
The Men's Center of Raleigh and Wake County

"A Safe Place for Men"

www.mens-ctr.interpath.com/

September-October 1999

◆ President's Message

When Men Feel Empowered, Men Empower Their Community

It is time to define who or what the Raleigh Men's Center is! In twelve years, many men have participated in Men's Center events, such as support groups, monthly meetings, fall feasts, spring gatherings, workshops, and special week-long events led by men like Robert Bly, Michael Meade, James Hillman and Malidome Some. And many of us have grown substantially from those experiences. But try to tell any man in the Triangle, who has never heard of the Raleigh Men's Center, who or what we are. Chances are you are going to have to stretch to figure out what to say, and the man you are speaking to will have to stretch to figure out what you have said.

Our role as men in society is critical. Men are valuable. When men feel empowered, men empower their community. Unfortunately, many men feel depressed, not empowered, by their situation in life. When men are hurting, their community hurts. The Men's Center helps men reach their potential and, thus, feel empowered.

We live in a violent society. We have experienced violence in our lives. Some of us have perpetuated that violence through our own behavior. Some of us have yielded to our feelings of anger and rage in ways that hurt us, our families and our community. The Men's Center strives to help men reduce the incidence of violence in their lives and in the community.

A major problem of violence facing our society today is abuse of our children. Many men and women I know have experienced sexual, physical and/or emotional abuse in their early years. That kind of experience can be very confusing, shaming and damaging to the child. We men have a responsibility to be part

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of society's ongoing discussion/effort aimed at breaking these cycles of abuse. We must accept responsibility for our own actions in these areas and support each other in working through this pain. Through support groups and workshops, the Men's Center helps men heal these wounds and be part of much needed prevention programs in the community.

Another major problem in our society is separation and divorce. Nothing seems to create a feeling of a man being alone more than going through a separation and divorce. Women seem to know instinctively how to obtain the support they need. Many men do not. In fact, the Men's Center phone log data show that the majority of calls are from men seeking support as a result of separation and divorce. The Men's Center helps men feel connected and valuable at this difficult time in their lives.

Our Men's Center celebrates each man's journey in exploring and understanding his own identity. We try to do that by providing male-to-male support groups and programs that communicate an understanding for the current male dilemma. We also try to do that in an accepting, welcoming and optimistic manner. The result is a feeling of personal worth, a sense of purpose and belonging. This human growth process creates feelings and energies of enthusiasm and empowerment. Men move. Men create. When men feel empowered, men empower their community. This is who we are.

--Frederick Whitmeyer

◆ Feature Interview

Robert Bly Speaks Out

In February 1983, long before Iron John and the zenith of The Men's Movement, Sy Syfransky, editor of The Sun magazine, interviewed Robert Bly when he was in Chapel Hill to give a poetry reading at UNC. Here follow a few excerpts from that interview, "Going Against the Dragon," published in the The Sun, November 1983. The excerpts are reprinted with the kind permission of Mr. Syfransky.

On Grief vs. Good Cheer

When I went to Russia this last year, I experienced each day the perception that the door to feeling is grief. Russia accepts grief and is still grieving over the Second World War. The lack of grief in the whole American Sixties movement may be one reason why it petered out. It's as if grief is an adult emotion, and limitless good cheer and longing for chaos are childish emotions.

On True Masculine Behavior

I have the sense that writers in [the Beat Generation] movement did not answer the question: what is true masculine behavior? Is leaving people and rushing about the country masculine? Is drug-taking masculine? The result of the confusion the movement had about the matter is that many men left over from the 60's are being dominated now by women. How often one meets a spontaneous new age man living with a fierce angry woman, whom he can't stand up to. There's a longing in the culture now for that

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Calendar

September

9/2/99, 7:15-9:15 PM Leadership Council Monthly Meeting. 723 W. Johnson St., Raleigh.

