

Organization helps young gays sort out feelings

(Continued from page one) homosexual. If accurate, that would make approximately 890 gay and lesbian students enrolled at Clackamas Community College (there were 8,937 students enrolled here winter term) enrolled at Clackamas Community College and 74 homosexuals among the staff and faculty. In Clackamas County, with a population of 245,100, approximately 2,450 people may be gay.

One of the group members, Shawn, age 18, said popular estimates suggest Portland is home to 50,000-70,000 gays and lesbians, many of whom are minors and as yet unable to deal with their sexual roles.

Shawn has been with the group for 10 months. He did not "come out," or publically admit to his homosexuality, until a few months ago, after seeking counseling. Shawn heard of Windfire from his counselor.

"This group gives gay youths a chance to get together and work their problems out," Shawn said. It is also one of the few places in the metroplex where gay minors may gather.

For Shawn, one of the hardest things about coming out was telling his mother, who lives in Washington. "She freaked out," he said. "I sent her a three-page letter explaining what happened and the day after she received it she arrived on my doorstep, her eyes raw from crying. She hadn't slept any since receiving my letter. It was real rough

on her, but she's adapting to it now."

Coming out, or accepting his sexuality, was "a risk that you have to take," Shawn said. "Not everyone in Windfire has come out yet. I know what that's like. It's very difficult. All my life, it (homosexual feelings) plagued me. 'It's sick...it's abnormal...' Finally, I had to face it."

Now, in retrospect, Shawn looks back at his life and sees "No happy times. I was never happy. This group helped to change that for me. If I can now help people through this group, then I will."

Another member of Windfire, Brett, age 18, helped found the group in 1982. "We have provided a place where teenagers can be themselves," Brett said. "We draw energy and support from each other."

Brett has been out for approximately 18 months now, ever since he helped Frank to form the fellowship organization. He said there is no comparison between his life now and his life before coming to terms with his homosexuality.

Another member of the group is Susan, age 17. She is one of the few women who attend Windfire meetings regularly. Susan is bisexual, and claims the disproportionate ratio of men to women (approximately 60-70 percent of the membership is men) is because "many lesbians are less open" and less likely to join any group with male members. "I attended a couple

of lesbian group meetings and was very uncomfortable because of how they feel about men: All men," Susan said.

Susan has been with Windfire since October of 1983. She has been out for about a month and a half. "I didn't know (she was bisexual) until a year ago," she said.

"I'm much happier now. It (Windfire) doesn't let me deal with the issues alone anymore," Susan said. "It feels good to belong and to teach other people."

The group teaches by speaking or writing to schools and other youth groups. In May, a delegation from Windfire will speak to a Human Sexuality class at the Multnomah Learning Center. The group is also drafting a letter to be sent to junior high and high school administrations throughout the metropolitan area, explaining the purpose and function of Windfire.

Education within the group is also part of the format. Last weekend, a representative from the Cascades AIDS Project (CAP) spoke to the group, talking about the fears, misunderstandings and problems facing AIDIS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) victims. AIDS is a fatal disease that strikes mostly homosexuals and is nearly always lethal. The speaker from CAP said there are currently 11 cases of AIDS in the Portland area, and there have been four deaths to date.

The Windfire group sat quietly

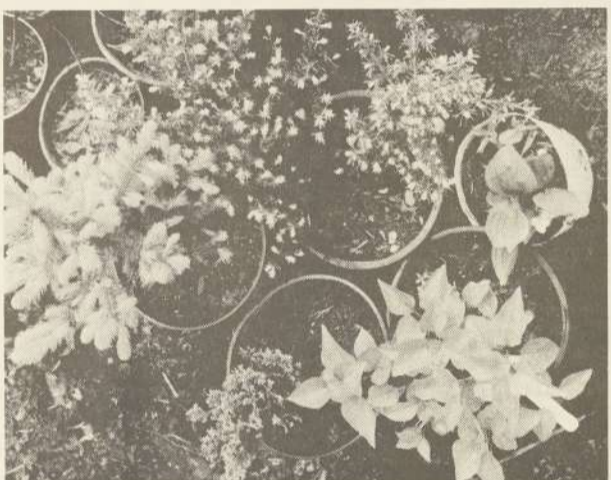
and listened to the speaker, many holding hands or with arms around shoulders—men and women both—for physical, as well as moral, support. Fear and tension were obvious. The group drew sustenance from each other in a way no person isolated from his/her community could ever do.

It is to deal with that isolation and the misunderstandings surround homosexuality that Frank helped found the group, and why he continues to act as advisor. Frank is currently working on a thesis for his master's degree in psychology. The theme of his work is biases among counselors.

"Many psychotherapists still see being gay as a mental disease," Frank said, even though homosexuality has been stricken from the lexicon of diseases in the medical community. He said there are still many counselors, whether psychologists, psychiatrists or social workers, who attempt to "cure" a patient of homosexuality.

"Every gay person knows that being gay is the way you are. It is not an intelligent choice the person makes," Frank said. "It is as hard for a gay person to be 'straight' (heterosexual) as it would be for a 'straight' to be gay."

Persons interested in information on Windfire are encouraged to contact Ann, 244-3225. For those who are 21 or older, another group is now being formed. It will be called The Bridge Club and will work in conjunction with Windfire.



PLANTS, PLANTS, PLANTS—These are just a few of the specimens that will be featured in Clackamas Community College's plant sale. Sale will run from May 2-12.

Photo by Joel Miller

College plant sale begins May 2

By Kathy Johnson
Of The Print

The Environmental Learning Center will be having their ninth annual plant sale starting today, May 2, and continuing through May 12.

On sale will be several outdoor plants and materials from bedding stock to garden vegetables to evergreens.

"This year seems to be the year for evergreens," Charles Puckett, education and recycling coordinator, stated. "We have got little pines, firs and other galore. We also have some large shade

trees which should provide for almost instant shade."

The plants have been donated by various nurseries throughout the area.

"In order for nurseries to make money they need number one stock, and they need it immediately," Puckett said. "So a lot of times they give to us what is considered by them to be number-two stock for one reason or another. I have never been able to see any real difference, but then we have the time to

take a little care of them and do whatever pruning might be necessary. With a little fertilization, they make good-looking plants."

The majority of the plants range in price from \$12-\$20, Puckett estimated. The proceeds from the plant sale will support the Environmental Learning Center which is a non profit association. Currently, there is a push for funds to complete the ELC's fish rearing facility by June 23.

Smucker's building gears up for auction; more than 250 items to be disposed

On Saturday, May 5, Clackamas Community College will be holding a public auction to dispose of five years' worth of College items that are currently overcrowding the warehouse at the Smucker's Building.

"We really need to have one (auction) every year, ideally," College Buyer Louise Slawson said. However, due to a shortage of staff and time, Slawson said it has been difficult for the College to do so.

The auction is being handled by the College's purchasing department and will begin at 10 a.m. at the Smucker's Building. Slawson said there would be about 250 numbered items for sale, although by counting individual items, she said the amount will be greater.

Items to be auctioned range from vehicles to office machines and furniture to audio-visual equipment and beauty salon supplies. All of

the items are on-campus, College-owned materials that have been piling up and therefore need to be disposed Slawson said.

Viewing time for the auction items will be between 8-10 a.m. on May 5. All sales will be final and all sold items must be paid for by cash or check and removed from the College on the date of the sale. Proceeds from the auction will go into the miscellaneous revenue account of the College's general fund.

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