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A GAY & LESBIAN NEWSLETTER ON COUPLING

COUPLES

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December 1991

Classifieds...

Thanks to all your wonderful suggestions, *COUPLES* will now have a *COUPLES CLASSIFIED* section. Starting with the January issue, this section will be devoted to classified advertisements for couples. What's more, you can put a classified in this section for two months at a charter rate of \$5.00 for 2 months.

The classifieds will be a separate section. They will not compete for editorial space—those not interested can simply disregard it.

Based on the letters we've received, readers felt this would be a great way to meet other couples in their area or across the nation. The *COUPLES CLASSIFIEDS* can serve other purposes: advertise your couples group, advertise couples activities in your area, or even research studies. If you travel a great deal or are going to vacation in another state, you'll also be able to contact and meet couples in other cities.

Send your prepaid classified, 40 words or less, to *COUPLES* Newsletter. We think this will be a refreshing section for the community.

Myths That Can Wreck Your Relationship

by Rev. Fred C. Williams



Whenever someone asks me what a relationship is I like to respond with this answer: a relationship is like two porcupines trying to stay warm on a cold winter night. The two creatures are shivering, desperate for warmth, and thus drawn like to

strong magnets. "Ouch!" they shout, when their pointed, prickly quills pierce each other's tender skin as they attempt to come together. They quickly withdraw to alleviate the painful closeness. But this time they do not move as far away as they originally were. Then they cautiously creep toward one another a second time...only to jab each other once again, but not so brutally as the first time.

Oh, yes, they jerk away from each other, but then, once again, they inch their way closer once more. Then the two porcupines shift back and forth, experimenting with positions that provide the most warmth with the least amount of discomfort. Finally they find a position that works. It is a position that enables them to enjoy a secure, peaceful and warm relationship which protects them from winter winds and snow storms. Their quills are still sharp. Their coming together doesn't change or weaken them. Each has found a way to be themselves and yet, enjoy being close to one another. That, my friends, is a relationship!

How do we find that position that works for us? We can begin by exploring the myths about relationships. And the first myth is this: All you need in a relationship is love.

Some compare a relationship to a tub of hot water. "Once you get used to it, it ain't so hot!" The love we feel for that special someone at the beginning of the relationship is like that tub of hot water. It's HOT! And we expect it to stay hot forever. When bath water gets cold, add more hot water! When the love in your relationship starts to cool, add more love!

Sitting around hoping that the love you felt in the beginning will keep your relationship going doesn't get the job done. There are two kinds of love in a

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News notes...

SAN JOSE, CA—Boosted by Lotus Development Corp.'s decision to grant employee benefits to partners of gay and lesbian workers, high-tech silicon valley homosexual rights groups vowed to win the same concessions.

ST. PAUL, MN— As reported in *Equal Time* by David Anger, a lesbian has been fired by a St. Paul based theater company for wearing her wedding band while on the job. The ring is not a traditional silver or gold band, but rather a contemporary design subtly representing two nude women. Tricia Hendre and Kate Higgins, partners for one-and-a-half years, are planning a commitment ceremony in the near future. They saw the ring advertised in a local paper. By way of conclusion Higgins said, "There's no way in my life I'm going to take less in life because I'm a lesbian."

DENVER, CO—A civil service officer rules gay couples eligible for benefits. Gay men and lesbians are entitled to sick-leave to attend to their sick or injured spouses according to a ruling by a Denver service hearing officer.

FLORIDA—Battered lesbian pleads guilty. A woman who was convicted earlier this year of second-degree murder in the death of her lover, pleaded guilty to manslaughter after an appeals court threw out the original conviction. The woman had used battered-spouse syndrome as her defense in the case. She was sentenced to five years in prison and five years probation following her guilty plea.

VANCOUVER, BC—A Vancouver court expands same-sex spousal rights. Same-sex couples must be included in the governmental definition of spouses according to a ruling handed down by a Supreme Court

relationship—romantic love and realistic love.

