IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR SUBSCRIBERS AND FRIENDS

To Subcribers, Readers and Friends,

There has been a long-standing need in the Boston gay community for improved communication between the various gay organizations and the gay individual.

So began Vol. 1, Number 1 of the *Gay Community Newsletter*, published June 17, 1973. *GCN* began as a stapled, loose leaf forum for Boston area gay community events. Over its 19 years of weekly publication, *GCN* became the paper of record for an exploding gay liberation movement.

No More Messy Newsprint!

This is the last issue of *Gay Community News* to be printed in a newsprint tabloid format. Starting with the spring issue, we will introduce a fabulous new look designed to match the editorial shift in the new quarterly *GCN*. When the paper underwent a restructuring in 1992, we realized that part of the challenge we faced was a broader crisis of politics and history. Since then *GCN* has made lots of changes to keep pace with, and help shape, a new queer movement. This visual transformation is the latest in a series of innovations designed to preserve the spirit of *GCN*'s history while adapting to a dramatically altered political, economic and cultural landscape—(we won't even mention the millenium).

In reader responses to the paper, you tell us that GCN is still one of the only general sources for progressive news, comment, discussion, review and analysis that exists within today's queer movements—more critical now than ever. But many of you have asked for a format that was more consistent with the new GCN's substantive approach. As one correspondent wrote, GCN carries articles of lasting relevance but in a form that seems destined for the recycle bin.

Our new design will feature an 8 1/2 x 11" format with a heavier, non-newsprint paper. We will introduce a new department on queer youth doings, more coverage of cultural happenings, several in-depth features each issue, and more graphic excitement. We will also premier our long-planned columnists, writing on issues from health and HIV to queer politics, culture and theory and bring back the much requested classifieds.

We are extremely excited about this change. We believe it will make GCN easier to read, easier to carry around, easier to xerox, easier to pass along to friends, and more eye-catching for new readers. In changing the format, we are saying good-bye to a look that some have called old-fashioned, and others have seen as lasting long enough to become stylishly "retro." We are not, however, saying good-bye to GCN's history of freshness, irreverence, provocation and radicalism. We hope you like it.

Ann Holder
for the Board and Staff of BSEF

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Advertisements do not reflect editorial endorsement.

Advertise

in the Premier Issue of GCN!

Advertising rates for the new format will drop by 50%. The premier issue will be more widely distributed than ever, reaching thousands of queers nationwide. We are also running a one-time organizational advertising discount for g/l/b/t groups and organizations that will result in even more dramatic savings, plus a year of free classified advertising. Let people know what your group is doing. Support the new GCN. For more information call 617/262-6969 or see the ad in this issue.

Gay Community News is supported in part by generous grants from: The Haymarket People's Fund, The Out Fund of the Funding Exchange, The Fund for Four Directions, The Paul Rapoport Foundation, and Resist. The Bromfield St. Educational Foundation gratefully acknowledges their support.

Letter to the Editor

Dear Ms. Wilchins:

You stated in *Gay Community News* (Summer 96), that "The transgender movement is not about trying to cement and valorize yet one more marginalized people, leaving behind some smaller minority, . . . to wage their own struggle." Yet that is precisely what you are doing to transsexuals with your recent attacks on Gender Identity Disorder diagnosis in *GCN*, *Out Magazine*, and *Lambda Book Report*.

Two people in Oregon, at great personal cost, recently persuaded the state Bureau of Labor and Industries to accept transsexuals' complaints of discrimination. This hard-won success affords some protection statewide, and may allow for future insurance coverage for sex reassignment surgery (SRS). Because this victory is based on their GID diagnosis, it is threatened by your anti-GID campaign.

You also said in GCN that the gay and trans communities were "brain dead," and you dismissed rights-based politics as selfish and failing to "engage the best in people" or to ask them to "look beyond their narrow self interest." But in Portland, Basic Rights Oregon gave crucial support to the recent unanimous recommendation by our Metropolitan Human Rights Commission to extend civil rights protection to TS's. Basic rights Oregon has mobilized coalitions to beat back two queer-bashing state initiatives by appealing to voters' concerns for everyone's rights. Not too shabby for the "brain dead."

Your 9/96 LBR review of Gender Shock showed great concern for the children described in the book as abused with the GID diagnosis. Their fate would merit reform if such abuse actually happened. Where are the medical records? Author Phyllis Burke and attorney Shannon Minter can only produce five. Where are the complaints to the APA? Hospitalization and electroshock are not acceptable treatment options for GID. Where are the malpractice judgments?

