



The Networker

The Official Newsletter of the Network for Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Concerns in Occupational Therapy

VOLUME 8/NUMBER 1/MARCH 2001

FROM THE CO-CHAIR

by Margarette Shelton

Well, are you getting ready for Philly? Coming out from under another snowy blanket, I can only say, be ready for anything! Hopefully, we'll have a great spring, and the peonies will be popping out blooms in Longwood Gardens. Center City, which is where Conference will be held, is the home of a large lesbian/gay/bisexual neighborhood. Giovanni's Room, good restaurants, and night clubs are not far away!

Last year at conference, the Network hammered out a bunch of changes in the bylaws — and left a couple of loose ends. This year should not be so business-filled — good news, since we only have an hour to be together. Please mark your conference calendars: the Network will meet **Friday 4/20/01, 7:00 - 8:00 p.m., in CC204B** (per online conference program).

The biggest item of business will be elections: my term as co-chair will end, as will the terms of vice chair (held by Randy Bratsven), and membership chair (held by Gloria Lucker). We hope you'll consider running for these positions. It would be nice to have a slate of volunteers interested in serving on the Steering Committee.

And speaking of volunteers, I wish to thank those of you who made donations in response to our plea in the last newsletter. We have limited our activities this year in an effort to keep costs down, but I think it limits all of our connections with each other as a Network.

I'm looking forward to seeing you in Philadelphia.

Margarette

TREASURER'S REPORT

Opening balance:	\$469.74	July 2000
Expenses	152.41	July 2000 Newsletter
Income	1094.00	Membership donations
BALANCE	\$1411.33	March 2001

MEET & GREET
At the AOTA
Conference
In Philadelphia

NETWORK LGBO
ANNUAL MTG.
Friday 4/20/01
7:00-8:00pm
in CC204B

MULTICULTURAL
EXCHANGE
Friday 4/20/01
8:00-9:00pm

CULTURAL UNITY
RECEPTION (\$20)
Friday 4/20/01
9:00-11:00pm

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**Network for Lesbian,
Gay and Bisexual
Concerns in
Occupational Therapy**

“The Mission of the Network is to create the means for members of the occupational therapy professional community who are committed to advancing understanding of sexual orientation issues to identify, support and mentor one another and to promote research in occupational therapy.”

Co-Chair

Margarette Shelton (01)
Philadelphia, PA 19107

Co-Chair

Gerard Mounic (02)
New York, NY

Vice-Chair

Randy Bratsven (01)
Houston, TX

Membership

Gloria Lucker (01)
Buffalo, NY

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Juliet Cooke (02)
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Michael Nardone (02)
Westerly, RI

Newsletter Editor

Mary Beth Kadlec (02)
Medford, MA

Webmaster

Ken Dechman (02)
Ghent, NY

FROM THE CO-CHAIR

by Gerard Mounic

Happy New Year and best wishes to all for the year to come! 2001 promises to bring about a great deal of change in both our personal and professional lives. To start with, we have a new President leading the nation, and good or bad, it's a call to all of us to remain vigilant as to how this new administration's decisions will challenge our personal freedoms, and professional avenues.

Having just recently completed my fieldwork, I can certainly testify to the fact that many practitioners in our field have a great deal of apathy. Unfortunately, this apathy translates everyday to tales of woe, echoing from state to state with changes that affect our jobs, our careers, and our futures. The solution? To maintain our strength, unify our voices, and continue being pro-active. This pro-action will assure our viability for years to come.

In terms of the Networks' viability, I have begun laying down the groundwork for the start of a new chapter in New York. Hopefully in a few weeks, prior to the upcoming AOTA conference in Philadelphia, we will be having our first meeting, and perhaps adding new members to our growing Network family.

I am looking forward to our upcoming reunion in Philadelphia, where we will have an opportunity to discuss further plans for the growth of the Network. I would like to thank all the members that have sent in their membership "dues," and also for their generosity. Along with discussing membership, and dues, I believe we should entertain the thought of improving communication amongst us, perhaps via a listserv, so that we get a chance to exchange thoughts, and ideas more than once a year! In any case, I hope to see all of you in Philadelphia, till then, best wishes.