Romantic love is based on emotions and it often causes irrational and irresponsible behavior. The very language we use about romantic love reflects this. We say "I'm crazy about her!" or "I'm mad about him!" or "My head is spinning." Now that's crazy...but that's romantic love. And it won't keep the relationship alive. You need more than romantic love.

Enter realistic love. That's the hot water you add before the entire tub cools off. Realistic love is a way of acting. It's the way you treat that special someone everyday.

Realistic love is patient, kind, never jealous, never envious, never haughty, never selfish, never rude, never demanding, never irritable, never touchy, and never ending. That's a far cry from romantic love. Romantic love is like a paper lantern. When the rain comes and the winds blow, the light goes out and you're left with a wet paper bag!

But realistic love can withstand the winds and the rains. But note, realistic love doesn't just happen. You have to work at it. It's true, relationships may be made in heaven, but they have to be lived on earth. And to keep the temperature of the relationship up, you have to constantly add more love!

And the second myth about relationships is that partners must be compatible! Compatibility is the term we use to label the ability of two people to live together in harmony. This is an age-old idea that says two people must fit together like the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle. And that's a myth. It just isn't true.

An application of the compatibility theory would mean, for example, that a person who likes to dominate should find someone who likes to be dominated. And a person who is indecisive should find someone who is forceful and makes decisions easily and quickly. It would also mean that a spendthrift should hook up with someone who can hold on to money. And a messy person should find someone who is neat and keeps things in order.

My experience tells me that when people like this get together what they end up with is comments like this: the dominator says, "Who does she think she is, bossing me around all the time?" The decision maker says, "I wish you would make at least one decision on your own!" The tightwad says, "what's wrong with you? ...Do you think money grows on trees?" The neat one says, "The way you throw things around the house is driving me crazy!"

Compatibility isn't a guarantee for a lasting relationship! If you expect every little edge and shape of your relationship to fit together like the interlocking pieces of a jigsaw puzzle, then you are setting yourself up for a big disappointment.

I always say that the strongest relationship is simply a polite agreement of two people to put up with each other's intolerable ways. The diversity in your relationship can be your strength. It can draw you together and give you a foundation upon which you can build.

The third myth about relationships is this: good sex makes a good relationship. Certainly this is not true. In fact, just the opposite is more true: a good relationship is the foundation for good sex.

It may be true that sex may be the initial attraction between two people. But over the years, couples who fail to develop strong non-sexual bonds are usually the ones who say that sex is not as satisfying as it once was! On the other hand, couples who develop a fulfilling relationship in non-sexual areas tend to enjoy an ongoing satisfying sexual experience.

A bad relationship, negative interchanges, and the demands of family, housework, career, and social activities all drain time, energy and emotions, and usually kills all desire for sexual interchange. So, good sex doesn't make a good relationship, rather, a good relationship is the foundation for good sex.

When I talk to couples about their sexual relationship, I lay before them a concept of sex that I call cathedral sex. The more two people put the qualities of God into their interactions with each other, the closer they grow to each other and the stronger their

bonds of affection, love and sex becomes.

And what are those qualities of God? They are: loving, caring, understanding, forgiving, and accepting. When the total, overall relationship is filled with these qualities, it provides a solid foundation for a good sexual relationship. And that's cathedral sex.

One final note on the matter of sex in your relationship. As a couple, you have a right to enjoy the sexual experience with the one you love. The sexual emotions are God given. And they should be used in the same manner we use anything else God gives us. Use then without guilt, or fear, or other emotional hang-ups.

If you want to keep your tub water hot, to accept the diversity in each other's personality, and to build a foundation for satisfying sex, try the following exercise every day that you are together. It's an exercise that requires that you say the important words to each other every day. And what are these words?

The five most important words are: You did a good job. The four most important words are: What is your opinion? The three most important words are: I love you. The two most important words are: Thank You. And the one most important word is: We.

