

The Coordinator's Corner

by Charles Fisher

Massachusetts

In early April our President, Frederick Whitmeyer, and I traveled to Amherst, Massachusetts for a training seminar with the people at the Men's Resource Center of Western Massachusetts. Steven Botkin and all of the staff and board were wonderful people to meet. They were very open about failures and successes, but the real highlight was Botkin's presentation of the philosophical underpinnings of the MRC's programs on violence. It is interesting that this group is the only men's group of its kind in all

of Massachusetts. One of the reasons we undertook this trip was to get an idea of how RMC might begin the transition into greater involvement in community issues and community partnerships. In that context, the trip was a great success. Not only did we satisfy that desire, but we received heavy doses of encouragement and assurance of a lasting relationship between our two groups. Personally, I greatly appreciate Frederick's vision and energy in arranging for us to meet with our Massachusetts brothers. We have a Remembrance Stone from them as a reminder of our mutual love

(Continued on page 2)

RMC August Monthly Meeting

Beginning in August, the Raleigh Men's Center will revive its monthly meetings with programs on various topics of importance to men. The meetings will take place the SECOND Thursday of each month, at Glen Eden Pilot Park on Glen Eden Drive, 7:30-9:00 PM. During our first meeting, to be held Thursday evening, August 9, Paul Tierney will lead us in an exploration of our dream worlds. Whether you have been interested in dreams for years or you never remember your dreams, join us to explore the creativity, humor and wisdom the dream-maker sends us every night. We will focus on actual

(Continued on page 3)

July 2001

s	m	t	w	t	f	s
1	2 Durham/Orange Monthly meeting 7:30pm	3	4	5	6	7 Survivors Support Group 9:30am
8	9	10	11	12	13	14 Leadership Council
15 RMC Poetry Group 7:00pm	16	17 Triad Monthly Meeting 7:30pm	18	19	20	21 Survivors Support Group 9:30am
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

August 2001

(Details: pages 2-3)

s	m	t	w	t	f	s
			1	2	3	4 Survivors Support Group 9:30am
5	6	7 GBO Support Group 7:30pm Durham/Orange Monthly meeting 7:30pm	8 Newsletter Submissions Due	9 RMC Monthly meeting 7:30pm	10	11
12	13	14 GBO Support Group 7:30pm	15	16	17	18 Survivors Support Group 9:30am
19 RMC Poetry Group 7:00pm	20	21 Triad Monthly Meeting GBO Support Group 7:30pm	22	23	24	25
26	27	28 GBO Support Group 7:30pm	29	30	31	

("Corner" continued from page 1)
and commitment.

New Mexico

I spent the end of April in Taos, New Mexico. This was a trip planned well in advance for the purpose of meeting Robert Mirabal. (For those who have seen *Spirit Dance*, Robert is the flautist. He is also the writer and star of the recent PBS production, *Music From a Painted Cave*.) Robert was done with his national PBS tour and had made me a flute, which I went to his place to collect. While in Massachusetts, I learned that one of Botkin's protégés was the Director of the Men's Resource Center of Northern New Mexico. So, I combined some business with my pleasure and spent some time meeting with Paul Zelizer and some members of his board. Once again the focus was mainly on the issue of violence. In fact, this MRC was actually envisioned out of Paul's experience managing a local shelter for battered women. Paul drew heavily on his Massachusetts background, but had to adjust for the rural nature of his location and the cultural diversity in which the violence is taking place. AND . . . just as in Massachusetts, the Northern New Mexico group is the only one of its kind in the state and possibly in all of the Southwest. I'll be sharing more about these folks in future issues. We also have a Remembrance Stone from New Mexico as a reminder of our mutual love and commitment.

Fatherhood Task Force

A number of men from RMC participated in the Wide-A-Wake Community Forum in March. At the forum it was announced that the Raleigh Men's Center, in part-

nership with the Healthy Mothers/Healthy Babies Coalition would work to develop a Wake County Fatherhood Task Force. This is our first formal community partnership, evidenced by an agreement approved by the Leadership Council and signed by President Whitmeyer. The Task Force is charged with the task of identifying the issues and develop strategies to address them; to examine support systems available for men and fathers in our community; and to develop resources to support new fatherhood projects in Wake County. The results of the work of the Wake County Fatherhood Task Force will be reported to leadership entities in Wake County. During the coming year the newsletter will include regular updates of the activities of the Task Force and what they mean to the work of RMC.

Support Groups

RMC has the most successful support group program I know of in the country. Because of the history of that program, it is different from either of the MRC groups we have visited. New ideas we have gained will be implemented at the right time and in addition to what we are already doing. At the present time, meeting space is being sought for a weekly and a monthly meeting in Raleigh. This is in addition to meetings we already have at RMC Headquarters. Meeting space is also being sought for at least one weekly meeting in Durham. I am hopeful that these needs will be met during July and August. Anyone interested in being in a support group is invited to call 832-0509.

