



INTERNATIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL for Homosexual Men and Women in Alcoholics Anonymous

Post Office Box 492, Village Station, New York 10014

NEWSLETTER 5

SEPTEMBER 1983

REPORT ON COUNCIL MEETING: The Council held its semi-annual meeting at the Living Sober Western Roundup (San Francisco) on July 16, 1983. We are very grateful to Living Sober '83 for their hospitality. IAC set up an information table in the main hall and introduced many west coast members to the Council's work for the first time. A fact sheet about the IAC, its pamphlet and the international directory of gay and lesbian groups of AA were distributed.

TREASURER'S REPORT: The Treasurer's statement was adopted. Through the generosity of a small number of groups, roundups, and individuals, the Council remains solvent. A contribution of \$250 was voted for the General Service Office to emphasize our participation in AA as a whole and in recognition of the continuing cooperation of the GSO with the IAC.

CHARTER AMENDMENTS: The IAC Charter was amended to accommodate certain realities. Terms of office for the Chairperson and Deputy Chair were reduced to one year each, and a new office of Past Chair was created so that the acquired expertise of the outgoing Chair would not be lost. In effect, the Deputy Chair apprentices for a year under the current Chair. When the year is up, the Deputy Chair "with the approval of the IAC" succeeds as Chair and the immediate Past Chair stays on tap as advisor and a voting member of the Council. Voting membership was clarified by a further amendment reading: "The Regional Delegates and the Officers form the membership of the [IAC]"; i.e., for voting purposes. The Secretary, Treasurer and Delegates continue to serve two year terms. A further amendment to the Charter was necessary to accommodate the fact that there were no eligible female candidates for Deputy Chair (candidates must be Delegates): "The Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson positions will be filled by people of the opposite sex when possible."

ELECTIONS OF NEW OFFICERS: Eric F. of Toronto became the new Chairperson, succeeding Patricia McG. of N.Y., who becomes Past Chair. Steve B. of Indianapolis was elected the new Deputy Chair and Meo Y. of Hartford is the new Secretary. Bernie O. of Boston continues as Treasurer.

PLANS: The outgoing Chair and Deputy (Pat and Eric) also met with 2 representatives from the Houston Roundup regarding preparations for a lesbian/gay center at the 1985 AA International Convention in Montreal. All agreed on the necessity to begin planning and raising funds for a full gay and lesbian program of hospitality, workshops, dances and meetings. The Council would appreciate any help or initiatives for this project and offers to coordinate any such efforts.

The new IAC chair, Eric, will attend and set up information tables at several of the remaining roundups this year: the first Ohio State Gay/Lesbian Roundup at Cleveland (Aug. 26-28); the Toronto Roundup (Oct. 7-9); and the N.Y. Big Apple Roundup on Thanksgiving weekend (where the Council will hold its next business meeting). With the proliferation of lesbian/gay roundups, officers can't begin to attend them all. If interested parties would like to set up an IAC information table at a particular roundup, please get permission from the organizing committee, then notify the Council for appropriate materials.

GENTLE REMINDERS: If your group or roundup does not currently support the IAC financially, please make a suggestion - perhaps a regular percentage after expenses. Often it is isolated groups or individuals who most need our experience, hope, and strength.

IAC DELEGATES: In light of the amendment noted above ("The Regional Delegates and the Officers form the membership of the [IAC]"), all delegates are urged to please plan on attending the next IAC business meeting to be held at the N.Y. Big Apple Roundup at Thanksgiving.

REMAINING 1983 ROUNDUPS

DATES	LOCATION	MAILING ADDRESS
Oct. 7-9	Philadelphia	Freedom Round-Up P.O. Box 15978 Philadelphia, PA 19103
Oct. 7-9	Toronto	Toronto Gratitude '83 c/o Chairperson 346 Spadina Road Toronto, Ont., Canada M5P 2V4
Nov. 24-27	Houston	Houston Roundup Committee P.O. Box 27703 - Dept. 339 Houston, Texas 77027
Nov. 24-27	New York	Big Apple Round-Up 1983 P.O. Box 451 Village Station New York, NY 10014

ANNOUNCING A NEW ROUNDUP IN 1984

DATES	LOCATION	MAILING ADDRESS
July 13-15	New Haven	Walk the Walk Round/Up P.O. Box 60 W. Hartford, CT 06107

Further information about the above (to be held at Yale University)
as well as the regularly scheduled 1984 roundups
will appear in upcoming issues of the
IAC Newsletter

TAPED AA TALKS

This is a new service available to AA members only. Since November of 1982 the High Noon Lesbian & Gay Group of Toronto, a speaker meeting, has been taping the talks given each Sunday. Each side of these cassette tapes features one AA talk of 30-40 minutes; a few sides have two or three shorter talks. With these tapes, the experience, strength and hope of a sober gay or lesbian speaker is available at home, in the car, or anywhere you have a cassette player. When we started this project we thought that mainly isolated lesbian and gay AA's would order them, but a surprising number of city dwellers also seem to find them helpful.