9/7/99, 7:30-9:00 PM Durham-Orange Men's Council. "Men and Spirituality: Our Journeys with the Sacred." During last month's meeting, we agreed to continue with the spiritual journey discussion based on printed questions that Mark Rutledge handed out. Mark has agreed to continue leading us in our discussion. If you still have a copy of the questions, please consider which ones you might be willing to answer by sharing your own story. But if you missed our last meeting, come anyway. You can feel free to jump right in! Pilgrim United Church of Christ, 3011 Academy Road, Durham, NC. For more information, call 933-8353

9/11/99, 9:00 AM till ? Men's Center Yard Sale. *See announcement on page 8.*

9/16/99, 7:30-9:00 PM Raleigh Men's Center Monthly Meeting. "Calming the Stress Beast: How Meditation Can Enhance Physical, Emotional and Spiritual Health for Men." Facilitated by Steven Gage, M. A. Pullen Memorial Baptist Church. *See announcement on page 9.*

October

10/5/99, 7:30-9:00 PM, Durham-Orange Men's Council. Topic to be announced. Pilgrim United Church of Christ, 3011 Academy Road, Durham, NC. For more information, call 933-8353.

10/7/99, 7:15-9:15 PM Leadership Council Meeting. 723 W. Johnson Street, Raleigh.

10/21/99, 7:30-9:00 PM. Raleigh Men's Center Monthly Meeting. "Men and Their Mothers: How to Take Reactivity out of Relationships with Women." Facilitated by Mark Bailes, M. S. W. Pullen Memorial Baptist Church. *See announcement on page 9.*

November

11/2/99, 7:30-9:00 PM Durham-Orange Men's Council. Topic to be announced. Pilgrim United Church of Christ, 3011 Academy Road, Durham, NC. For more information, call 933-8353

11/4/99, 7:15-9:15 PM Leadership Council Monthly Meeting. 723 W. Johnson St., Raleigh.

11/18/99, 7:30-9:00 PM Raleigh Men's Center Monthly Meeting. Topic to be announced. Pullen Memorial Baptist Church.

11/19/99, 8:00-9:30 PM Poetry Reading by Robert Bly, Carolina Theater, Downtown Durham. *See announcement on page 3.*

11/20/99, 9:00 AM-5:00 PM A Day for Men, Led by Robert Bly, American Legion Hut, Chapel Hill. *See announcement on page 3.*

**Deadline for Submissions for the
November-December Issue is October 12**

YOUR LEADERSHIP COUNCIL FOR 1999-2000

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Information	Daniel Lebold (Newsletter)	dalebold@email.unc.edu	929-7199
	John Haverstock (e-mail)	haverstock@schoollink.net	252-537-0320



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imbalance to end. I don't know if it will happen.

On Dragons and the "Deep Wound" of Childhood

I have the sense that Asia went through its dragon-fighting stage hundreds, maybe thousands, of years ago. Krishna... strangled dragons and giants when he was only one or two days old. He didn't have much trouble with them.

But we are still in the dragon-fighting stage; our dragons have not been defeated by any means. ...Beowulf's...last [battle], from which he died, was with a dragon.... Giants really won the Second World War in the sense that the nazis got possessed by giant-energy and a tremendous cultural destruction followed.

I take all this to mean that the giants and

dragons are still very much alive in us. The light tone of the new age often implies that all you need to do is meditate 20 minutes a day and if something negative appears, "bring it up and bathe it in the heart radiance."

It's very dangerous—this heart radiance attitude—because if the dragon material is not dealt with, a man or woman can suffer a breakdown, and the longer the dealing is put off, the deeper the breakdown will be.

To take rage, anger, jealousy, envy seriously, while watching them, is a way of dealing with dragons. Rather than getting a massage in order to remove tensions from your body, you could say, "What is the matter with tensions in the body?" Rather than slandering your parents by taking an Asian name, you refuse to do

that, and ask the Asian to take an American name. See if he'll do it. That will bring up a little dragon energy. Going back to your parents and trying to understand the grief in them, and in your relations to them, is a good way. Dealing with dragons seems to involve moving backward or downward.