Yes...we can make it as a couple. Remember, the porcupines made it! And with God's help, you can too. ▼

Rev. Fred C. Williams is Senior Pastor of King of Peace MCC in St. Petersburg, Florida. This article has appeared in *Second Stone* and it originally appeared in the church magazine, *Visions*.

COOKS CORNER

by Peter Fitzpatrick

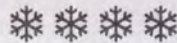
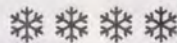


Table For Two



Most people have "traditional" meals that they prepare for the holiday season. Since almost everyone is either visiting someone or being visited by someone, I thought I would pass along two recipes that you can bring with you or have ready when friends drop by. The first recipe is a Christmas classic:

FRUITCAKE

1/2 cup snipped dried figs, 1/2 cup chopped dates, 1/2 cup chopped prunes, 1 cup of crushed pineapple, 1 cut dark raisins, 2 cups chopped apple, 1/2 cup chopped walnuts, 1/2 cup orange juice, 2 cups whole wheat flour, 1/2 cup toasted wheat germ, 1 tablespoon baking powder, 1 teaspoon baking soda, 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon, 1/2 teaspoon ground

nutmeg and 2 eggs.

Combine the figs, dates, prunes, pineapple, raisins, apple, walnuts and orange juice in a bowl. Add the remaining ingredients and mix well. Pour into a lightly oiled 10-inch tube pan. Bake in a preheated 350 degree oven for 40 to 50 minutes. Serves about fifteen.

GREEK CHRISTMAS BREAD

1 pkg or 1 tablespoon of active dry yeast, 1/4 cup warm water (110 to 115 degrees), 1/3 cup sugar, 1 teaspoon ground cardamom, 1/4 teaspoon salt, 1 egg, 1/4 cup milk, 1/4 cup vegetable oil, 1-1/2 cups whole wheat flour, 1 cup all purpose flour, 1/4 cup golden raisins, and 1/4 cup chopped walnuts.

Dissolve the yeast in the warm water. Combine the sugar cardamom, salt, egg,

New notes...

judge. *The Vanguard* reported that the ruling essentially grants common law marriage status to gay and lesbian couple.

BERKELEY, CA—If you're traveling or live near Berkeley, California, you can now register as a domestic partner at the Berkeley City Hall. The program started on National Coming Out Day and it is offered to any one in the country. You fill out the registration form, sign it under oath and pay the registration fee—no mail orders are accepted. So on your next trip to California, plan a day in Berkeley! San Francisco also offers a similar registration service.

NEW YORK CITY, NY—A recent court ruling has cleared the way for gay and lesbian teachers to sue the New York City Board of Education for access to health insurance for domestic partners. The city had argued rejection of this insurance based on cost, but State Supreme Court Judge Karla Moskowitz ruled in favor for the Gay Teachers Association. Judge Moskowitz, further rejected the city's premise that the board would have to ascertain the conduct and nature of gay teachers' relationships.

ATLANTA, GA—City Council member Mary Davis introduces a domestic partnership ordinance to benefit city employees. Davis feels that partners of gays and lesbians should be eligible for insurance benefits, sick leave, and more. Davis wants to ensure that gay and lesbian employees receive the same benefits that straight, married city employees enjoy.

MASSACHUSETTS—A lesbian couple has won a settlement against a national leasing company and a car dealership for denying them a car lease based on sexual orientation. The couple settled for \$1,500.

Anniversaries...

A happy belated anniversary to Michael Engelhart and Steven Toth—19 years together as of October 5, 1991, and their basset hound Oscar 10 years!

A happy anniversary on December 4th to Eric Britten and Rob Lauriguet in Alaska. Eric writes: "We came to Alaska together right after we met in 1983. We've lived with the Eskimos in Kotzebue on Alaska's northwest coast; then lived and worked on Unalaska Island in the Aleutians, home of "the worst weather in the world"; but the hardest job has been building a strong and loving relationship through trust and respect for each other. We've loved it all, but the relationship is the greatest! [ED]"

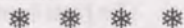
The experience...

