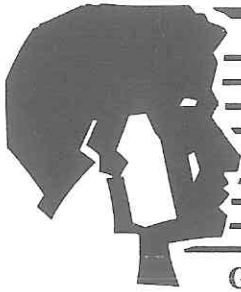


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GFC NEWS

April, 1998

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

Anniversary Musings

President's Message:

Well guys, it's been a year since GFC-Richmond had its inaugural meeting. When Bob Rodgers, Randy Phelps, Dave White and I arrived that night to prepare the room for the meeting, we had no idea who or how many guys would walk through the door. Seven did. For Richmond, that was quite remarkable! And the next month there were eleven besides us four. And since then, there has not been a meeting when a new face did not appear. It's been very gratifying to me to realize that GFC is meeting a definite need for gay fathers here in central Virginia.

In the past twelve months, we've come a long way. We were mentioned prominently in *Style Weekly* in one of their "Family Style" supplements. A picture of Bob Rodgers and me sitting at our booth at the Richmond Pride Festival was the only photo of the festival that the *Times-Dispatch* ran in the Monday-after edition. (And they usually run a

shot of the most outrageous individual they can find.) To top that off, the caption said "Family Matters." What was so gratifying was the positive feedback we kept hearing from heterosexuals who saw the coverage.

While this was not necessarily a "turning point" for GFC-Richmond, I viewed it as a turning point - however small - for social change in the Richmond area. And it reinforced something I had already come to believe very strongly. We bring social change by our example, by living out our lives as fathers and as gay men with honesty and integrity. The fact that GFC-Richmond exists is solid testimony that there are gay men who take their role as fathers seriously, and who are discovering that living as a gay or bisexual man and being a loving and attendant father are not mutually exclusive paths in life. We stand in stark contrast to the image of gay men that Pat Robertson, Jerry Falwell, James Dobson and Fred Phelps - no relation to our own Randy Phelps - would

have the rest of society to believe. We are living proof of their lie. And we should be quite proud. I know I am! And I hope that you are also.

The more of us that are "out of the closet" to our families - regardless of the repercussions - the better off we are in the long run, both individually and as a group. This is simply because we are living honestly and with full integrity. And that means we are deserving of respect. The same holds true when we are "out" - be it formally or casually - to heterosexual neighbors, associates, friends, and work colleagues. (Most problems arise when closet doors are opened by others and not ourselves.) Each "out-of-the-closet" gay father is a good-will ambassador for all gay fathers, as well as for all gay men. Your visibility, even when it is very quiet, dispels myths and stereotypes about gay men in general and about gay fathers in particular. And your visibility gains you stature - despite what we've been lead to believe.

Well, enough of my sermonizing. Let me just wrap this up by saying that I'm very proud to have been affiliated with GFC-Richmond from its prenatal stages, and proud to have been associated with all of you who've sought the support of GFC-Richmond. And I look forward to serving again as president of this organization in the coming year.

Minutes From The March Meeting

The twelfth meeting of GFC-Richmond began at 7:45 p.m. at St. Marks Episcopal Church, 520 N. Boulevard, Richmond. Thirteen members and visitors were in attendance.

General Business

Nominations for the GFC-Richmond Board were opened at the February 5 meeting. As of the March 5 meeting, no names had been submitted in advance. A motion was made and seconded to nominate all of the incumbents for another year. The vote was unanimous in favor. A second motion was made and seconded to elect the nominated slate of officers. The vote was unanimous again.

The Board positions for the second year of GFC-Richmond are:

President - Bob Greene
Vice President - Bob Rodgers
Treasurer - Dave White
Secretary - Randy Phelps

Treasurer's Report

None given. A comment was made regarding the annual dues of \$30; \$10 of which goes to our parent organization GLPCI - dues should be paid at the April 5 meeting. Checks can be made out to "GFC-Richmond" and given to the Treasurer or any other Board member.

Potential New Members

Jay returned, after having first joined us at the March 5 meeting. Joining us for the first time were the following: Kevin - 40 years old, lives in Richmond, has two sons aged 4 and 6; heard about the group from friends. Randy - 35 years old, lives in Powhatan, has two sons, ages 5 and 10; heard about the group from a flyer posted locally.

The meeting concluded with introductions and personal stories around the room ending at approximately 9:30 p.m.

March Pot Luck A Success

On March 11, Kurt Elam hosted a Pot Luck Dinner for the members and guests of GFC-Richmond. The event

was very well attended with over a dozen members, guests and several prospective members. The food and company were great. Thanks Kurt!

Calendar of Events

• **April 2 Meeting**
Time: 7:30 p.m.
Place: St. Marks Episcopal Church, 520 N. Boulevard

Happy Birthday GFC-Richmond. The April meeting kicks off the beginning of the second year of our organization. Come enjoy good company, conversation and refreshments. Just who will jump out of the cake?

Also, our own Jim Beckner, the Executive Director of the Fan Free Clinic will discuss the work of the clinic, their upcoming relocation, volunteer opportunities and the 1998 AIDS Walk on Sunday, April 19th.

**For More
Information about
GFC-Richmond, call
355-6218 or 230-
2578.**