FROM THE NEWSLETTER EDITOR

by Mary Beth Kadlec

GENTLE REMINDER: Those members who are current with his/her annual donation (By-Laws, 4/00) will receive The Networker in the mail. We will stop sending The Networker to members who are not current with his/her donation. You will NOT receive another notification prior to termination of membership. See Ken Dechman's article re: options for receiving the newsletter via web site. This is your golden opportunity to support the Network!

You are also invited to sponsor an occupational therapy program by paying the donation for an Institution. Your support enables students to have access to this great organization!

**PLEASE REMEMBER TO SEND IN
YOUR ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL!!!
SEND YOUR ANNUAL DONATION WITH THE ENCLOSED FORM
TO THE ADDRESS AT THE BOTTOM OF THE FORM.**

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for Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual
Concerns in Occupational Therapy
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**Membership is defined as
making a donation in any amount.**

To join, send application on page 8 to
The Network

167 High Street, Westerly, RI 02891

REPORT FROM AOTA'S MULTICULTURAL, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE

BY ROXIE BLACK

As many of you recall, after the dissolution of the Multicultural Affairs Program (MAP) as a result of necessary budget cuts at AOTA, concerned members of the diverse networks presented a resolution to the RA in 1999 to reinstate the MAP. Although that resolution was not voted in, a second resolution that requested the AOTA Executive Board to "charge the President [of AOTA] to appoint an ongoing ad hoc committee [of varied association members] to address multicultural/diversity and inclusion issues" was accepted. The October 1999 executive board meeting voted to accept this and did charge President Jacobs to appoint the members of the committee. The resolution stipulated that two members must be executive board members, and that the committee must include a practitioner, a consumer, a student, and an academic. By the end of 1999, the original ad hoc committee was appointed, with Terry Olivas-De La O as committee chair. Currently, the other committee members include:

Meri Carlstedt — consumer and board representative

Vickie Lee Thomas — practitioner

Bhagwant Sindhu — student

Roxie M. Black — academic

Resource persons to the committee include:

Mary Taugher

Shirley Wells

This committee met electronically and sometimes via conference calls in order to begin to address the charges of:

1. Seek resources for multicultural/diversity and inclusion concerns
2. Coordinate dissemination of information

Although meeting electronically challenged the committee, as did the turnover of its members, the ad hoc committee managed to visit most of the networking groups who met at the 2000 AOTA Conference in Seattle. Efforts were made prior to conference, and have continued to be made since that time, to contact each of the networking groups, in order to determine if there are issues or concerns that this committee could support. We had hoped to be a conduit from the networking groups to the executive board. However, despite repeated attempts from committee members, and the committee chair, communication between the groups and the ad hoc committee has been minimal at best. Perhaps this lack of feedback from the groups is an indication that this form of interaction is not the most effective approach to highlight the needs of the groups and their members.

One accomplishment of the ad hoc committee is the establishment of the Multicultural, Diversity, and Inclusion (MDI) Listserv. This is open to all AOTA members for questions of discussion of diversity issues.

(continued on next page)

**REPORT FROM AOTA'S MULTICULTURAL, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE
(CONTINUED)**

The committee also developed a mission statement in June of 2000. This was sent, with a brief article about the committee to *OT Practice*. Although OT Practice requested this article, for some reason it was never printed.

It became apparent to the committee, that one barrier to the accomplishment of significant projects, was the lack of funding from, and the lack of a clear staff connection to the professional organization. Terry Olivas-de La O worked very hard with the executive board to change this, and a motion was passed by the board on 10/20/00 for the ad hoc committee to come up with an action plan. Working with the reports from the 1995 Multicultural Task Force and the 1999 recommendations from Penny Kyler before she left AOTA, the ad hoc committee met the charge of the executive board and presented a motion via de La O at their January meeting. That motion was accepted, as well as a budget voted on to hire an outside consultant to support the board and the committee in its efforts. At this point the committee is working collaboratively with the executive board to select the consultant. However, communication between the groups is slow and limited.

