

# Toronto Men's Clearinghouse Newsletter

October 1987 — Volume 3 — Issue 2

In this issue we're continuing with controversial content. We have two longer articles whose positions contrast with those in the previous issue. We have the results from the questionnaires returned and other interesting stuff.

The Clearinghouse wants to get more men support groups started, and is working on removing the time delay in

contacting possible new members. If you know of anyone who's interested in being part of a weekly group, get them to call Peter at 532-9400.

We can't recommend enough if you want a great, inexpensive, eye opening, sharing, partying, weekend go to Kingston. Details below.



## MEN'S CONFERENCE

## "Changing Men Together"

Oct. 23-25

Friday October 23rd  
7 pm: "Metamorphosis"... a  
Theatrical Event at Kingston  
City Hall

Saturday October 24th  
morning: Keynote Address: Ray  
Jones "Men's Fear of Change"  
10:45 - 12:30 Workshops  
1:30 - 2:30 The Eclectic Hour  
2:45 - 4:45 Workshops  
8:00 Men only Party

Sunday October 25th  
10:00 - 11:45 Workshops  
12:00 - 1:00 Evaluation

For billeting, childcare, and  
anyone who can give people a

Workshops on:  
Alternatives in relationships,  
Anger without violence, Art as a  
medium for change, Balancing  
friends and lovers, Can gay &  
straight men work together?,  
Capital Punishment—loosening the  
noose, Challenging Power  
Structures, Changing Parenting  
roles, Eroticizing safe sex,  
Feminism and changing men,  
Getting intimate, History of the  
Men's Movement, Homophobia,  
"L'amour, l'amere, l'amort",  
Like father like son?,  
Meditation, Meeting the female  
within us, Men in love, Men  
living alone, Men making peace,  
New male bonding, Playing  
together, Sexuality,  
Spirituality, Surviving on the  
shop floor.  
Some workshops will be conducted  
with both men and women present.

IND				NEWGR
REQ	DGT/NN	DGT/PS	DGT/REP	
LW	C/P	R/i		
MN	MC			

## Book review

In a Man's World, Perry Garfinkel, New American Library, 1985

The advent of the "Men's Movement" or "Men's Liberation" has produced a flood of books, new magazines and articles, and other publications - and now "Men's Studies" programs at major universities. Many of these publications are hard to find, quite expensive, and written at a lofty theoretical or academic level which mystifies the subject and dampens the interest of the average reader.

Not so with In a Man's World which is widely available, inexpensive, and very readable.

Why do men fear and avoid intimacy with each other? Why is the competitive credo accepted as the unspoken, unwritten contract that divides us? What is the so-called "male bond"? Why do we have so much difficulty connecting with each other on a personal level? Garfinkel deals with these and many other male issues in a frank and comprehensive presentation which is well illustrated with anecdotal and personal material.

The focus is on how men relate to each other - as fathers and sons, as brothers, as friends, as lovers, and as acquaintances.

Garfinkel collected much of the material for the book through interviews with a wide cross section of several hundred men using a prepared questionnaire as a springboard for a dialogue on male feelings, attitudes, anecdotes and impressions about their relationships with other men.

The author's major findings were:

- 1) Men's experiences with their fathers, brothers, friends, and other men are eerily similar;
- 2) Men communicate little of that common experience of their innermost lives to each other;

3) The themes of power, competition, and emotional detachment are woven into the fabric of men's relationships.

In a Man's World offers a well developed analysis of the psychological and social forces, and the shared experiences, that have made men silent about what matters most to them - and explains the origin and force of the theme we all know: "To seal the heart is to be a man".

However, the message of the book is that men need not be bound by the early learnings of their life and by the social milieu in which we live. There are ways to start to break the fetters that bind. These opportunities are available to every one of us who is prepared to exercise his courage to reach out and to open up to other men.

- Peter Strathy

## Other Upcoming Events

Toronto Men's Forum monthly potluck and workshop tentative schedule:

Oct. 11 - topic ?

Nov. 8 - How AIDS has affected our lives

Dec. 13 - living alone

Jan. 10 - Feminism

6 pm to 1 pm at 101 Summerhill Ave., 920-2396

TMF's Integral fund-raising dance, open to women and men, on Oct. 30, 8 pm to ? probably at above address.