However successful a relationship may be, you may discover that when the "love of your life" leaves you, so do the feelings of security and completeness.

If you decide to "wait it out," or give the relationship "just one more chance," and it doesn't get better, you become passive. So you either stay in the relationship or you go through one lover after another trying unsuccessfully to maintain some semblance of balance in your life. The vicious cycle of frustration, and blame goes on.

If this sounds like you, then *The Experience*, a two and a half day workshop designed to help you discover the one person you've been looking for in your life...yourself, is for you. To register, or to find out more about *The Experience* and when it will be in your area call (213)848-9571 or (800) 966-3896. ▼

milk, and oil in a large bowl and mix well. Add the yeast mixture, flours, raisins and nuts and mix well. Add enough extra flour to make soft dough. Turn the dough out onto a floured surface and knead until smooth and elastic, about 5 minutes. Shape the dough into a round loaf and put it into a lightly oiled 8 inch round cake pan. Cover with a damp towel and let rise in a warm place until doubled in size, about 1 hour. Bake in a 350 degree oven for 35 to 40 minutes, or until brown. Serves about fifteen.



HOW TO STORE LEFTOVERS

With the holiday season upon us, we always have food left over to store. Whether freshly cooked or extras bought at the supermarket and not used. Here are some storing and freezing tips you may find useful either because you have cooked a large holiday meal or because you are cooking for two and there are bound to be plenty of leftovers.

Always chill food to room temperature before covering and refrigerating. Use within 3 to 4 days. Do not keep uncooked fish longer than 1 day, meat longer than 3 days. Do not freeze cooked sea food. Do not freeze ham for more than one week. Meat and poultry, if well wrapped, may be kept frozen up to 1 month.

Store cheese well wrapped in plastic in the refrigerator. If mold spots develop,

cut it out; the rest of the cheese is edible. Cheeses such as cream and cottage cheese do not keep well after opening, use within one week.

Herbs such as parsley and basil keep up to 3 days if stalks are immersed in water; change the water daily. They may also be washed, dried, wrapped in a towel and refrigerated in a plastic bag for up to 1 week. Store dry herbs in a dark place away from the heat of the stove. Dried herbs lose flavor if kept too long, so do not buy in large quantities. Do not wash vegetables until you are ready to use them. Store them in plastic bags in the crisper area of your refrigerator.

Store dried fruits such as prunes and apricots in plastic bags at room temperature; figs and dates in the refrigerator. Under ripe fruit, especially avocados, should be allowed to ripen at room temperature before refrigerating. Do not refrigerate bananas. Store nuts in the refrigerator if not using within the week.



I hope you enjoy preparing these recipes and perhaps send in some your own favorites. In future issues I will pass along more of my favorite recipes and report on great restaurants to go to and enjoy. Once again, let's hear from YOU, share not just your favorite recipes but eating establishments too! ▼

LESBOMANIA

Kissing Cousins

Do Straight People Want Us to Lie?

by Jorjet Harper

Recently my lover had to go to the hospital for surgery. She introduced me to her doctor, "This is my lover." He didn't bat an eyelash, just smiled and shook my hand the way anybody would if we lived in a non-homophobic society.

Score one for Lesbian Visibility.

The nurses all reacted well, too. If

homosexuality was an issue for them, they managed to hide it nicely.

Score another for Lez-Viz.

On the day of my lover's operation, however, lesbian visibility hit just a bit of a snag in the hospital waiting room.

Guarding the door was an elderly woman with blue-tinted hair and thick rhinestone-framed glasses. In a bureau-

cratic manner, she began what was obviously an oft-repeated speech: "Waiting for a surgery patient? Please take a seat here and make yourself comfortable. When the patient is able to see visitors, I will inform you."

She had a ledger book in front of her. "What is the patient's last name?" she asked.

I told her.

"Could you spell that for me, please?"

I did—slowly, because I saw that she was wearing a hearing aid and seemed to be watching my lips.

