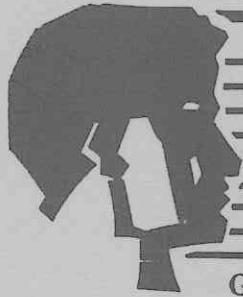


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# GFC NEWS

September 1998

GFC-Richmond • P.O. Box 8501 • Richmond • VA • 23226

## President's Message: *Gay Pride & Self Esteem*

As September approaches my thoughts run again to "gay pride." How often I've heard someone say, "I'm gay and I'm proud of it!" I suspect that, more often than not, what is meant is that the person is proud that they have wrestled with the demons foisted on them by society and overcome them. And out of that struggle, they have gained the emotional strength to be honest about their sexual orientation.

We have nothing to do with the formation of our sexual orientation. Therefore, we cannot really be proud of the fact that we are attracted to those of our own gender. But we do have something to do with the formation of our acceptance of our sexual orientation. Because there are strong societal pressures opposed to that, we must wrestle with them. When we succeed, we have good cause to be proud.

Self esteem is a fortress against a world seemingly opposed to openness about homosexuality. Each time we push past the point beyond which we previously doubted we could extend ourselves, we lay another stone. Pride is the mortar that holds the stones together. We build this fortress by reflecting on our successes.

Self esteem serves us in our relationships with others. It especially helps us to help

our children. When we feel good about ourselves, others can read it in our speech and our actions. Other adults can read it, and our children can read it. And because they are aware of it, they are influenced by it. "My dad really feels good about himself and life isn't easy for him. So, if he can do it on his own, maybe I can also." A bit simplistic, I admit. But, not far from reality.

One of the most effective ways to build self esteem is to refuse to allow others to dictate who we are. And that includes our children. When we steadfastly define ourselves instead of permitting others to do so, we teach our children to do likewise. Contrary to popular belief, children do mimic their parents. They are more influenced by their parents' actions than by their parents' words. Kids are more cognizant of integrity than adults are and are more inclined to point out inconsistencies. Remember the emperor's new clothes?

So, where is all this leading? (It would be nice if I could just stop writing here and punt, but you deserve better – so I'll push past my perceived limit and resolve this meandering commentary in some rational fashion.) Well, it leads inward. Looking back at your own journey from darkness to light, what have you done that was more than what you once imagined you could do? How did it make you feel

when you succeeded? How did that influence you as you dealt with your next challenge in life? How does that affect your approach to the future?

One of the purposes of GFC/Richmond is to provide a means for gay men – who just happen to be fathers – to share their experiences with others and thereby help each other to grow stronger as fathers and as gay men. So I offer you the opportunity to complete this treatise.

*When we gather in September, come prepared to offer your own conclusion to the discussion I've just begun.* You may consider this a cop-out. But it isn't. You'll see. But until we meet, you'll just have to take my word for it.

## August Minutes

The seventeenth meeting of GFC/Richmond began at 7:45 p.m. at St. Marks Episcopal Church, 520 N. Boulevard, Richmond. Nine members/visitors were in attendance, including two Board members.

The meeting began with socializing among the members and several new visitors, and enjoying a wine and cheese tasting.

**Program:** An open meeting was held to allow members to update the group on their own personal situations and for visitors to relate their own backgrounds and reasons for coming to GFC. The visitors were:

- **Rod Gordon** who has two children, ages 12 and 16. Rod has been to several of our meetings in the past.
- **Robert Pitts**, who is not a father, but fully supports another father and his children. He was a guest of Randy Phelps.
- **Humberto Fabelo** who has three children, ages 3, 5, and 10.

**General Business:**

Old – None

New – Barbara Gibson who spoke to our group in the past regarding diversity counseling is developing a divorce recovery group. Please contact any of the GFC board members who can give you a contact number for Barbara.

Virginians for Justice is holding a special meeting on Saturday, August 8, 1998 at St. Marks Episcopal Church. This will be in association with a national group looking at gay and lesbian rights. VJ is asking for representation from all gay and lesbian oriented groups in the Richmond area at this meeting. Several members indicated that they would try to attend.

**Treasurer's Report:** A quote from the humorous Mr. White... "We have money in our account!"

The meeting concluded at approximately 10:00 p.m.

**Calendar of Events**

Date: Thursday, Sept. 3

Time: 7:30 p.m.

Place: St. Marks Episcopal, 520 N. Boulevard

The program will be a group discussion on

maintaining our self esteem and believing in ourselves in the midst of the currently changing religious/political climate. Our facilitator for this discussion will be Ms. **Mur Nease**, a local pastoral counselor. Some of you have seen or heard about the full page national adds that a group of churches and other religious groups have recently placed. These ads portray gays and lesbians as sick, alcoholic and kleptomaniacs, among other things. It also praise those who have denounced their homosexuality and gone back to being a Christian (?). Regardless of your past religious upbringing, this discussion should be beneficial to all who attend. It may get much worse as election time draws closer... and GFC/Richmond exists to provide support for our members. See you on the 3<sup>rd</sup>!

**Other Dates To Note...**

**Richmond Pride Festival**

Friday, Sept. 25, 1998

8 p.m. – 11 p.m.

Film festival at VCU

Saturday, Sept. 26, 1998

10 a.m. – 6 p.m.

"LGBT Financial Workshop," "Politics 101," and "Transgendered Celebration"

8 p.m. – 12 a.m.

Fundraiser cocktail party at 4616 Monument Avenue (home of Carl Archacki)

Sunday, Sept. 27, 1998

11 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Information fair (non-Profit booths) at Babes in Carytown

1 p.m. – 2 p.m.

Pride march from Carytown

to Roundhouse in Byrd Park  
2 p.m. – 6 p.m.

Picnic (BYO) in Byrd Park

6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Interfaith celebration at MCC and candlelight march on Monument Avenue

**National Coming Out Day**

Sunday, October 11, 1998

A day set aside for "coming out" to someone whose respect you value but who you haven't actually told about yourself.

**Social-Cultural Opportunity**

Friday, October 16, 1998

7:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.

Shockoe Bottom Arts Center

Reception to celebrate the opening of **Bob Greene's** solo exhibition of *The Mysterious Masculine* – a presentation of surrealistic photographic images celebrating the nude male figure.

**Looking For Contributors**

We want to hear from you. If you have any information that you would like included in *GFC News*, you can now e-mail information to the Editor at: [wmturmer@erols.com](mailto:wmturmer@erols.com)

All submissions are subject to approval and may be edited for content or length.

**Contact For Information**

If you are interested in learning more about GFC/Richmond, please call 355-6218 or 230-2578.