C. G. Jung Foundation presents a lecture on Friday Nov. 13

"Phallos: Sacred Aspects of Masculine Sexuality" by Eugene Monick at 252 Bloor St. W., \$10, followed by a one-day workshop, "The 'Iron John' Quality of Masculinity" at 288 Bloor St. W. 961-9767.

Open Feminist Discussion Group for both women and men, every Thursday, 7 to 9 pm, at U of T, 49 St. George St..

Continued on page 7

## Sexiness

For a man there seems nothing more natural than to respond to the sexiness of a woman. It seems instinctive. A woman looks sexy; she just does. How can anyone deny this, or how basic it is? But there now seems to be an uncomfortable connection with pornography and rape.

Woman often understand very well what they need to do in order to appear sexy. Certain clothes, certain poses and certain expressions are sexy. Drag artists study this, often to brilliant effect. If it can be put on and taken off in this way, how real can it be?

In adolescence I wanted to fuck. But all the girls I knew always said "No". I was going around with this erection all day sometimes, and knowing what it was for, and not being able to do anything about it. What was so precious about their bodies, I thought, that they wouldn't even try it? They would enjoy it too, I knew, I just knew. How could they be so negative and frustrating? Dressing themselves up to make me come on and then saying "No". Maybe laughing at my frustration. It was enough to make anyone angry. If I could only get my own back on all those girls who said "No" when I was fifteen. If only I could teach them a lesson. Maybe rape would teach them a lesson - make them laugh on the other side of their faces.

It was in a therapy group that I discovered that this was the way my mind had worked. There on the floor I "raped" the youngest and sassiest woman in the group, and when I had done a lot more work on this, I was able to leave my fantasy behind.

And the women who have been used to create pornography feed this fantasy. Pornography feeds the male fantasy that women

really want to say "Yes" all the time, but are held back by inhibitions and fears, which only need a bit of force, or a sum of money, to overcome. The women have taken money to show themselves sexually, to allow themselves to be used in male fantasies of masturbation. Maybe for a little more, they would go all the way. Maybe they should be taken in any case, just to show them what's what.

But the same fantasies extend into real life. The other day I was in a filling station, and a woman came in to buy something in the shop. She got out of her car and flashed her long legs as she did so. She was in a very short pink dress, and looked young, blonde and attractive; she wasn't wearing a bra. As she walked her breasts bounced under the dress. I couldn't take my eyes off her. I waited with interest for her to come out again a few minutes later. It was an exciting bit of my day.

But what I had been seeing was my own fantasy. I knew nothing about this woman in reality. I was projecting upon her a sexiness which may or may not have been there, and in any case was not there for me. It was as if I was not interested in any part of her life except that part which had to do with being sexy. I had turned a real live person into a near-pornographic image in one second flat. It was basically about exploitation, as if I were saying to her: "Let's start off with me exploiting you, and see where we go from there." It was the same as Captain Cook in the South Seas - he might see this island, might even love, cherish, and look after the island, but basically what he was about was about was exploiting the island. Sexiness is about exploitation. It is about women meeting the conditions of men. continued

It is about men winning and women being reduced to something less than a human being.

I remember a time in one group where this man kept on paying the women in the group compliments which they didn't really appreciate, like: "I really like your breasts!" He was being genuine and sincere, what more did they want? So I asked him, if people were paying him a compliment, what would he like them to say? He said, after some thought: "I really like your moustache!" So everyone went in front of him and told him: "I really like your moustache!" They went round and round, saying it over and over again, in an endless chain. He looked pleased at first, but after several minutes had gone by, he said: "Stop! Stop!" I asked him what was the matter. He said: "After a while it was as if I was nothing but a moustache - as if all anyone were interested in was my moustache." He had finally got the point.

Sexiness is a sort of fantasy which men put on women, and then fall for the fantasy they have themselves created. Except that sexiness is only part of a person at best. Perhaps it is easier to cope with part of a person than it is with a whole person. It is certainly easier to hurt and illtreat someone who is less than a full human being. So sexiness is an attempt to reduce a woman to something which can be controlled and used more easily. It is all about power and control, not about sexuality, and not about intimacy with another person, and that is offensive - it makes me angry.