New Poetry Group Forming

Poetry and the Raleigh Men's Center have never been far apart. On Sunday, May 20, seven poets gathered at the Men's Center offices to read aloud and listen to each other's poems. The Poetry Group's next meeting will take place Sunday, July 15, 7:00-8:30 PM, at the Men's Center offices on Johnson Street in Raleigh. Thereafter, the group will meet the third Sunday of each month, at the same time, in the same place. Each poet who wishes to read his poems should bring 8-10 copies of his poem(s) so they can be shared with the rest of the group. Poets have the option to ask for comments from the rest of the group--and comments will always be positive and supportive. New writers are encouraged to participate. For further information and directions to the Johnson Street offices, call Hilton Freed (919-362-6204) or Bennett Myers (919-419-8886).

Survivors' Support Group

The Survivors' Support Group meets on first and third Saturday mornings, 9:30 to 11:30, in the Raleigh Men's Center offices, 723 W. Johnson Street. This is an open, drop-in group for men who experienced physical, sexual, or emotional abuse as children or adolescents, as well as for men who may be experiencing such abuse now. Dues for this group are \$5 per meeting or \$30 per quarter. For further information, contact Charles Fisher at 832-0509 or e-mail him at raleighmencenter@hotmail.com

August Program for Durham-Orange Men's Council

On Tuesday, August 7, 7:30-9:00 PM, Terry McCarthy will lead us in a program entitled "Body Wisdom: Introduction to Interplay." Terry writes: "Life too serious? Need some play time? If you can talk, walk, stop, make a shape, breathe and sigh, you're ready for InterPlay. InterPlay is dedicated to fun, ease, affirmation and body wisdom. It's a powerful, playful practice any body can do." All men 18 and over are welcome. Pilgrim United Church of Christ, 3011 Academy Rd., Durham. For directions and further information, contact Ken Wahl at 933-8353 or at wahlesq@earthlink.net.

Suicide Prevention: Some Reflections

by Vaughn Clauson

Friday, May 25, 1999, marked the second anniversary of Marcus Copelan's suicide. Marcus was president of the Men's Center's Leadership Council 1996-1997 and was also very active in the Center--as the coordinator of the RMC monthly programs, as facilitator of many dance and movement workshops for the annual Spring Gathering, and, above all, as a gifted writer for the newsletter. There is disagreement among Men's Center members about how preventable this tragedy was, but I hope that there will be little or no disagreement that suicides, if possible, should be prevented. The U. S. Surgeon General agrees with this idea and has launched a campaign to prevent suicide.

Suicide is now the 8th leading cause of death among Americans. Men are four times more likely to die of suicide than women. For specific suicide statistics and for information about the Surgeon General's campaign to prevent it, visit the Surgeon General's website:

<http://www.mentalhealth.org/suicideprevention/index.htm>

At RMC There's Something New: A Support Group Known as GBQ!

Beginning on Tuesday, August 7, the Raleigh Men's Center will sponsor a weekly support group for gay, bisexual, and questioning men. In response to numerous requests from a broad variety of men, RMC is pleased to be able to sponsor this important new group. A nominal charge of \$5.00 per meeting will help defray the cost of renting the meeting space. The group will not meet at RMC offices so that confidentiality might better be protected. GBQ is not intended to be a substitute for therapy for those who require therapy related to their sexuality. This group will provide a place where men can come together and share their stories, supporting one another in identifying and coping with issues related to their sexuality, families, careers, and spirits. The search for a facilitator for GBQ continues as we go to press. If this sounds like the right group for you, come join with other men who feel the same way. If you have any questions about GBQ, call Charles Fisher at 832-0509.

Who?

Gay, Bisexual and Questioning Men

What?

Support Group

Where?

Jaycee Comm Center on Wade Ave.

When?

Tuesdays 7:30-9:30pm
beginning August 7th

("Monthly Meeting" continued from page 1)
dreams that men offer for exploration at the meeting. Paul Tierney has had a keen interest in dreams and dream interpretation for over ten years. He and his wife record and interpret their dreams several times a week and find that dream-interpretation enriches their relationship and their individual lives. Paul worked for years as a mechanical engineer and an engineering manager until he had a dream that changed his life: last month he received his M.Ed. in Counseling from NCSU. All men 18 and over are welcome. We request a small optional donation (\$2) to cover room rent.

TIME: 7:30-9:00 PM,
Thursday, August 9.