No mystery surrounds the lot of most preop transsexuals; disowned, isolated, unemployed through discrimination or working multiple low-wage jobs to pay for surgery. They really fit your unwitting irony, that "Unfortunately, in political dogfights like these, it's those most vulnerable among us who are inevitably stranded in no-man's (sic) land, with no help on the way and no prayer of relief."

Oregon transsexuals are helping themselves with action. You called it selfish in GCN to want what others have as a right, but the real selfishness is your attitude that you have your surgery and to hell with anyone else's needs.

Out, (10/96), quoted you comparing psychiatrists' cosmetic surgery to SRS. Do psychiatrists die during their own nose jobs because they can't pay for them? Such surgery is "elective" just because the patients' health is not at stake. That's why it isn't covered by insurance or Medicaid. Ideologic cleansing of GID would put SRS on a level with nose jobs. Most TS's can't afford either.

You also equated mental disorders with perversion, demonstrating the very demonization you decry. That suggests that your attack on the diagnosis springs from your own bigotry toward mental illness.

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GWM, HIV-, 22 yrs old, brn hair/blue eyes, 180 lbs, 5'9". Body builder/exotic dancer, 9 3/4 cut, is very versatile, seeking long term friendship and more, your sexy flick gets mine.

Marc Rich
#903147
W.V.C.I.
POB 1111
Carlisle, IN 47838

36 yr, light skinned BM would like to correspond w/ a sincere TV/TS. I have many interests and a heart to share. Will answer all. Race unimportant.

Anthony Atkins
#560931
Huntsville Unit, POB 32
Huntsville, TX 77348

BGM, 5'7", 26 yrs, 210 lbs. Very lonely. Seeks pen pal for short or long term friend and possibly more if our connections produce light at the end of the tunnel. Will answer all. I can't write inmates.

William Howard Bemnister
Box 316
Fort Madison, IA 52627-0316

TS WM, nympho, 37 yrs old, 5'8", 160 lbs, brownish blond hair/blue eyes, imprisoned for a consensual oral love affair w/a forbidden apple from the government's tree; seeking that social apple for my friend and possible future lover. I can't write inmates, but I will reply to all others.

Charles Risdal
#802094
Box 316
Fort Madison, IA 52627-0316

Gary Hudson
#111594
E. KY Corr. Complex
POB 636
West Liberty, KY 41472

Letter to the Editor continued from page 2

All transsexuals would welcome ". . . a solution that does not stigmatize people yet still retains a basis for reimbursing those intending surgery." But until you produce one, please stop undermining the only solution most transsexuals now have.

Sincerely,
Lynn Ford

Thank you

Thanks to all who contributed, or who still plan to contribute (it's never too late) to Bromfield St.'s year-end fundraising drive. Thanks especially for your ideas, inquiries, questions and notes of encouragement. For all of you who missed the mailing, Bromfield St. is offering a membership option for those who want to become more involved with any of our projects. Become a member of BSEF for a donation of any amount. Receive periodic Foundation updates and project mailings, feel entitled to let us know exactly what you think of how we're doing, get that warm, fuzzy feeling from supporting an institution that makes a real difference in the quality of queer life.

The Prisoner Project Needs Your Help

Currently the BSEF Prisoner Project sends free subscriptions to about 800 incarcerated g/l/b/t people annually. We also sponsor a Pen Pal project that draws many more requests than we have space for each issue. We are in the process of completing a resource booklet on HIV issues that will be available for free distribution. Correspondence from prisoners is some of the most lively and informative mail we receive.

The Prisoner Project is an all volunteer effort and we need your help. There are many possibilities, such as assisting with the high volume of weekly correspondence and data entry. If you can't make an extensive time commitment, consider becoming a Pen Pal, make a directed donation to support free subscriptions, or offer your services working on grant proposals or fundraising. For more information contact the office, 617/262-6969.

Job Openings

OutWrite Producer
20 hours/week, annual salary of $12,500.
Health insurance and paid vacation.

Administrative Coordinator for the Queer Progressive Organizing School (QPOS)
10 hours a week, $12.50/hour, temporary job from February 1-June 15, 1997.
For more information and full job descriptions contact Ann Holder, 617/262-6969.

Thank you to the following volunteers:

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