



# GFC NEWS

March, 1998

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

## *The Value of Self-Esteem*

### **President's Message:**

Lately I've been doing some thinking about why some guys seem to make it through the "coming out" process emotionally unscathed - and others seem to emerge from it quite battered. Most people's first reaction is to attribute the phenomena to whether or not his spouse is accepting of his being gay. But I've seen cases where a guy's spouse is accepting, but he still seems defeated - and I've seen others where a guy's spouse is positively wretched through the whole situation, and yet he nevertheless seems whole. It's a paradox.

It occurs to me that the difference might have something to do with whether or not a guy considers himself a victim. I've noticed that guys who view themselves as victims of the fate of being gay - as though being gay were an affliction - never seem to fare well. This seems to hold true whether a guy realizes he's gay at an early age - and never

marries - or doesn't see the light until much later and after many years of marriage. On the other hand guys who do not think of themselves as victims seem to go through their lives or the rest of their lives with relish.

Over the past four years since my "coming out" - since my rebirth - I've reached the conclusion that the better one feels about himself, the less vulnerable he is to the vagaries of a society that does not yet accept homosexual relationships. This may seem like more of a paradox than my original observation.

I'm not a great believer in karma and New Age spirituality. But I'm beginning to believe that there might be some truth to the idea that a positive attitude about ourselves creates a protective aura around us. The greater the self-esteem, the stronger and more far reaching the aura. I'm beginning to suspect that, when a guy who feels good about himself and about his being gay encounters someone that might be inclined to make a homophobic comment,

his much stronger aura overpowers the inclinations of the potential attacker. On the other hand, a negative feeling about oneself does not generate a protective aura and may even invite attack.

So, it seems that the best approach to finding happiness as a gay man, regardless of ones circumstances, is to embrace your sexual orientation and celebrate it and let others know how great you feel about yourself. In that way, you might not be vulnerable to those who do not yet approve of same-gender romantic relationships.

## **Calendar of Events**

### **• March 5 Meeting**

**Time:** 7:30 p.m.

**Place:** St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 520 N. Boulevard

Annual Elections.

### **• March 11 Potluck Dinner**

**Time:** 7:30 p.m.

**Place:** 507-D N.

Hamilton St. in Mt.

Vernon Condominiums (Home of *Kurt Elam*)

Bring a dish to share and enjoy the fun.

## February Meeting Minutes

The tenth meeting of GFC-Richmond began at 7:40 p.m. at St. Marks Episcopal Church, 520 N. Boulevard, Richmond. **Bob Rogers** (VP) introduced the speaker, Barbara Wust Gibson of Diversity Counseling Services. Barbara provides counseling services focusing on the needs of adolescents and their families; including substance abuse, sexuality/gender issues and trauma issues. Barbara spoke about issues affecting teens who are dealing with their sexuality or the sexuality issues of their parents. She also shared insights about her own bisexuality and family dynamics. She commented on the courage of the GFC-Richmond members and how accepting and open-minded children can be if they are asked and given a chance to express themselves.

Upcoming elections were discussed as new business. Nominations were opened for the chapter President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Publicist and will be accepted until the March 5 meeting at which time the elections will take place. New officers will take over their responsibilities at the April 2 meeting.

Treasurer's Report - \$262.83 balance in

account as of 2/5/98. A donation of \$25 was accepted from Bonnie Greene, daughter of **Bob Greene**. GFC-Richmond presented a check for \$115 to the MCV Childlife Fund in December. This fund is used for the many infants and children who have been diagnosed with HIV/AIDS. A reminder...annual dues for the GFC-Richmond chapter are \$30.

Discussion of a possible social event in March to be hosted by a member. **Kurt Elam** has offered to host a potluck dinner at his home (507-D N. Hamilton St., Richmond) on Wednesday, March 11.

A potential new member joined us at the 2/5 meeting after finding out about GFC-Richmond through the InterNet. He is 36 years old and a father of a 2 1/2 year old son.

Final discussion centered around creating a list of members' phone numbers to share among those who would be comfortable sharing that information. The discussion was to table any decision until after the new group of officers could fully address the issue.

The meeting ended at approximately 9:45 p.m.

## Member News

• Congratulations to **Randy Phelps** on his new live-in, loving

companion. Shannon moved into Randy's home on 2/21 and the two are rumored to be "very happy together." Shannon is a one year old female golden retriever/chow mix. She was adopted from the Richmond Animal League (RAL) where Randy works as a part-time volunteer. Another one of our members, **Gil Caldwell** is an adoption counselor at RAL. Anyone interested in a dog or cat is welcome to visit the RAL. Talk to Randy or Gil or call RAL at 379-0046 for more information.

• Congratulations to **Gil Caldwell** who was recently elected as the Vice President of the Board of Directors of the Richmond Animal League. Gil was also recently re-elected as the Chairman of the Social Committee for the Stonehenge Golf and Country Club in Chesterfield County.

## That's Entertainment!

The Richmond Triangle Players will be presenting the following productions at Fieldens Cabaret Theatre (2033 W. Broad St.):  
March 11 - ?, *Fairy Tales*  
March 11 - April 4, *Lonely Planet*  
April 4 - May 23, *Killer of Sister George*

Call Fieldens at 346-8113 for more information.