[According to Alice Miller, in her book *The Drama of the Gifted Child*], we receive a deep wound from our parents before we can speak and we spend the rest of our lives pretending we had a happy childhood. When people can't remember their childhood or when they say, "Oh, it was very happy! I had wonderful parents," that is, Alice Miller says, the mark of a really deep wound.

That our mothers and fathers gave us a wound does not stem from their being evil—that's not it at all—it stems from

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New Raleigh Men's Center Dues Policy

By unanimous vote of the Leadership Council:

1. Beginning in 1999, annual membership dues for all members will be payable every year by March 1.
2. Current members, who have paid their dues by their anniversary date, will be billed under a rebate schedule.
3. New members who join the Men's Center after March 1 of any year will be billed under a separate rebate schedule.
4. The Finance Manager is responsible for implementing this policy.

The Procedure:

The following procedure was adopted unanimously by the Leadership Council:

1. Annual membership dues of \$30 are payable by March 1 of every year.
2. Current members will be billed according to the following schedule:

If dues were paid during the 1998 period of:
dues for 1999 will be:

Dec 1-Mar 1	Mar 2-May 31	Jun 1-Aug 31	Sep 1-Nov 30
\$30	\$22.50	\$15	\$7.50

Members will be billed Feb 1, 1999.

3. New members joining the Men's Center in 1999 and beyond will be billed as follows:

If they join during the periods of
their dues for the current year will be:

Jan 1-Mar 1	Mar 2-May 31	Jun 1-Aug 31	Sep 1-Nov 30
\$30	\$22.50	\$15	\$7.50

4. Billing statements will be the responsibility of the Finance Manager.
5. The Finance Manager's Monthly Report to the Leadership Council will include the status of dues payment.

Point Your Web Browser **HERE!**

We now have a web presence due to the effort of many men. If you haven't visited our web page please take a peek. If you have any comments, observations or suggestions, send a note to the Web Master, Allen Frazelle.

I want to extend some words of thanks to the men that made this page happen. First, thanks to Hilton Freed for keeping the web-page vision alive. The page became Hilton's personal mission. He did a great deal of legwork to find out the particulars about developing a web page. And he did research to find out what other men's groups were doing with their page.

Thanks also to Victor Taube for advising me of the possibility of getting some free web space from Interpath. If he had not taken the initiative to talk to his friend at Interpath, we would still be trying to figure out how to make this happen.

Thanks also to the folks at Interpath. Because of their generosity we can now let men know there is a safe place for them. --Ron Blankenship



[http://www.mens-ctr.
interpath.com/](http://www.mens-ctr.interpath.com/)



FREE LEGAL INFO FROM WOMEN'S CENTER

The Women's Center of Chapel Hill offers free legal information. Speak with a volunteer attorney by phone for fifteen minutes about divorce, consumer law, tenant's rights, etc. This is information, not advice, consultation or representation, but it may help you clarify your legal issue. Appointment times vary.

Call 968-4610.

The Leadership Council Welcomes Four New Men

Bill Switzer, John Haverstock, Sid Harrell, and Doug Jennette are the new men on the Leadership Council for 1999-2000. Each man was asked to write of his commitment to the Center in the coming year. In this issue, Bill and John speak below.

BILL SWITZER

Although I don't have in front of me the exact words that I said in my statement about running for Leadership Council, I recall that I did not have any ideas of what I wanted to do to "revolutionize" the Men's Center. In fact I am sure that I did not want to revolutionize it, but I did think that I wanted to explore ways we could further reach out to and to serve other men. I hoped that working with other like-minded men on the Council would stimulate ideas. I have not been disappointed.

First was the excitement that I felt working with the web. I have enjoyed, with Alan Frazell's guidance, adding a number of pages both for general use and for use by the Council. (I would still like to get messages from members that start out saying, "Why don't you ...?"—especially if they end, saying, "Maybe I could ..."). I also have agreed to serve as treasurer, a position that I have never before held in any organization. Daniel Lebold and Sid Harrell have agreed to work with me on a finance committee and the outgoing treasurer, John Marmaud, has spent several hours helping me understand the finances.