She flipped through a few pages, found the name, and put a check mark next to it. Then, her pen poised above a blank space, she asked: "And what is your relation to the patient?"

Lez-Viz: "I'm her lover," I said.

Though the word "lover" seemed to echo through the big waiting room to every husband, wife, child, aunt and uncle sitting about reading magazines, the blue-haired lady appeared not to have heard me. She looked up over the top of her eyeglasses. "Excuse Me?"

"I'm her lover," I repeated.

She just stared at me.

"Her significant other," I tried, though it occurred to me as soon as I'd said it that maybe "significant other" would only confuse rather than clarify the situation for this lady.

She looked back down at the ledger book, puzzled, thinking. After a long pause, she slowly wrote, in a large, quivering, round script, the word "cousin."

"Thank you," she said, smiling, and waved me on into the waiting room.

I dutifully took a seat to begin my

vigil.

But inside, I was fuming. I ran over the incident in my mind. The exasperating thing was, I simply could not decide if the woman had heard me right or not. "Lover" and "other" and "cousin" sound *sort of alike*, don't they? Well, then "husband" sort of sounds like "cousin" too—did she make husbands into cousins in her ledger book? Or maybe she'd heard me perfectly but thought she was doing me a favor by making me a relative in some conventional definition?

Nope, I thought, straight people want us to lie about our relationships so they don't have to deal with it. OK. The next time something like this happens, I'll do it *their way*, I'll just lie. I'll say "wife," and see how that one goes over. And if they balk at

that, I'll lie some more, and say we were married in Denmark.

When my lover was out of surgery, the blue-haired lady, still perfectly pleasant told me how to find the intensive care unit. Happily, my lover was doing well, and the reunited "cousins" kissed in an especially loving, significant-otherly way.

Lesbian Visibility was back on track. But I left the hospital that evening still wondering if my lover had become my cousin through homophobia, or bureaucratic conformity, or merely because of a low battery in someone's hearing aid. ▼

Jorjet Harper regularly publishes a column titled *Lesbo Mania* which appears in several community newspapers. Chicago based, she is known nationally as a freelance writer for the gay and lesbian press.

Fighting back...

Several of our readers have written or called us concerning involvement in letter writing campaigns to support gay and lesbian causes. One of our readers in San Francisco writes, "If the fundies can write letters why can't we? Lets join in this letter writing campaign." The note was accompanied with an article from a local paper. The American Family Association, a heterosexual supremacist group with members nationwide, has launched a new campaign to censor TV shows with non-judgmental depictions of gays and lesbians.

The AFA is providing 1 million "Christians with" pre-printed postcards to be sent to four companies that sponsor TV shows that "promote homosexuality."

The shows cited are *Dear John*, *L.A. Law*, and *Roseanne*.

The postcards threaten the targeted companies with a boycott, warning "you will have to choose whether you want the business of the radical homosexual or those of us who are concerned with their anti-family campaign."

These companies are likely to receive hundreds of thousands of these postcards, but one personal note from us is worth many of their pre-printed hate-filled cards.

Write these corporations today and tell them not to be intimidated by the AFA. Remind them that none of the AFA's many boycotts have ever had any significant economic impact, and that gays and lesbians form a more lucrative market than the half-wit fundamentalists of the AFA.

Write to Chairman D. Wayne Calloway, Pepsico, Anderson Hill Road, Purchase, NY 10577; Chairman Michael A. Miles, Philip Morris Inc., 120 Park Ave., NY, NY 10017; Chairman Robert C. Stempel, General Motors Corp., 3044 W. Grand Blvd., Detroit, MI 48202; Chairman Lee Iacocca, Chrysler Corp., P.O. Box 1919, Detroit, MI 48288. ▼



'TIS THE SEASON

Oh, Good Grief!

The Holidays Are Here

by Kenneth A. Osherow

'Twas the night before Chanukah when all through the house. Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse. The stockings were hung by the Menorah with care, in hopes that Chanukah Harry and St. Nick would soon be there...