In fact, it may well be that sexiness is actually all about avoiding intimacy. By seeing a woman as sexy we can actually avoid being close to her or open with her - it can be like a sort of code by which we use roles and rules to keep our distance.

It is as if we can relate below the neck and avoid relating above the neck. It is safer that way - we can't get drawn in - we can't swim beyond our depth. But how frustrating this is to anyone who wants to meet a real person.

Being sexy is something that men may often require as a condition of their being interested. But this kind of interest is a basically exploitative interest; the best a woman could get out of it would be some kind of horse-trading exercise - you give me this and I'll give you that. That is not love, or anything like it - more of an insult.

So what do we do about all this? Firstly, we give up pornography. Secondly, we give up sexiness. Thirdly, we give up rape. Pornography and sexiness are in a way all about rape - all about being able to make women do we want, and like it, or pretend to like it. But the price of that is not to be fucking with a real person, a real partner, a real lover - but just to be fucking a cunt. And that turns us into just a prick. We don't like being reduced to a fragment ourselves - how come it's OK to do it to someone else?

- John Rowan, Oct. 5, '86, a member of the Achilles Heel Collective in London, England and author of **THE HORNED GOD** about feminism and men as wounding and healing. Over the past 10 years they have produced 8 issues of an excellent magazine with emotional depth, political awareness and accountability to anti-sexist women and men. Subs are 2.50 pounds per issue, 7 for 3 issues.  
79, Pembroke Road,  
London, E17 England.

Interested in joining a weekly men's support group? There are no fees, therapist/leaders, and meetings are held in member's homes. Phone Peter **532-9400**

## The Angry Men's Movement

Ross Virgin, President of In Search of Justice, excerpts from an interview with Erik Malmsten.

EM note: I didn't like their "Men's Liberation" poster, but was impressed when their Father's Day rally got coverage on the front page of all 3 Toronto dailies, and on national TV. As the Toronto Men's Clearinghouse is interested in hearing the stories of men undergoing change, I listened to Ross, but didn't request any documentation for his figures and slanderous claims.

EM: What is In Search of Justice?

RV: At our meetings for new fellows we refer to it as a men's rights group that deals with what we call the big picture and the little picture. The big picture is looking at the political scene and laws which either created or neglected to provide avenues for solving the problems that bring men here, and the little picture is addressing the specific problem of the individual fellow.

For example the fellow coming in may have been accused of molesting his kids by his wife, or ex-wife as 90% of the false accusations of child abuse result during a divorce. (That's one of the standard weapons to stop a father from getting custody or increasing access.) He has no idea of what the Child Abuse Register is all about. Very often he's looking for a lawyer. We work with lawyers who pretty well do nothing but men's cases. We have books and video tapes on how he can defend against those false allegations. Our child abuse group right now has 40 people and they all have been accused. So, it's not to find out how to tell the other guys how he feels, as much as what did you do to defend your case. We've never referred anyone to a therapist. Most of the guys here say the hell with

therapists. The kind of headlines we get aren't going to attract a guy to this organization who says "I'm the problem". In most cases the guy who walks in that door is so distraught and angry, he can't even think straight. He wants to moan the blues for 6 hours. And I say, great, are you going to come back next week and cry about the same thing? I agree that you are hard done, but now what are you going to do about it? The best way to get them to do something is to get them angry. Anger is one of the best motivators that gets people off their arse. I am not prepared to say you should learn through a therapist to accept that anger.

The judge does not know how to sentence if the facts aren't brought out, and that's what our role is. We get these guys to write down all the facts. I guess our experience has been so extensive that I'm not even worried about screening people coming in the front door. The number of guys who are actually guilty is so minimum it doesn't bother me. Even if we were offended by guys who were guilty, I believe that they're entitled to their day in court.

There is that picture on the far wall of one of our members who is a negro fellow, and his wife took a pot of boiling water off the stove and poured it over him. The pigment of skin on the left side of his abdomen peeled off and he's scarred for life. Nothing happened to her, and yet if he took that same pot of water and poured it on her, he'll be in jail today.