So the bottom line question remains, "What is going on with diversity at the organizational level?" And the answer remains, "Not enough." I will speak only for myself when I say I am frustrated with the lack of progress. The members of the ad hoc committee are committed to work with association members to address diversity issues, yet it feels like we've been spinning our wheels despite our best efforts. Perhaps the executive board's decision to hire an outside consultant will result in some positive progress.

The ad hoc committee would really appreciate any feedback or suggestions from the readers of this newsletter. You can contact me at rblack@maine.rr.com or Terry Olivas-de La O at tolivasde@worldnet.att.net

FROM THE WEBMASTER
by Ken Dechman

Did you know that the newsletter is now posted on the Network's website? You can view this newsletter (and the last one) by going to networklgbot.freesevers.com and following the link to the newsletter section. Future newsletters will be posted there as well.

You can save the Network on its newsletter photocopying and mailing expenses by signing up to receive an email notice that a new edition of the newsletter has been posted on the site, instead of receiving a hard copy. The email would contain a link to the new edition of the newsletter which you could follow to view it online. Send me a note to kdechman@taconic.net to sign up for the next newsletter.

Those of you with email addresses on file recently received an invitation from e-groups to join the new Network discussion group. Gerard Mounic set this up for us to discuss topics of interest, socialize, flirt, and network with each other. If you haven't already done so, please respond to that invitation. If you deleted it by mistake, or need assistance with this, please contact me.

Please send me any comments and suggestions regarding the website! Looking forward to seeing you in Philadelphia!

PRACTICE

Inclusion Revisited: Why We Should Care about Including Transgendered Persons by Margarett Shelton

At the 2000 Conference, the Network membership decided not to change the Network's name to include "transgender." What seemed like a straightforward recommendation coming from the Steering Committee became one of the most hotly debated topics of the meeting. Part of the argument against this change ran along the lines of: "Well, did any transgendered person (i.e., OT) approach the committee to request inclusion?" No, but it seemed to the Committee that the Network might consider a more inclusive approach. Some of us remember the barriers we've had to cross to be recognized, personally and professionally. One of the members of the Network shared how her practice included work with transgendered persons — so this issue was a concern to her.

Do you remember going to the gallery of AOTA's Representative Assembly — in Seattle, as I recall, the first time the Network met — to hear the debate on inclusion? (And if you don't remember, or were not yet in the profession, ask someone to tell you!) What a sense of triumph I felt when I saw the professional association, our professional association, embrace inclusion — to include me as a lesbian. But we had to pound at the door and go en masse to the Assembly to make our presence known. Does every group have to do this in order to be recognized?

The Association continues to update its position and boldly asserts: "We . . . reaffirm that every individual has a right to access and full participation within society" (AOTA, 1998, Occupational Therapy's Commitment to Nondiscrimination and Inclusion). The position paper further states: "We support nondiscrimination and inclusion throughout our profession. Our concerns are twofold — for the persons who receive occupational therapy services and for our professional colleagues." Do we share these values as a subset of the professional association?

And the saga continues. I went to Texas in early February to defend my dissertation (which was about lesbians and so much fun, but I digress). One of my straight OT friends, my first clinical supervisor, pulled me aside. She said, "You have to help me. I have a client who is in the midst of changing his sex to female. She is a welder in the oil fields and lives in a trailer park in a little east Texas town. She has no resources, her neighbors are starting to attack her, and she's depressed and contemplating suicide. Where can I turn?" My friend was unaware of the large transgendered community that co-exists with the large gay, lesbian, and bisexual community 30 minutes from this client's home. Moreover, she had no resources to turn to in our profession — except someone she knew to be openly lesbian. How I would have loved to recommend the Network as a resource for her!

So what do we want to do? Members at the 2000 Conference meeting suggested opening up a dialogue around including transgendered persons. I agree, but I hope we don't get so lost in process that we forget to act. The precedent for inclusion has been set — we spearheaded it. We know what it is like to be denied access by those who hold power — and we hold power now. Dare we perpetuate a model we sought to change? We can be a source of information or a barrier to it. Which will it be?

