

GENDERSERVE NEWSLETTER

Issue No. 3

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March, 1988

Recent Publications

A selected guide to monographic works on human sexuality has recently been published by Libraries Unlimited under the title Studies in Human Sexuality, by Suzanne G. Frayser and Thomas J. Whitby, price \$47.50 U.S., \$57.00 elsewhere. Works by Freud and Havelock Ellis are included.

Write to Libraries Unlimited, P.O. Box 3988, Englewood, CO 80155-3988 for further details.

In an exclusive interview with Dr. Peter Duesberg, SPIN uncovers the HIV controversy in its second installment of its new AIDS column. Further information may be obtained by writing to Camouflage Publishing Inc., 6 West 18th. Street, New York, NY 10011-4608.

Transgenderist Societies

In our first issue we reported the demise of TVIC Albany and the change of name of the former Gateway Gender Alliance. It is understood that TVIC Albany has now been re-formed and that the National Gender Alliance is no longer led by Sharon Renee Hart.

Anglican Church Accepts Transsexuals

The churches can act positively, even though they are quiet about it. **Twenty Minutes**, the newsletter of the XX (Twenty) Club, reports (February 1988) that Joanna

Clarke has been admitted as a novice in the Community of St. Elizabeth in the Episcopal Church, U.S.A. Joanna is not the first transsexual to be so accepted. This writer is aware of an M-to-F who is a member of an order in Ontario and also of an F-to-M who is lay brother in an order in New York. There is also an F-to-M serving as a minister in the Metropolitan Community Church (M.C.C.) in the States. This writer is a former lay reader in the Anglican Church of Canada and is once again active in her diocese, though not in her former role.

The Church and the Gay Community

We have noted that the churches are quiet about their acceptance of transsexuals. This is also true of the gay community. The work of M.C.C. is reasonably well-known by gays who are committed Christians, but how many church adherents know that the Roman Church has its own gay association, known as **Dignity**, that the Anglican Church's is called **Integrity**, that the Canadian United and Presbyterian Churches also have their own support groups? Her diocesan bishop once said to this writer "People write to say that they will quit the church if I ordain a gay. How am I to know if I do?" In other words, if a person chooses to keep quiet about his or her sexual orientation in order to better serve God, who

need be any the wiser? In spite of this, the churches do have known gay clergy. It is therefore all the sadder when a communion loses a fine postulant because he is honest. a case in point is that of a fine minister who was refused ordination by his bishop because he knew himself well enough to refuse to take a vow of celibacy in order to be ordained. That man is now doing a fine ministry in M.C.C. for the benefit of God's people.

Help Wanted in Research

GenderServe has received two requests for persons who are prepared to complete questionnaires regarding transsexualism and/or cross-dressing. Those prepared to assist in such a research project are asked to write to

S. Ruben,
Dept. of Human Development
and Family Life,
University of Kansas,
1034 Haworth,
Lawrence, KA 66045-2133

The authenticity of the second request is being checked by GenderServe before publication of the applicant's name and address.

New TS Support Group?

GenderServe has been informed of efforts to form a transsexual support group in Buffalo, NY. Those interested should contact Hart, c/o M.C.C. 370 South Elmwood Avenue, between Tupper and Victoria in Buffalo.

Support for AIDS Victims

Councillor Jack Layton has recently supported the Normal Heart Gala held on March 1, 1988 in support of the Toronto Peoples with AIDS Foundation.

The gala performance was sponsored by the Toronto Star in association with CFNY-FM. Contributions may be made to:
The Normal Heart Gala,
P.O. Box 1065, Station Q,
Toronto, Ontario. M4T 2P2.

Casey House Hospice

Located in Toronto this hospice is set to open its doors next month to receive people suffering from AIDS. It is still in need of funds and the gay community is putting on a show, D.Q.'88, at the Bathurst Street Theatre from Friday, April 8 to Sunday, April 17. Gala performances are to be held on the first and last nights. Further information is enclosed with this issue to our subscribers in the Toronto area. To order tickets, call (416) 927-8890.

Drugs in the Workplace

A comprehensive national conference, sponsored by the Foothills Provincial General Hospital, Calgary, Alberta, is to be held May 24 - 27, 1988 at the Banff Springs Hotel, Banff, Alberta. Details may be obtained by writing to The WJS Conference Group, P.O. Box 253, Maple Ridge, B.C., V2X 7G1.

In Search of Healthy Sexuality

This is the title of the 10th Annual Guelph Conference on Sexuality to be held in the University of Guelph, Ontario, June 13-15, 1988. The keynote address is to be delivered by Dr. Ruth Westheimer. Further details may be obtained by writing to Division of Continuing Education, Room 160, Johnston Hall, University of Guelph, Guelph, Ontario, N1G 2W1, telephone (519) 824-4120.