Another case we have is where a man came home and on the kitchen table there was a little pile of ashes. He says, "What's this?" She says, "Those are all your purchase orders from customers who phoned in orders in the last 30 days." That guy actually lost over \$200,000 worth of accounts because this bitch continued

has done that kind of damage.

Probably the worst kind of abuse that men put up with is when he comes home from work and the whole house is empty, or when he goes to see his kids, the kids aren't home, and he has a court order. Women may be guilty by denying the father access to his children, but never are they put behind the bars which house their ex-husbands if these men default in their support payments (which is contempt of the exact same court order). Ontario's Attorney General, Ian Scott, is making a major progressive advancement in drafting legislation to enforce access.

You're always hearing about how men are alcoholics, they beat their wives, are sex perverts, molest their kids, don't make their support payments and all the rest of that standard feminist crap about how rotten men are suppose to be. I would suggest to you that there are not more than 2,000 men in Canada who assault their wives, I'm talking about beating their wives, not "speaking sharply".

There are far more men murdered in Canada than women. To paint a picture of men as the only antagonists in life is a grotesque figment of the imagination. Society conditions us from birth to think that physical forcefulness is masculine. Women, therefore, learn other methods of assertion. And some of them are more damaging, are difficult to detect, and are not covered by the criminal code. The real truth is that men tolerate an enormous amount of abuse with little or no retaliation. It's no wonder that loving, caring and conscientious dads get pushed beyond superhuman limits until they abduct, murder and commit suicide. Men never talk about it, they never complain about it the way the feminist do. There's a long overdue need for men to be vocal, and the guys in our group certainly are.

I've been wondering why it is that there is this constant obsession with what a bunch of bastards men are suppose to be. It's that there's a very powerful segment of the feminist movement which is lesbian, who plainly, simply hate men. There's a book by an older lady, Betty Steele, called The Feminist Takeover and she says the same thing. I'm an enemy of lesbians only if they hate men. We have guys who are homosexual. EM: How did your group start? RV: I guess around the second week in September, 1972, I worked with a guy who went through a divorce. The family had been put together in Toronto, but as soon as the divorce was over his ex-wife moved with the children to Alberta. "Yeah, you can see the children, fly out to Alberta every second weekend." I was angry and started talking with co-workers about divorces they've been through. And it was just one case after another after another after another and that's how this organization happened.

Up until four years ago our membership size was running 10 to 15. But, Christ Almighty, Ever since that Toronto Star article in May 1984, the interest has been just phenomenal. Currently the membership is 2,100, 85% from Ontario. Members pay \$40 and have to be a volunteer in a minimum of 2 departments. Only people who have done something can speak at the monthly meetings. No free rides.

We actually have eight categories of men's rights we deal with, but family break-down is the biggest one. Legal fees average \$20 - 50,000. At the conclusion of a trial neither spouse has anything left for the children. We endorse resolving disputes in a mediator's office as in the U.S., and support joint custody.

Close to 70% of rape cases take place between two people

continued

who've known each other well for 5 years. The only issue at trial is whether or not there was consent. Now it doesn't have to be penetration, there can be sexual play, and that's sexual assault.

Pay equity is sex pay, any pay based on your genital organs is sex pay; is the same as prostitution. Our suggestion is that pornography is women exploiting male's sexual needs. The majority of prostitutes I've spoken with think it's fantastic, they don't want to go back to a secretarial job at \$8 an hour. It is my belief that if there was government run prostitution, it could be feasible that men should not have to pay for sex.

Kevin Scanlon's article in the Star was the one that changed the focus from the small picture to include the big picture. It's been a good thing that we've gotten into political lobbying. That's addressing, stopping the problem, rather than constantly patching up everything. The Ontario government has set aside \$90,000 for a review of the child abuse register.