RESEARCH

The following three abstracts are from articles that our very own Co-Chair, Margarett Shelton, wrote as a part of her dissertation research. These articles are currently in review at various publications, which is why the references are not cited. We look forward to seeing them in print and they will be cited in future Networkers. The results of the studies provide an opportunity to integrate an increased understanding of lesbians' lives into our practice and curriculums, as well as, offer avenues for future research.

Adaptation and the Altered Self: Lesbians with Chronic Medical Conditions

Abstract

Aims: The aim of this phenomenological study was to understand how lesbians' life histories and sexual orientation affected their adaptation to life-altering medical conditions.

Methods: Seven women participated in a series of in-depth interviews that explored their illness experiences. Transcripts were subjected to thematic analysis, peer debriefings, and member checks.

Findings: Two themes emerged: "Everything has changed," following the onset of participants' conditions. Further, participants' processes of adaptation involved "finding balance." Participants had difficulty articulating the effects of sexual orientation on their experiences, yet this aspect of their identity remained a steady undercurrent in their narratives.

Implications: Onset of medical conditions compelled participants to examine their identities. Identity and adaptation are related through the medium of occupation. The influence of sexual orientation needs to be considered in a broader cultural context.

Holding Their Own: Experiences of Lesbian Caregivers

Abstract

Objectives: This phenomenological study explored the experiences of lesbians who are caring for other lesbians who have life-altering illnesses or disabilities. Of particular interest was how caregivers perceived their adaptation to the care recipient's condition.

Methods: Four lesbians with chronic conditions gave consent for their caregivers to be interviewed. Each caregiver participated in an open-ended interview that took place in her home.

Results: The experiences of each caregiver were unique. Each participant discussed challenges she faced as a caregiver and resources she drew upon to meet these challenges. She also assessed her coping and interpreted the meaning of the caregiving experience.

Conclusion: Allied health professionals can enhance their level of cultural competence by listening to their patients' stories. If they recognize that not every caregiver is a traditional family member and that different caregiving arrangements engender unique sets of challenges, then that may help them to foster trusting relationships.

HelpingHands: Care-team Support as a Lesbian Community's Adaptive Resource

Abstract

Objectives: This descriptive study explored the fit between HelpingHands, a volunteer care-team organization that provides support to lesbians with medical conditions, and its occupations.

Method of study: Members of the board of directors, volunteers, and clients attended one of five focus groups. An interview guide examined need for the organization, the organization's structure, operational processes, and its role in the community.

Results: HelpingHands is an adaptive response that meets real and perceived needs for care and occupies a unique niche within the lesbian community. It provides resources, services and education, which contribute to the community's stability.

Conclusions: Consideration of an aggregate's occupations requires exploration of resources for adaptation that are external to the individual. Determination of the goodness of fit between an organization and its occupations involves assessing the organization's viability and sustainability and the resources it generates within its community, notably, human and social capital and choice sets.

EDUCATION

Innovations in Occupational Therapy Education: 2000

A recent publication by AOTA, *Innovations in Occupational Therapy Education: 2000*, includes a section addressing diversity issues within a curriculum. The article was written by one of our esteemed members, Diana Bailey, who described how the faculty at the Boston School of Occupational Therapy at Tufts University integrated a diversity awareness program into the curriculum. Please review for potential ways to promote awareness within your curriculum.

Bailey, D. M. (2000). Introducing an awareness of cultural diversity into an established curriculum. In P.A. Crist (Ed.), *Innovations in occupational therapy education: 2000* (pp.135-145).

“New Opportunities for Gay Students”

by Mindy Sink

From the New York Times, November 12, 2000

Scholarships are being offered to gay and lesbian students for who they are and their community service. The following is a list of scholarships mentioned in the article which are potential resources for occupational therapy students:

Matthew Shepard Scholarship (Iowa)– available to students from Iowa who have demonstrated leadership in their communities on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender issues. Sponsored by Rich Eychaner, a business man in Iowa.