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Be All You Want To Be

To be held near Detroit the weekend of June 8-12, this cross-dressers sixth annual event features, among others, a workshop for transsexuals conducted by Joanna Clarke (see above, Anglican Church Accepts Transsexuals). Most of the events are TV oriented and the weekend is sponsored jointly by Chi Chapter, TRI-ESS (Chicago), Crossroads (Detroit), Paradise (Cleveland) and Transpitt (Pittsburgh). Further information may be obtained by writing to "Be-All", c/o P.O. Box 196, Garden City, MI 48135.

Employment Aid Handbook

Publication of The Federal and Provincial Government Employment Aid Handbook has recently been announced. This is an expensive item, but may be examined at your local public library. Details may be obtained from Canadian Research and Publication Centre, 33 Racine, Farnham, Quebec, J2N 3A3.

Places of Interest

Persons interested in the books of Ferrari Publications, Inc. should know that these are now available in Canada from JAL Enterprises, P.O. Box 70, Station J, Toronto, M4J 4X8.

CANADIAN SEX RESEARCH FORUM

The 14th. Annual Convention of the Canadian Sex Research Forum was held in London, Ontario, September 13-14 last. This small organization includes most of Canada's leading sex researchers and therapists. Attendance at the annual convention is not restricted to members of the Forum, but those who attend are expected to be seriously-

minded professionals in the field of human sexuality. As a result, attendance is not large. Each convention features a keynote speaker of international repute. The speaker for the 1987 Convention was Dr. John Bancroft, Clinical Consultant, MRC Reproductive Biology Unit, Edinburgh, Scotland, whose address was given in the Amphitheatre of the Victoria Hospital.

The name of Dr. Bancroft is well-known in the gender dysphoric community in Britain. On this occasion his subject was Hormones and Human Sexual Behaviour. He pointed out that hormones are not the only factor in human sexual behaviour; moods, which are non-specific, make it difficult to see the effect of hormones. The genetic background of an individual is also significant.

The evidence of hormonal activity is most evident in males; testosterone is necessary to sexual activity. Evidence of this is demonstrated in cases of cancer of the testes. Erections have been shown to be associated with the REM period of sleep, i.e., rapid eye movement, the period when dreams occur. Dr. Bancroft did not remind us of the phenomenon of wet dreams, but the connection should be obvious. He suggested that there may be a threshold level for testosterone and stated that the level is high in adolescents, resulting in high masturbation and sexual activity.

Hormonal influence in the female is more complex and more interesting. He asked if there is an estrus factor in the menstrual cycle and observed that the association of depression and female sexuality

require further research. He pointed out that androgens are also cyclic in the genetic female and made the rather startling observation that the female androgen level is greatest when sexuality is lowest! Is there a delayed action? There seems to be a significant correlation in females. In the case of post-oophorectomy patients, testosterone raises sexuality, but the relationship is far from straight-forward.

Dr. Bancroft concluded by suggesting some possible explanations for variations in the effects of hormones. (1) In some people there may be a greater susceptibility to social learning. (2) The interaction between biological and social influences may be inconsistent. (3) There may be greater variability in the organizing effects of androgens in early development and (4) there may be greater genetic variability than we suspect. He concluded by asking what may be the significance of the location and number of receptors and also to what extent the hypothalamus is involved.

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To those concerned with gender dysphoria syndrome the presentation by Marilyn Wilchesky on Genital Symbolization Processes in Male Transsexuals was of particular interest. Ms. Wilchesky is a sex therapist in the Human Sexuality Unit of the Montreal General Hospital and spoke as a member of a team headed by Dr. Pierre Assalian, Director of the Unit and Assistant Professor of Psychiatry. This programme has been involved in the evaluation of transsexuals since 1974. The Unit is

dissatisfied with the new criteria established by DSM III. This opinion had already been expressed by this writer at the joint AASECT/SSSS meeting held in Boston in 1984 at which time it was requested that the term "gender dysphoria syndrome" replace "transsexualism" in the revised DSM and that the whole definition of "transsexualism", in the sense of those who should eventually be recommended for SRS, be clarified and redefined. The new definition, as set out in DSM IIIR, was completely strange to this writer and still falls short of the mark. The view has been expressed before that the psychologist or psychiatrist who has little or no previous experience with the syndrome tends to pull DSM off his shelf as a bible and hence may get a completely false impression of transsexuality.

In her presentation Ms. Wilchesky stated that clinical observations have shown that the genetic male "transsexual" (the quotes are this writer's) characteristically repudiates the penis. This led to a hypothesis that male "TSs" are unable to symbolize their genitals, but further research showed that male gender dysphorics do indeed have a rich symbolic life. The instrument used in this project was the Rorschach inkblot test, which was scored by using the Holt method.

A full report of this Convention is contained in SIECCAN Journal, Vol.2, No.3, of September, 1987.

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