# An open letter to the Portland lesbian community

Have you been wondering where the movement went? Maybe you're not sure what the movement is. What happened to those of us who were active in the past? Why aren't we now? How will activism in the mideighties be different? What do we need as individuals and as a community to support and sustain ongoing activism?

The Lesbian Community Organizing Project (LCOP) is busy asking these questions and searching for their answers. We're a group of lesbians who share a desire to see our community more organized and more active. Some of us were activists in the seventies; some of us are new to the women's community. All of us believe the lesbian community needs to and is able to develop a more powerful influence on social change politics in Portland.

Aross the Nation

Recently the repeal of the county employee gay rights ordinance, under pressure from a fundamentalist group, found us, as a community, unable to respond effectively in our own interest. We need to make our voice heard on the many issues that affect us as lesbians, as women, and as citizens.

We've been meeting for several months discussing ideas and developing goals. Essentially, we envision a four-phase project: information gathering, analysis, and a community conference that, aided by the results of the information, will decide to set in motion strategies for community development. The final phase will be sharing our work with other lesbian communities nationally, encouraging them to undertake their own

organizing projects. In order to accomplish these goals we plan

to:

1. Design and distribute a communitywide survey.

 Conduct in-depth interviews with individuals from different segments of the community. 3. Hold a series of house meetings to facilitate small group discusson of the questions.

4. Compile and analyze the information and write a report of the findings.

5. Present the report at a conference so Portland lesbians can get together and make informed decisions regarding community development.

Publicize the work of our project in the national women's press.

During the whole process we will be connecting women with one another, developing mailing lists and phone trees, and focusing community attention.

There are many ways you can be involved. Right now we're recruiting for the steering committee and the house meeting committee. We also need lesbians from a wide variety of perspectives to participate in the community focus group. This group will meet periodically just to tell us what they think about the work of the project as it progresses. In the future we'll need help compiling and analyzing the information and organizing the conference. You can choose a level of participation that's comfortable for you. Participate with a maximum commitment on the steering committee, or on a more minimal level by holding a house meeting for friends in your home, or putting your name on a committee phone list so you can be called for help on a specific task. So, don't be overwhelmed. The LCOP is accessible even if you don't have a lot of extra time.

Another way to participate is financially. Your contributions of money, as well as time, are needed to make it all happen. We also need help planning and organizing fundraising activities.

To contact us call: Cathy at 238-0135 and 233-9079, Judith at 284-5262.

Or write us a P.O. Box 2212, Portland 97228.

Or, leave a message in the LCOP log book at A Women's Place Bookstore. We'll be talking with you.

> The Lesbian Community Organizing Project

# Insurers to require AIDS test

The American Council of Life Insurance, whose 6030 member companies write 95 percent of the nation's insurance policies, announced on September 12, that it would back any insurers that want to require AIDS blood testing of prospective clients.

The policy statement by the board of directors of ACLI said the tests are necessary to "protect policy holders' interest." An industry spokesman said the industry will also use its substantial lobbying power to overturn laws in California and Wisconsin which ban insurers from requiring the tests.

Nationwide Insurance Companies, an Ohio-based firm, was reported to have started AIDS blood screening of some male applicants from New York, New Jersey, California and Florida a week before the ACLI announcement. 20 percent of antibody-positive people will contract the lethal syndrome, and an additional 25 percent will contract AIDS-Related Complex, a milder form of the infection that poses serious health problems. As many as 1 million Americans have the AIDS antibodies in their blood, federal officials have said.

Both insurance industry representatives and gay community leaders have expected concerns about AIDS and insurance to increase as more AIDS victims become sick enough to require expensive hospitalization and medical treatment.

Federal health officials have estimated that AIDS care already is costing billions of dollars nationally. Each of the nation's AIDS victims typically runs up a medical bill between \$50,000 and \$100,000. As of this month, more than 12.900 AIDS cases were reported nationally. sexual intercourse with another individual of the same sex," even in private.