Tapes are available by money order only (no checks please) US \$5. or CAN \$6. from:

Eric Fisher
31 Alexander St. #614
Toronto ON Canada M4Y 1B2

Specify male, female, mixed, doesn't matter. On re-orders be sure to write the names and dates of speakers you already have. Proceeds to IAC work. These tapes are fully guaranteed; if for any reason they prove disappointing or defective, you may return them for replacement or refund.

NEEDED NOW — YOUR AA STORY FOR A GAY/LESBIAN PAMPHLET

If you think you've heard about this before, you have: Last year, the IAC solicited personal stories for a General Service pamphlet much like the Young People's pamphlet. A committee has met at the General Service Office, including two representatives of the IAC and a professional writer, to draft a pamphlet using stories from those contributed.

So what has happened? BOX 459 for June-July 1983 reports as follows:

"Potentially explosive topics confronted the 33rd General Service Conference (U.S./Canada) during its meeting at the Hotel Roosevelt April 17-23, 1983."

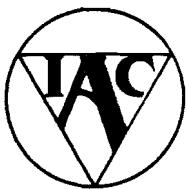
"Another key issue was the disposition of a leaflet directed to homosexual alcoholics."

"[Advisory Actions] Literature - that the draft of the pamphlet for homosexual alcoholics be approved for distribution among all Conference members, so an informed policy decision may be made in 1984."

Our IAC Past Chair, who was a member of the GSO lesbian/gay pamphlet committee, is not optimistic about the chances of its being adopted. Even if it is approved in 1984, it will be a long time before it is generally available. Therefore the IAC, meeting 16 July 1983 in San Francisco, voted to proceed with a gay/lesbian pamphlet of its own. This is an emergency interim measure. Our lesbian and gay brothers and sisters are dying of our disease and we have no comprehensive pamphlet to help them identify.

Please help: if you are sober a year or longer, do write your story (what it was like, how you sobered up, and what it is like now), in 500 to 1,000 words (2-4 double-spaced pages) and send it to the Pamphlet Committee at our mailing address. You may also write by hand or dictate onto a tape cassette.

This project will be expensive. If your group does not already do so, please ask them to support the work of the IAC with a regularly-scheduled pattern of giving. Lives may depend on us.



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ORDER FORM FOR PUBLICATIONS

NEW: Taped talks (30-40 min. each) US\$5. for two talks
[SEE REVERSE SIDE OF THIS FORM FOR MORE INFORMATION]

ITEM	PRICE	QUANTITY	TOTAL COST
Pamphlet: "Gay/Lesbian Alcoholic?" Single copy: Quantity order:	[free] \$0.15/ea.	_____	_____
World Directory of Gay/Lesbian Groups of Alcoholics Anonymous	US\$2.00	_____	_____
Information on how to start a lesbian/gay group of AA	[single copy free]		
Copy of the Advisory Council's Newsletter/Calendar	[single copy free]		
Fact sheet of information about the International Advisory Council	[single copy free]		
Information on how a group can become a member of IAC	[single copy free]		
Donation to the International Advisory Council		_____	_____

TOTAL: _____

PLEASE SAVE US TIME AND MONEY;
REMIT FUNDS BY MONEY ORDER
IN U.S. DOLLARS

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

NAME OF YOUR GROUP: _____

DATE: _____

MAIL

TO A BRITISH MEMBER: People sometimes ask us what we do. We answer a great variety of enquiries, especially from centers where the idea of a visible gay and lesbian presence is being resisted. The following is from one such answer.