Our members lobby the press, too, and when the Board of Directors of the Toronto Star get enough complaints over a long period of time, they will do something. I believe that we are responsible for getting rid of Lynda Hurst, who had a column for six years, and we're working on Lois Sweet now, ha. I'm totally convinced of the power of positive thinking. I really believe that we're more mainstream than the feminist groups are. Twenty per cent of our phone calls are from women asking, "Can we help?" Out of every thousand phone calls we average only 3 hostile calls. We don't get any hate literature. Feminism is dying and will be dead in five years.

EM: So, is it possible that men and women can live together peacefully?

RV: Absolutely, most of our

guys are in second marriages. Their biggest problem is that they don't usually get finished with one and they're in with another one, and half the time that one falls apart. So they get two legal actions and they're into a third one!  
EM: Have you been married?  
RV: No, and I'm scared to get married now after all I've seen. In Search of Justice 851-3496 Box 14, Woodbridge Ont. L4L 1A9

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Other upcoming events continued  
AFTERMATH presents a public forum "Child Sexual Abuse: When Families Need Help, What is Available?" Thursday December 3, 8 pm at Ontario Hydro, 2nd floor Auditorium, 700 University Ave. 535 -0537

Fisher Divorce Adjustment and Personal Growth Seminar, 10 sessions started Oct. 1, at 427 Bloor St. W. led by Edward Beauchamp and Alan Philip, \$150.

"Reclaiming the Wildman Within"  
A weekly men's group led by Donald Munro, 54 Augusta Ave., 368-0177

Ongoing Men's group on every third Saturday at the Therapy & Life Management Centre, 341 Eglinton Ave. E., led by John Plunkett 482-7074.

Association of Parent Support Groups of Ontario (APSGO) meets weekly for parents of teenagers, Brian Grebow 466-2054.

Couple Therapy Group Tuesdays at the Gestalt Institute, 37 Cecil St. And a one-day Sensuality and Sexuality workshop, Oct. 20, \$125. 977-0844.

Self-Knowledge and Meditation discussion group Tuesdays at the Rainbow Centre, 559 Bloor St. W.

Barefoot Boogie free form dancing in an alcohol and smoke-free environment every Sunday, 7:30 to 11 at 419 College, \$3.

## Changing as I Go

There was a time when I was as uptight as could be <G - - ->  
I'd pretend I had no feelings wrapped up inside of me <C G A D>  
No love or joy or pain, only anger would I show <G - - ->  
But I began a-changing, and I'm changing as I go <CG/GD/G>

Chorus: As I go (I laugh and cry) <D ->  
As I go (I'm feelin so fine) <G ->  
My life it is achanging as I go (Hallelujah) <- - D ->  
Oh I want to shout and sing <G ->  
For I've finally taken wing <C G>  
And my life it is achanging as I go <- D G ->

My life began to change, and I began to lose my fear  
When I expressed emotions to those I felt were dear  
I began to see in life a sunshine and a glow  
And I began a-changing and I'm changing as I go

### Chorus

My foggy, frozen self, began to warm and clear  
When I discarded dominance and threw away the fear  
of softness and gentleness and letting feelings flow  
And now I'm a-changing as I go

### Chorus

So let me say to you who think you're masculine  
Be wary and be cautious of the traps it puts you in  
Suppression of your feelings, always putting on a show  
When you can be a-changing as you go

Chorus As WE go (We laugh ...)

Written by Peter Heines, Scott Giasrod, and Bruce Kokopeli, Seattle. Taken from the "Winds of the People" songbook which is a collection of political activists songs taken mostly from the "Sing Out! Magazine". It would be great to hear the 1980 Falloways album "Walls to Roses", a collection of anti-sexist men's songs. Geoff Morgan also has 3 folk music albums with mostly changing men songs.

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of interest happening nation-  
ally; seems to be a lot going on  
in the U.S. that we are not  
connected with; articles on how  
to start a men's group, resour-  
ces available; needs cartoons.  
A few men did not enjoy the  
article on the strip show which  
had a "lack of analysis of the  
exploitation of women in these  
places."

Should the newsletter list  
activities that aren't exclus-  
ively for men? Yes, by a margin  
of 2 to 1, but must be focussed,

related to the "men's movement".

