

than five years ago, strives to educate and inform the campus community about sexual minority concerns, including harassment, discrimination and personal dignity.

"Fusion provides a safe environment for students of all sexual orientations and allows people to expand their horizons and escape their sheltered little bubbles," student Karin Lamberson says. She notes that when Fusion was founded, college trustees didn't think the school needed a gay-straight alliance because they thought no sexual minorities were on campus.

In addition to regular meetings, the club offers guest speakers, films and other forums for

members to interact with each other and the larger student body. Each year, Fusion participates in a week of sexuality awareness activities during which it plays host to speakers, shows and dances; distributes safe-sex kits; and

"Fusion provides a safe environment for students of all sexual orientations and allows people to expand their horizons and escape their sheltered little bubbles"

—Karin Lamberson

organizes coming-out panels. The club also regularly works with faculty and other campus organizations to promote visibility and acceptance of sexual minorities.

"As a faculty member," says Martha Van-Cleave, mathematics department chair, "I have found that the work of the members of Fusion has improved the climate of acceptance for gay, lesbian and bisexual individuals."

For more information send e-mail to Karin Lamberson at klamber@linfield.edu.

CHECKS AND BALANCES

High school reaches out as well

BY JONATHAN KIPP

Adozen students at McMinnville High regularly show up to Counter Balance meetings after school. The 6-year-old group is a comfortable place to talk and share feelings and experiences, adult coordinator and advocate Susie Alin says.

Two students have told her they are alive only because of the support they received through Counter Balance. Others have decided to attend college because their mentors served as such strong role models.

Generally, students who attend the meetings are local, but some come from out of the area. Realizing the region needed more support for sexual minority kids, Counter Balance started a youth group in Newberg.

Local college students are trained to work with the teens as well and help keep the program afloat during summer months. Alin, also a counselor at McMinnville High School, says

Counter Balance is funded by donations and periodic grants. The group needs money for food it serves at meetings, emergency housing and counseling.

the bond of friendship and personal support between the youth the college leaders has been inspirational to witness.

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Alin also is hoping to acquire a computer so sexual minority youth can write their own stories and communicate with others across the country. She says that most high schools don't allow students to use their e-mail accounts for such activities but that it is a safe way for them to connect with peers going through similar experiences.

For more information or to make a donation send e-mail to Susie Alin at salin@msd.k12.or.us.



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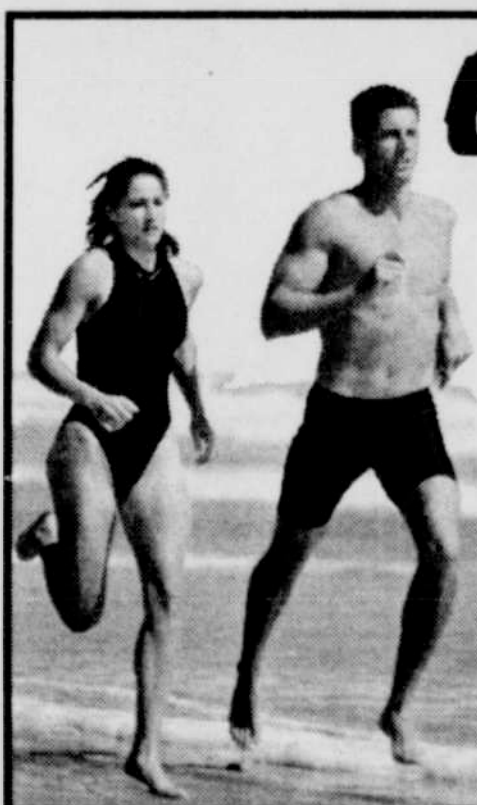
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