However, the first real burst of energy came in trying to put together a budget. Daniel, Sid and I stayed up until 2 AM one night during our retreat working on it. Although the Center is not destitute, we certainly do not have the financial resources to support any new ventures. What projects could we start? Only about half of the phone calls that the Center gets result in a message left. Can we have a person answer our phone at least some of the time? Also, what about more solid counseling and guidance for men who do reach us with problems of divorce, child custody, anger management, etc.? And what could we do to fund these projects? And how about...? Get the idea?

JOHN HAVERSTOCK

I am not usually a joiner. I have a hard time with institutions. I have never liked rules much, nor have I always agreed with the collective goals set by the groups I've been in. What the Hell am I doing in this thing? Being a member of the Leadership Council is a pretty heady trip for a sideline player. But I am here for something, I chose to be here, and I agreed to serve. I really want to serve. How can I serve? What do I really want to do? I found something here that I want to make more available for myself, but also for other men. The venue for my story, your response to it, and your story is basis and substance enough. Isolation is something many of us have experienced and have expressed no desire to extend. Large numbers are not necessary to form the venue that I like about the Men's Center. I don't need for the Center to grow in numbers. I do want it to remain prosperous (in a different way than usually thought) and lively. There are many of you that I want to know. If the Center grows, the need for what we do is certainly larger than we are. So what I really want to do is support the venue for telling our story, being ourselves, finding through telling and hearing a new repertoire, and singing it clearly. I will serve by being a contact guy. You join, and I'll make contact and try to facilitate your joining and entry. You e-mail a question or a request (I'm far away—in the sticks), and I will respond. I will be real and resourceful. I will try to know you and let you know me. I have always been better one-on-one. I can tolerate the group and its needs, and I can support the activities necessary to sustain it and even make it grow. But I am more interested in the men this group makes accessible to me and to you. I have volunteered to be the membership manager, and I will serve to assist Doug Jennette and Doug Lester with the support groups, events, and communications. Being ninety miles away from most of you requires that I be creative in the ways I make contact. I want the personal contact most, but the wired kind suffices in its absence. I will be there—present—every chance I get.

The ManKind Project presents

The New Warrior Training Adventure Weekend

Now for the first time ever, the New Warrior Weekend will be held right here in the Carolinas.

November 5-7, 1999

Reidsville, NC

(near Greensboro)

This intense men's training invites you to make the journey from head to heart. The program challenges you to look at all aspects of your life to see which are effective and which are not, and then to create new, more powerful and joyful ways of living.

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A uthenticity • S pirituality

For more information about The New Warrior Training Adventure, call Ron Blankenship at (919) 553-9289, or John Miller at (919) 465-0807 (or e-mail us at Carolina@mkp.org)



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their being narcissistic. For our purposes here, that would mean that they needed us for something, or they needed us to be something, or they needed something from us. They weren't standing on all four legs in the world, they weren't complete in themselves, they were needy. What do they need us for?

The nature we brought with us from the far reaches of the universe and worked on in the womb, using the threads of DNA, and the genetic cross threads, was our nature, and our gift, But our parents didn't want it.

Alice Miller believes that we each live with this tremendous wound, which amounts to a rejection that is, because it is pre-verbal, not accessible to encounter group tellings or to confession. And what can we do then if we can't express it? We can respond to this wound, acting it out and hiding it at the same time, in two possible ways: we can work things out as we reject someone deeply—that would keep us in unconscious touch with it—or we can work things out so that someone else rejects us deeply. Both ways are good. I've done both.

So one can live through post-verbally a rejection that one received pre-verbally. I suppose the important thing would be gaining consciousness of the procedure, so that one wouldn't go on being angry and offering blame for the rest of one's life. As the Buddhists say, when the pre-verbal is entered, blame disappears. But grief comes.

