shearls, Computer Consultant, 6112 Riverview Dr., Indianapolis, IN 46208 (317) 255-8328



Sweet Honey invites us to expand our awareness

It has been written that without a vision, the people perish. On April 8, a willing and ready people beheld riveting visions in the forms of Sweet Honey in the Rock. In a performance that captured not only the eyes and ears but the hearts of the audience, Sweet Honey combined rich songs of gospel, political activism and personal testimony to reveal elemental truths which powerfully transcended our ethnic, cultural and economic boundaries.

Who is Sweet Honey in the Rock? Sweet Honey is a quintet of black women singers who, from Washington D.C., began their performing career in 1973. Founded by Bernice Johnson Reagon, the group is deeply committed to educating their audiences on the struggles of the oppressed. Struggles against racism, classism, homophobia, poverty and political corruption are some of the ideals expressed throughout the music of this unique group. These women, including interpreter Shirley Childress Johnson, are well prepared in the social, spiritual and political messages of their music. A creative piece often receives intense study before it is ever brought before an audience. This type of dedication to the personal and collective integrity of the group and its music is a gift to any listener who experiences one of their performances.

One such journey began the moment Sweet Honey entered the stage. With voices that matched the brilliance of their African dress, Sweet Honey began with messages of hope, deliverance and praise in a powerful gospel series. As the audience was led to participate in congregational revisions of old-time spiritual classics, Sweet Honey provided an informative and entertaining focus on the messages within. Of special note were the arrangements "Father, I Lift My Hand To Thee," and "By and By." An exceptional arrangement of "In the Upper Room," sung in quartet style, featured the rich bass vocals of Ysaye Barnwell with the fine soprano of Nitanju Bolade and brought the audience to its feet.

We were then carried along the journey to the rhythmic march of freedom songs and messages of personal struggle. Bernice Johnson's arrangements of two poems written by Langston Hughes, "Dark Like Me" and "What Happens to a Dream Deferred?" were reminders that many of the struggles of the past still exist for many throughout this country and the world today.



Sweet Honey in the Rock

Then we found ourselves deeply enlightened and challenged by songs of love and personal consciousness. In tributes to Dr. Martin Luther King and Woody Guthrie, the visionary inspirations of their hopes and dreams were offered to us, making them reality. Perhaps no words spoke as clearly as the songs "Are My Hands Clean?" and "Emergency," the latter of which earned a Grammy nomination for best contemporary folk song.

Sweet Honey in the Rock is more than a group of women singing gospels, songs from the Caribbean, Central America and Africa. They are more than a concert or an evening of entertainment. They are Movement. They are illuminaries of the conditions of our times. They are the voices of the voiceless, blending together to make a mighty sound. In the Caleb Mills auditorium, they were the voices that inspired and renewed visions of living in harmony for the present and the future. And like the walls of Jericho, our unseen walls came tumbling down. Shouts of "encore" brought these special messengers back so that we could hear their voices one more time.

Yes, it has been written that without a vision, the people perish. May our eyes be wisely opened and all people live forever free.

INFORMATION FORM

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