Dear N:

Many thanks for your letter requesting experience in dealing with public information and the place of gay/lesbian groups within the larger AA community. My analogy for lesbian/gay groups is that of foreign-language groups: we speak the same language. People who have no trouble with a French or Italian-speaking group have trouble with us. There is an outside issue at work in these continuing discussions of our validity and this is prevailing homophobia. Like wolves in sheep's clothing, I've seen this bigotry all dressed up as self-righteous posturing under the cloak of the Traditions. As the material in our information package indicates, gay/lesbian groups in AA are an integral part of the total picture. We have no secrets and any AA member may attend our meetings with no conditions attached. (Otherwise it is not an AA meeting.)

Conventional wisdom in dealing with a balking Intergroup is to continue to send donations, request listing in the meeting book, elect Intergroup reps and attend Intergroup functions like any other group. This is virtually universal practice in all North America.

Regarding Public Information I enclose a set of General Service Guidelines. I also enclose an advertisement the Toronto groups run in a local lesbian/gay newspaper. The "Tradition Eleven" chapter in the Twelve and Twelve is helpful. Articles and advertisements in the gay/lesbian press do not link us to any "outside issue" any more than renting space in a church advocates that denomination. So I would feel perfectly free to work with the gay/lesbian press as I would the "straight" press within the same guidelines.

Eric F.
Chairperson, IAC

FROM A GSR: The following is from a letter sent by a General Service Representative to all groups and individuals in his state listed in the IAC World Directory and to the editor of his state's Area Newsletter. We publish it here as an example of what can be done to further the approval by the 1984 General Service Conference of the proposed gay/lesbian pamphlet.

Dear Editor:

I am not writing this with my GSR hat on: I am speaking for myself. I do believe, however, that these thoughts and feelings are shared by many other recovering gay alcoholics.

On June 7, I heard our delegate, N, report on the events of the 1983 General Service Conference. The matter of a conference-approved pamphlet for the homosexual alcoholic generated more controversy, more emotion, and took more time than any other issue at the Conference. It was resolved that a specific pamphlet draft be presented to the delegates before the next Conference so that "an informed policy decision may be made in 1984". I would like to address the need for such literature to be approved and published in the timeliest manner possible.

I recently had the opportunity to see a videotape of a speaker meeting in Atlanta. An oldtimer shared his story of more than 44 years of association with AA and 33 plus years of sobriety. Back around 1949, he and some other recovering alcoholics from Boston approached Bill W. with much trepidation to request his approval of a special interest meeting. Bill had to ask several times what the interest group was before he was able to say, "homosexual". Bill readily gave his approval to the first gay meeting in AA; cautioning only that the focus always be on recovery from alcoholism. Which today remains true of every gay meeting I've attended: the focus is recovery.

It is my firm belief that Bill W. would extend his blessing to a pamphlet for the homosexual alcoholic.

For AA to carry the message to homosexual alcoholics, it is necessary to speak to the special circumstances that have affected them. Just as the rapport between one alcoholic and another is something beyond what usually exists between an alcoholic and non-alcoholic, the communication between homosexual alcoholics is likely to be greater. In our efforts to reach out to the still suffering or newly recovering alcoholic who also happens to be gay, literature addressed to him or her will be of great value, just as it has been for other interest groups.

I would like to share some facts surrounding this issue:

- It is generally assumed that the homosexual population is about 10 percent of the total population.
- Several studies have indicated that the rate of alcoholism among homosexuals is about three times the average.
- Individuals and groups of sober gay alcoholics in AA have been expressing a definite need "to carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers", through literature addressed to the homosexual alcoholic.
- AA has conference-approved literature for special interest groups. Some of these are directed to a population smaller than the population of homosexual alcoholics.

In its almost fifty year history, AA has overcome barriers of gender, race, color, creed, and age -- it is now time to overcome the barrier of sexual orientation. Tradition stresses placing "principles before personalities", and that should include "principles before sexualities". Each hurdle put behind us does indeed "help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety".

The program and fellowship of AA is not one of exclusion, it is one of inclusion. The proposed literature is needed as a means of carrying the message -- as an attraction to those alcoholics who "desire to stop drinking", and who happen to be homosexual.

I feel that if the issues are known, and if AA is to truly follow its traditions and to achieve "our primary purpose -- to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety", then approval of this literature must be supported.

It is my hope that the trusted servants of Alcoholics Anonymous, under the sponsorship of a loving God, will recognize this express need and will respond to it by approving literature for the homosexual alcoholic.

When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help,
I want the hand of AA always to be there.
And for that: I am responsible.