The work of realizing what one has done is an example of what is described in the fairy tales as cutting of the head of the dragon in the solar plexus.

In our culture now, the young man, being parted from positive masculine values by the collapse of mythology, and separated physically from his father by the Industrial Revolution, is often, in this new age, full of feminine values. Many of these values are marvelous, but their presence in his psyche are not well-balanced by positive male values. It is the male, in both the man and in the woman, who fights the dragon—the dragon-fighter is not "a man" but the yang, whether that appears in a woman or a man.

With men I understand the struggle [with the dragon-energy] a little better [than I do with women]. During the struggle I think it's important to stop imagining yourself as spiritual. I think the whole imagery of going down in the lower chakras and fighting the dragons has a certain quality in it that involves forgetting oneself as someone destined for higher consciousness. One doesn't consider oneself as someone spiritual, or someone nice, but one just does what men and women have done for hundreds of thousands of years, which is to deal with that material. It's also good to stop imagining oneself as a part of the new age.

©The Sun Magazine, Issue 96, November 1983

Want to Conduct an Event for Men?

At our Annual Meeting in May, it was suggested that the Men's Center sponsor or endorse one or several enjoyable, active, outdoor events.

Some of those mentioned were:

- >Ropes Course
- >Volleyball
- >Rafting trip
- >Softball

If you are interested in conducting or helping with any such event, we have volunteers, publicity, and other resources available to help make it happen. To coordinate any events with the Men's Center, please contact one of our Events Managers: Doug Lester (djlester@mindspring.com; 676-9546); Doug Jennette (adouglas@ipass.net; 832-6071); or John Haverstock (haverstock@schoollink.net; 1-252-537-0320).

New Group Forming

Men who have been abused by their wives, girlfriends, or significant others often live in shame and feel alone. The burden they carry is a heavy one that can lead to depression and isolation. To provide a safe environment of support and caring, a new group is forming for men who have been, or currently are being, abused by their primary partners. If you are interested, call Les at 639-6899.

Bridge Group Forming

Two Men's Center members are seeking fellow bridge players. If interested, please call Peter Frechtel at 834-9084 or Rowland Shelley at 859-0990, after 6 PM.

Men's Center Yard Sale: Losing the Past-Dues Blues

The plans for our **Men's Center Yard Sale** have been finalized. The sale will take place on **Saturday, September 11, beginning at 9:00 AM**. Men wishing to donate items for the sale should bring them to the sale site the night before (Friday, September 10). The sale will take place at **8300 ½ Falls of the Neuse Road, next to Manchester's Restaurant** in Raleigh. Please contact me, **Tom Weber, at (919) 380-7993**, for directions. The proceeds will go into a fund that will be used to aid individuals in support groups who have hardships that affect their ability to pay quarterly dues.

September Monthly Meeting

Calming the Stress Beast: How Meditation Can Enhance Physical, Emotional and Spiritual Health for Men

Steven Gage, M. A. will lead a combination discussion/experiential program on the impact of stress in men's lives. Men are prone to stress-related cardiovascular and digestive illnesses, as well as interpersonal conflicts complicated by stress. We will learn/practice a meditation exercise designed to lower body tension and improve mental and emotional attention and resilience. The exercise can serve as a basis for continued learning/practice if desired. Steve is a Raleigh psychotherapist with a long history of using meditation in his personal and professional life. He frequently offers workshops on meditation and other health related topics. We are fortunate to have him as a resource for the Men's Center.

*Note: Interest has been expressed in forming a Men's Center-sponsored meditation support group. Men who are interested or want more information are invited to attend Steve's program to help determine support for the new group.