Mathew Shepard Scholarship (Utah) – available to students who have shown service to the community, not necessarily LGB. Three scholarships were created with private donations from more than 100 people in response to the death of Matthew Shepard.

Gill Foundation Scholarship (Colorado) – available for undergraduate students in Colorado. Requires participating schools to have or create a nondiscrimination policy that includes sexual orientation and to match those funds given to the same student. The foundation was developed by Tim Gill, founder of Quark, Inc., a software company.

National Lesbian Health Conference 2001: Challenges in the New Millenium

June 22-23, 2001 at the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF)

www.glma.org/conferences/nlhc/2001

In 1997, the Institute of Medicine (IOM) Committee on Lesbian Health Research Priorities published a report highlighting the issues around lesbian health. The committee wants to “identify health conditions in which lesbians are at risk, or tend be at greater risk, than heterosexual women, and to gain knowledge to improve the health status and health care of lesbians”. Conference topics to include: substance abuse, mental health, domestic violence, hate crimes, nutrition, HIV/AIDS and STDs, family planning, seniors, disability health care access, and underserved populations, including bisexual and transgender women.

Call for submissions deadline is March 22 (for more information, check web site).

**PLACES TO GO, PEOPLE TO MEET
IN PHILADELPHIA**
From Phyllis Ehrlich

For up-to-date information and events, pick up a PGN (Philadelphia Gay News) Comes out on *Fridays*. We may have a few copies at the Network LGB Annual Mtg.

RESTAURANTS

TAVERN ON CAMAC at 243 S. Camac
(also has a piano bar and drag shows)

VENTURE INN at 255 S. Camac St

THE WESTBURY BAR AND RESTAURANT at 261 S. 13th

LESBIAN BAR (one and only!)

SISTER'S at 1320 Chancellor St-between 13th St and JuniperSt

BOY BARS AND GAY FRIENDLY RESTAURANTS

12th Air Command at 254 S. 12 St

Woody's at 202 S. 13th St

The 2-4 Club at 1224 St. James St

Additional Listings: www.outinphiladelphia.com

1. Senator Claiborne Pell (D-Rhode Island)
2. Roberta Achtenberg
3. 1854
4. Death Trap
5. October 1987
6. On the principle that as more people come out of the closet, it will be harder to deny the rights of lesbians, gay men, and people who are bisexual or transgendered.
7. They were protesting the Court's decision to uphold state sodomy laws
8. The Well of Loneliness
9. Tema
10. Phyllis Lyon and Del Martin

ANSWERS TO QUIZ

THE Q.E.E. QUIZ

1. Which Senator in 1993, supported the political appointment of a lesbian Roberta Achtenberg by announcing to the Senate that his daughter was a lesbian?
2. In 1981, California governor Jerry Brown appointed Mary Morgan to the San Francisco Municipal Court, making her the first openly lesbian judge in the United States. Can you name her well-known partner?
3. Shortly after marrying and having two sons, playwright and poet Oscar Wilde met and fell in love with Oxford University student Robert Ross. In what year was Oscar Wilde born?
4. In what Broadway play and film did actors Michael Caine and Christopher Reeve kiss?
5. When was the Names Project, the memorial quilt panels of 2,000 individuals who had died of AIDS, first displayed in Washington DC?
6. October 11 is National Coming Out Day. On what principle was this day founded in 1988?
7. In 1987, 600 demonstrators were arrested at the U.S. Supreme Court building – the biggest act of civil disobedience since the Vietnam War. What were they protesting?
8. When Radclyffe Hall died in 1943, her now-famous novel was still banned in Britain. What was her book called?
9. In 1990, Yevgenia Debrienskaya and Roman Kalinin launched the newspaper that started the organized lesbian and gay movement in Russia. What was the name of the newspaper?
10. In 1955, the Daughters of Bilitis held its first official meeting, becoming the first national lesbian organization in the United States. Can you name its founders?