"In view of the strong objection to homosexual conduct, which has prevailed in Western culture for the past seven centuries, we cannot say that (the Texas law) is totally unrelated to the pursuit of implementing morality, a permissible state goal," the judges said.

The case was appealed by Danny Hill, a district attorney in Potter County in west Texas, with the support of a group called Dallas Doctors Against AIDS after the law was declared unconstitutional by a federal judge in 1982.

The ruling majority (six Reagan appointees, two Nixon appointees and one appointed by Carter) apparently ignored a decision released last May by the Eleventh Circuit Court which struck down a similar law in the state of Georgia.

The majority opinion in the Georgia case

### Weller quits Chicago post

Jerry Weller, executive director of Chicago's Howard Brown Memorial Clinic, resigned, according to GayLife. Weller said he plans to complete his master's degree in journalism at Roosevelt University during the coming school year and then possibly return to Portland.

Weller's resignation came after a vacation in Portland where he decided that he "really is a West Coast person," and that working at the clinic is "not how I wanted to spend my life."

Weller was founding executive director of Portland's Phoenix Rising Foundation until 1982 when he moved to Washington, D.C., to

The controversial blood test detects the presence of antibodies to the HTLV-III virus, which causes acquired immune deficiency syndrome.

Opponents of the test have argued that it should not be used by insurers because not all people with antibodies will develop AIDS. Experts estimate that between 5 percent and

# Texas Sodomy law upheld

The Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals in New Orleans voted 9 to 7 on August 26 to uphold Texas' sodomy law which forbids "deviate ruled that the law "infringes upon the fundamental constitutional rights of the homosexual" and that the state "must prove in order to prevail that it has a compelling interest in regulating this behavior."

At this time litigants in the Texas case have made no decision for a U.S. Supreme Court appeal. The state of Georgia, on the other hand, is asking for a Supreme Court decision claiming that the state *does* have a "compel ling interest in regulating" sexual behavior. work for Gay Rights National Lobby. After a stint as GRNL's deputy director he was appointed acting director between the resignation of Steve Endean and the appointment of Vicky Monrean.

Hired on October 25, 1984, by the Howard Brown Memorial Clinic, Weller said he is leaving the clinic more financially stable than when he took the job. Weller also cited his success at bringing city and state funds to the clinic for the first time.



#### RED ROSE SCHOOL Women's Term, Fall 1985

The Red Rose School offers classes to help us better understand our position in society and our ability to change it through social action. This fall we present a special term which is being conceived, organized and taught by women.

Classes begin Oct. 14 and are held at 7:30 pm in the Friends' Meetinghouse, 4312 S.E. Stark. A small tuition is charged to cover expenses. For more information and a brochure, call 232-1605.

Mondays: Women as Organizers in the Workplace (M. L. Smith, 4 Mondays starting Oct. 14): Methods of Discrimination (Patricia MacAodha, 6 Mondays starting Oct. 14). Tuesdays: Daughters of Poverty: 20th-Century Fiction (Diane Nowicki, 7 Tuesdays starting Oct. 15); Violence Against Women (Portland Women's Crisis Line members, 6 Tuesdays starting Oct. 22). Wednesdays: Internalized Oppression of Women (Cindy Cumfer, 6 Wednesdays starting Oct. 16); Women's Leadership Development (Sister Guadalupe Guajardo, 5 Wednesdays starting Oct. 16). Thursdays: Lesbian Identity in a Homophobic Society (Dr. Peggy Hockenbruck, 6 Thursdays starting Oct. 17) FRIDAY, OCT. 4: FORUM AND OPEN HOUSE. "The View From Nairobi" will be a

special report on the recent international women's conference by two Portland women who attended, Damari Wakhungu and Carol Page. Open house: 7 pm; forum: 7:30 pm. Friends' Meetinghouse, 4312 S.E. Stark.



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