Possible Fund Raising Project

To give the Center a income of \$300 to \$400 per night by doing an activity that might itself be fun, we are exploring the possibility of working a concession stand at either the Durham Bulls Ball Park or the Walnut Creek Amphitheater next spring and summer. I myself had an opportunity to do this a couple of weeks ago at a Bulls game. After a few butterflies at the beginning of the evening, I had a great time of fellowship both with the crowd and with the group of men who invited me to work their booth. Getting assigned one of these booths is competitive and by no means guaranteed for even a few nights. However, in preparation for the possibility, we are asking for volunteers who are willing to be put on a list to be asked to work if we get a booth. Please contact Bill Switzer at bill_switzer@ncsu.edu
217-9095 (H), 515-2945 (W), 831-0509 (Center's voice mail) or visit our web page: <http://www.mens-ctr.interpath.com> for a link to a mail-back form to volunteer to be on-call to volunteer. Our activity will require about six volunteers a night.

October Monthly Meeting

Men and Their Mothers: How to Take Reactivity Out of Relationships with Women

Mark Bailes, M. S. W. will help us address issues of emotional closeness with women. Using conversation and experience we will explore how the relationship with the first woman in our lives colors all other relationships. We will learn how to have more adult, here-and-now, intentional connections with female partners, friends, and family, thereby enhancing the quality of our emotional lives as men. Mark is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker with a private practice in Raleigh. A member of The Men's Center since 1989, Mark has been part of a men's group for nine years and values his ongoing personal and professional work with men.

Meet for Dinner Before September and October Meetings

On Thursday, September 16, and Thursday, October 21, at 6:00 PM, those men who wish to can meet at Joe's Place, 301 West Martin Street in Raleigh. Phone 832-5266. We will gather at this popular and inexpensive Raleigh diner, featuring "Joe's Mom's Food" in order to socialize with one another. If their schedules permit, our program leaders will join us.

Ongoing Discussion Group for Men

We would like to invite you to an inquiry into what it means to be an adult man and other questions that relate to our lives.

2nd Thurs. of Every Month, 7:30-9:30 PM
6200 Coldwater Court, Raleigh, NC
Call Martin Brossman (919)-608-8157

Bring a favorite beverage or snack.

"Our Commitment is to support the Men's Center of Raleigh and Wake County as well as to support the creation and maintenance of relationships with ourselves and others"

Financial Assistance

Members may apply for up to 50% financial assistance for fees to any Men's Center event. Applications are treated confidentially. For information, call Doug Jennette at 832-6071.

Subscription and Membership Services

Full membership -- \$30/year which gives discounts to Men's Center Events and subscription to the monthly Newsletter. Subscription to the newsletter alone -- \$15/year. Tax deductible donations are always greatly appreciated. The Men's Center is a tax exempt organization. Send your name, address, home and work phone numbers to Ray Schuh, 4705 Baybridge Crossing, Apt. 1319, Raleigh, NC 27604.

Newsletter Contributions

Send all contributions to Daniel Lebold via e-mail at dalebold@email.unc.edu Send hard-copy contributions to Lee Elliott, 1019 Iredell St., Durham, NC 27705. Calendar items will be included as appropriate and as space permits. **Deadline for November-December issue: October 12**

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Support Groups

All men are welcome to the Men's Center. The only requisite for joining a support group is a genuine desire to join with other men in supporting each other's journey. At this time, there are groups meeting one evening a week, Monday through Thursday. Most groups meet at the Men's Center on the second floor at 723 West Johnson St. in Raleigh. There is a small charge to help pay the rent for the facilities. To join, or for more information on support groups, call Patrick Knox--phone # 870-0765.

The Men's Center's e-mail address:

rmncenter@juno.com

Phone Number: 832-0509

The newsletter welcomes all your comments, suggestions, and letters to the editor.

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(919) 832-0509

Forwarding Service Requested

The vision of the Raleigh Men's Center is a world in which people recognize one another as who they are rather than what they do, and celebrate the spiritual connectedness of all life.

Its mission is to provide a safe place in which men support men in becoming themselves. We are committed to strengthening men's roles as friend, son, father, husband/partner and citizen. The Men's Center is committed to strengthening the individual, the family and the community.

This newsletter is a publication of the Men's Center of Raleigh and Wake County and does not necessarily express the views of the center.