What a perfect time of year to talk about mixed faith relationships. The holiday season is upon us. For some this means running to church and gift shopping, for others, buying Menorah candles and eight smaller gifts. Mixing faiths during such a joyful season can be both fun and tricky. The ideas that follow come from a diverse group of Jewish/Christian couples on how to make your holiday season a little more interesting.

On the Christian side we have the obvious: lots of presents, screamingly loud wrapping paper and a tree. On the Jewish side: candles, prayer books, smaller gifts and eight long days of celebration. Now, mix them together and you're in store for double the excitement this holiday season.

Last year one couple I know drove up to a rural tree farm and chopped down their own Christmas Tree. They lit Chanukah Candles the same night they decorated the tree. There was a festive mood throughout their house and celebrating both traditions only added to the joys of the season. They both liked the classic holiday songs, and would listen to Deck the Halls, Rudolph, and Silent Night for hours on end. They bought a book of Chanukah traditions, played Dradle games and snacked on chocolate silverdollars. Not only did they eat traditional Christmas foods like bread pudding and turkey, but they made the traditional Chanukah potato latkes as well. For this couple it was truly a united holiday.

Beyond the eggnog and potato latkes, both Chanukah and Christmas have religious significance. While most people

understand that Christmas celebrates the birth of Christ, I thought I would briefly describe the significance of Chanukah. It can be useful and even interesting for couples to teach one another about their religions. Tell your partner about how you used to celebrate the holidays with your family when you were growing up. You may find that sharing religious experiences and religious knowledge may add to your enjoyment of the season.

Chanukah is known as the *Festival of Lights* and is celebrated for eight days. It commemorates the rededication of the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem about two thousand years ago.

Shortly after the rededication, the Syrians ordered the Jews to worship idols—which goes against the fundamental principles of Judaism. The Jews revolted and drove the Syrians away.

According to the legend, the Jews then searched for oil to rekindle the Eternal Light at the Temple. They found a jug with enough oil to burn for only one day and one night. Miraculously, however, the oil lasted for eight days and eight nights; the time it took to find a fresh supply.

Today the eight days of Chanukah are celebrated by lighting candles, one the first day, two the second day, and so fourth. Small gifts are given, and songs and games are played to celebrate the miracle of the oil.

A couple I know told me that they followed the same ritual each year. They lit the Chanukah Candles together and read the accompanying prayer and then right afterwards they would light the

Christmas Tree and marvel at its' massive beauty. Imagine a room aglow with candles and Christmas lights—they said it was a very peaceful time for them and they would snuggle on the couch and share holiday stories.

If your partner is Jewish, think about going to a local potter and having some clay "Jewish" tree ornaments made. They can be very interesting stocking stuffers (although you might want to give them several days before Christmas so they will have time to hang on the tree). Personally, I was truly surprised when I received my very own set of "Jewish" Christmas ornaments. Chanukah and Christmas truly merged when I placed the hand made clay Menorah, and Star of David on to the branches of a seven foot Scotch Pine.

If you haven't celebrated Christmas before, it can be a wonderful experience. How quickly you'll get worked up with the glitz and spirit of the holiday season. You'll be twirling garland up the stairway, wrapping gifts, and kissing under the Mistletoe in no time. Presents will gather quickly under the tree and each of you will wait in suspense to see what the other has gotten for you. You may decide to buy each other some small gifts, and then chip in together for a larger purchase—a new stereo system for the livingroom, a trip to the Caribbean, or a new dining room table and chairs. If at all possible, you should wrap the joint gifts and open them together on Christmas. ▼

**MOVING???**

Return the mailing label from your envelope with your new address.

**GIFT SUBSCRIPTIONS**

Send the names & addresses with your check. One full year, 12 issues, \$30.

COUPLES GROUPS

Affirming the Spirit of Committed and Loving Gay and Lesbian Couples

Couples groups have become very popular around the country. These groups provide an opportunity to socialize and make friends with other couples. In a community which often caters to swinging singles, many couples find it difficult to meet other pairs.