Possible goals of the "Men's  
Movement": I've become much  
more pessimistic about the  
future of the men's movement.  
fear and terror can become  
immovable objects; To humanize  
men; to change toward openness,  
gentleness, sharing, and love;  
support and information for men  
interested in developing  
positive relationships with  
other men; breaking the barrier  
between heterosexual and  
homosexual men; getting in touch  
with our socialization in a

continued



## newmanifesto

\*1 To question rigidity in the defining of male and female behaviour and to create awareness of the wide spectrum of roles that can be chosen by men and women today.

\*2 To challenge and re-evaluate patriarchal systems and structures inherent in the family, the state, the army, religion, schools, political parties, unions, etc.

\*3 To work for shorter hours with greater opportunity for flexible schedules, job sharing, job exchange, etc., to allow and encourage both men and women to participate equally at home and at work.

\*4 To provide equality of opportunity for creative responsibility for men and for women within local, regional, national and international administrative structures.

\*5 To fight against all forms of social discrimination and create absolute equality of legal treatment for all people regardless of sex or sexual preference.

\*6 To develop non-competitive modes of human interaction and

explore more open and honest personal relationships, and forms of conflict that encourage trust and co-existence of polarities and diversities.

\*7 To fight against herdism, coercion and war in all the forms they take within our sphere of influence.

\*8 To encourage the shift from a relationship of indiscriminate exploitation of natural resources, towards a relationship of symbiotic nurture of the planet.

\*9 To fight against sexism, pornography and rape in all the forms they take within ourselves and within our sphere of influence.

\*10 To remove fear of the expression of tenderness and affection between men, to develop awareness of the hidden constraints and oppressive phobias and of the ways to overcome them.

\*11 To work towards wholeness.

This interesting document of the NEWMEN group in Brussels was published in M.A.N. (Men's Anti-sexist Newsletter) #22, summer '85. Each issue is produced by a different group of people. M.A.N. 60, Rhymney St., Cathays, Cardiff, England.

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continued from page 8

sexist society to make us more whole and society more just; to support feminists and to educate them on men's right to be an equal parent, to have "women's studies" as a subsection of "gender studies", and to get men to keep the toilet seat down.

It's up to YOU, the reader, to share your stories that everyone wants to hear about. And keep the feedback coming in.

Volunteer workers on this issue of the Toronto Men's Clearinghouse Newsletter:

Erik Malmsten, Greg Barsoski, Benny Anderson, Stephen Boyd, Wally Brant, & Bruce Cardoza.

The

## Toronto Men's Clearinghouse

is a volunteer group of men devoted to sharing and brotherhood. Items in this newsletter don't necessarily represent the views of these men. All men are welcomed to join.

Subscriptions of \$10 for 4 issues, literary contributions (upcoming events, etc.) to:

## T.M.C. Newsletter

c/o Greg Barsoski  
104 Spencer Ave.,  
Toronto, Ont.  
M6K 2J6  
537 - 3528

T.M.C. Newsletter  
c/o Greg Barsoski  
104 Spencer Ave.,  
Toronto, Ont. M6K 2J6

### Questionnaire Results

The response wasn't overwhelming, or sufficient to make statistics. But it was nice to have some caring men taking the time to write.

To "What sparked your interest in the "Men's Movement" some answers were: My confusion vis a vis role models, my guilt/pain in connection with male aggression and violence; I became aware of the difficulties of being open and intimate with other men; more meaningful contact with men; networking; while feminism helped me understand where social expectation of what a Man is came from, it didn't help me to feel good about being a man.

For those who answered "yes" to being in a support group: The support is very important; a sense of not being alone in my journey; getting in touch with myself and being more tolerant of others.

Several men had dropped out of a support group: The group dribbled away, we never decided what we wanted to do; not able to give one night each week; almost all members were too afraid to reveal themselves; sub-group now meeting to design a new structure.

The content of the Toronto Men's Clearinghouse Newsletter enjoyed and wanted to see more of: the controversial sharing articles, would like to see sharing from a greater variety of male experiences (confused fathers, close male friends, athletes); the sharing of men who are 'on the way' or have just experienced their first high through a men's gathering; more men telling their stories, book and magazine reviews; gossip, testimonials, and movie reviews from a 'liberated' male perspective; notices of opportunities to meet others; events