The Los Angeles-based "Couples Group" has just celebrated its third anniversary with an annual picnic. The group's dual goals are to affirm the spirit of our own committed relationships while providing a network for gay and lesbian couples to meet and socialize with each other.

The Couples Group is a loosely-structured, purely social group that has chosen to dispense with any and all politics, dues structure and Board of Directors hierarchy in order to provide committed couples with a relationship-affirming "group of friends."

The central activity of the group is a monthly "Snack 'N' Yack" gathering which combines a potluck meal or snack; a non-threatening opportunity to network and socialize. Snack 'N' Yacks are held at a different member couple's home each month and also serve to facilitate planning for additional group events such as day trips, concerts, and theater evenings.

The group financially supports its monthly "Couples Group Newsletter" and monthly meetings with voluntary donations. Among their 50 member couples are several who enjoy relationships that are still going after 20-27 years—but "newlyweds" are always welcome as well.

One member writes, 'Many couples travel for business and pleasure, and

would like to attend couples events sponsored by the local group at their destination. Couples also have occasion to move to a new city and local couples groups could provide a unique "welcome wagon" in their new home town. My partner and I recently contacted the Couples Support Group in Washington D.C. before our recent trip and made several new friends this way. Even though the CSG didn't have an event officially scheduled during our stay, three member couples *created* one just for our benefit. What a warm feeling to know that even on vacation, we were *not alone*.'

The following are excerpted from the Couples Groups monthly newsletter: "This past November the group had a special COUPLES Thanksgiving potluck feast! Many couples are *transplants*, meaning they come from somewhere else in the USA or abroad. Some couples also find they don't have the support of their family or relatives. The holidays can be a rough time for some of us who want to celebrate the holidays as a couple. So, at the Couples Group, we created our own family and celebrated the Thanksgiving holiday in a warm, supportive and friendly atmosphere.

This December David and Barry are opening their home for the holiday Snack 'N' Yack. The topic for this evening will be: being a couple and successfully cop-

ing with the stresses of the holiday. This topic always brings up issues about work-related holiday parties, relatives and couples visiting or not visiting for the holidays, interfaith couples dealing with the holidays..."

...

To contact the group write or call: *The Couples Group*, P.O. Box 69554, West Hollywood, CA 90069. Tel #: David and Barry (818) 994-3483 or Barbara and Leslye (213) 654-7572.

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NOTE: COUPLES is looking to put together a list of Couples Groups throughout the country. If you know of any groups in your area please drop us a note. We would be most appreciative. Thank you in advance!

Back issues...

Back issues of COUPLES are available at \$3.00 per issue. Simply circle the appropriate triangle and return with payment and shipping address to TWT Press, P.O. Box 253, Braintree, MA 02184. March, April and May also available. All 10 issues just \$25.00.

- ▼ June 1991: Summer Travel, Family Protection Act, Testicular Cancer, Jewelry, Hot Politics, Closing the Deal, Domestic Abuse.
- ▼ July 1991: Estate Planning, Mediation, Shaping Up, Out of The Dark, Personal Time, Prime Time, Marriage Book, Legal Health.
- ▼ August 1991: Agreements, Living Alone, Couples Rights, Mental Abuse, Time Alone, On With The Show, Noteworthy.
- ▼ September 1991: Other People's Weddings, Fighting, Vacation Hot Spots, Foster Parenting, Plan Ahead.
- ▼ October 1991: What to Call Your 'Lover,' Taxability, Co-housing, 'How Married Are You Quiz, Rabbi Speaks Out, Nothing In Common.
- ▼ November 1991: Holiday Traditions, Child Care & Custody Agreements, Gay Marriage, Holy Union Approved, Next of Kin.

REVIEW 1991 REVIEW

Spousal Benefits

Despite a policy that forbids discrimination based on sexual orientation, The University of Southern Maine dismissed a professor's claim, in arbitration, that health insurance should cover her lesbian partner.

Three employees of Lotus Development Corporation sought health coverage and other benefits from their employer. Lotus responded with a company policy: gay and lesbian spouses will be afforded the same benefits as straight married couples, if they sign a legally binding contract with Lotus. The contract is, in effect, a "marriage license."

Todd Barr-Sawyer, a New Hampshire resident and Boston-based flight attendant for USAIR, has filed a union grievance demanding a free travel pass and insurance benefits for his partner. USAIR says that only legally married spouses are eligible.

Stanford University and the University of Wisconsin passed policies that allow gay and lesbian couples to apply for on-campus housing and to share in other benefits extended to enrolled students.

A lesbian is suing AT&T for pension benefits she says were owed her upon the death of her partner, a former AT&T manager. AT&T argues payment is only available to widows or widowers. This from a company who promoted and supported an internal gay-awareness week!

Gardner's Supply of Burlington, Vermont extends insurance and other spousal benefits to the partners of gay and lesbian employees. The insurance coverage under the company plan requires a partial payment from the employee.

Hope 1992 is as good to us as 1991 was!

[ED]

MAIL BAG



I want to thank you for putting out a newsletter aimed at lesbian and gay couples. There are newsletters and magazines for everyone else in our community except us! My lover and I have been receiving the newsletter since its inception and have since turned two other couples on to you. Your articles are both entertaining and informative and we find ourselves watching the mailbox every month.

Peter and Orien, New York, NY.

I was extremely impressed with the May '91 issue of *Couples* which someone gave to me. I have recently relocated to Florida and wanted to get settled with a permanent address before I subscribed. I'm really looking forward to receiving the newsletter on a regular basis.

Garrett, Boyton Beach, FL

We look forward to reading your newsletter every month. Keep up the great work! How about having more FYI on other groups we can write or call when they are being pressured by fundamentalists. For example AT&T in your Sept. issue. Maybe we can start our own letter writing campaigns?

Ron, San Francisco, CA

Thank you very much for the mention of my tour in your great newsletter... I want to express my compliments, it's a very informative and well put together publication. I found it interesting that I personally knew three of the editorial writers.

Trevor, San Francisco, CA

First off I would like to apologize for not writing sooner. Time does fly and other things seem more pressing at this time. You have sent either two or three issues of the newsletter. My friend Lorie-Anne and I are really enjoying it and we would like to become subscribers. We wish the letter was a bit cheaper, but since you don't take advertising we understand

that all your revenues must come for the subscription orders. My lover and I are in the publishing business and we know how expensive producing, printing and mailing can be. We are on a tight budget, but we think the newsletter is well worth the price.

Sharon and Lori, Princeton, N.J.

My best-friend, lover and partner of four years has left me. I would like to continue to receive *Couples*, however with this change in my life other changes come along as well. First, please remove my partners name from the mailing label and second please update my address.

L., Petersburg, AK

I read a copy of your may 1991 edition entitled a "Foreign Affair: In the last paragraph there's mention of an appeal to immigration for an extension of Luciano's visa—I think the USA is really very much "behind the times" as regards its immigration laws on gay and lesbian relationships involving a foreigner and a US citizen. There are several countries such as Australia and a few others which already have immigration laws that permit foreigners who are in a gay or lesbian relationship to immigrate and live with their lovers. Perhaps it would interest your readers as to why the US, being one of the most progressive in terms of human rights, minority rights, etc can be so far behind the times in this respect?

Calvin Chen, Singapore

I am sending you this notice to tell you how much I enjoy receiving *Couples* each month. Since I put out a newsletter for gay science fiction fans, I now how much effort goes into one. If I have any complaint, it deals with typos—I may be picky, but I find them annoying. Anyway, keep up the good work. By the way, my lover and I share the same first name—and we were wondering if you have any other couples who subscribers that share the same first name?

Tom MacLaney, Royal Oak, MI