PLACE: Glen Eden Pilot Park, Glen Eden Drive, Raleigh, NC

DIRECTIONS: From Durham, Chapel Hill, and points west: From I-40 East, take

exit for Wade Avenue Extension. After following Wade Ave. Ext. for several miles, turn left at the SEC-OND stoplight and you'll be on Ridge Road. (Ridgewood Shopping Center is on the corner of Ridge Road and Wade Avenue.) Follow Ridge Road for a few blocks. When you pass Daniels Middle School, turn left onto Glen Eden Drive. Immediately after Glen Eden crosses the Beltline (I-440), take a sharp right into the parking lot for Glen Eden Pilot Park. (Be sure to watch for the right turn into the Park--it's easy to miss it.) If you need further information about the program and/or the location of and directions to the meeting space, call Charles Fisher at 832-0509 or Lee Elliott at 286-2357. Or e-mail: Charles Fisher: raleighmenscenter@hotmail.com Lee Elliott: leetituseliott@earthlink.net

One Man's Reflections on the Sixth Annual Spring Gathering

By Gregory Blaine

Once again, in April 2001, the Annual Spring Gathering was a great treat for me.

After the 2000 Conference, I wondered how the next gathering would feel from the vantage point of someone planning the retreat. So I decided to ask the members of my support group to plan the 2001 April Conference. They were hesitant, at first, giving me that "Yeah, right, Gregory" expression on their faces. But, after the initial shock of knowing WE would plan the event and would be largely responsible for its success, we got down to business--performing the various tasks that took months to complete.

We arranged the schedule of events for the three days of that April weekend. We also called for volunteers to facilitate workshops, to lead the opening and closing ceremonies, and to do the various logistical chores that any retreat of this size would require.

I'd like to throw out some names at this point--names of men who, in addition to members of my support group, made special contributions to the Gathering's success. There were Jim, Peter, Levi (with his powerful drumming and storytelling), Bennett, Steven, Don, Bert, Sheldon, Kevin, Cory, the poet Mark Smith-Soto, Mark Smith, Bill Finger, Doug Jennette, Doug ("The Godfather") Lester, Frederick, Larry--just to name a few. Through e-mails exchanged, many long telephone conversations, many planning meetings in the Men's Center offices--yes, the whole nine yards--we all created a beautiful weekend.

Special thanks to you, Hilton, for

giving your time so unselfishly to make this Conference not only a reality but a memory that the men in attendance would forever hold and relish. (Hilton, by the way, gave me the gift of a book of poems that I will forever cherish.)

In our plans for the event, I and my support group dreamed of holding a pow-wow drum circle, and Bert made that dream a reality. Thank you, man!

Every man attending the Gathering touched me deeply. During those three days, I saw men canoeing, hugging, crying, laughing, and I thought to myself, "What a great community we've created, guys!"

I spoke with Wilson McCreary during the planning meetings and really missed his presence at Camp Chestnut Ridge. I missed Paul Tierney's presence as well--his gentle guiding hand.

I've come to a soul-place where the Spring Conference has bloomed into an eagerly-awaited ritual of spring--such a natural measuring stick that it's annual occurrence is like my expecting the sun to rise and set, like my eager waiting for the inevitable changing of the seasons. I--and many other Men's Center men who share my soul-place--have grown to expect, with eagerness and delight, this warm green weekend in April.

Knowing the Conference will continue for many more Aprils, let us all in the Men's Center think of ways we can make the Gathering in April 2002 even more memorable.

When Gregory Played His Flute

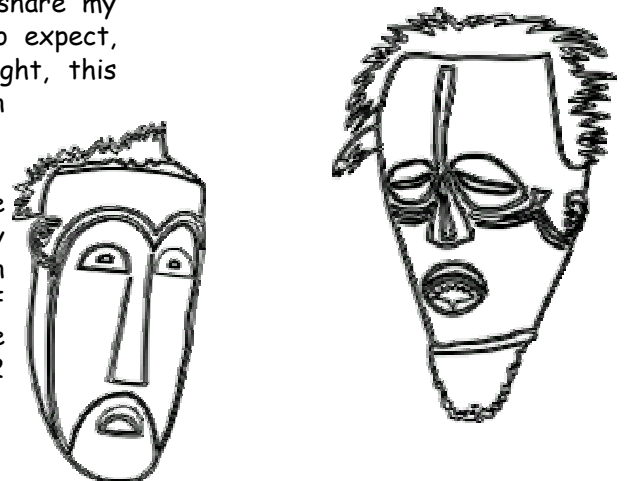
by Grady Bennett Myers, Jr.

Bennett writes: "This poem was written during the 2000 Spring Gathering at Camp Chestnut Ridge and was read aloud for the first time during the 2001 event."

When Gregory Played His Flute
Plastic seated them
But the serenade of the woodwind
Lulled them to the waters
Where they can't drink
Without muddy knees.
That's the way men go to pain:
Down.

Much has come from simple mud.
Jesus in dust spat
And a man could see
Good dirt and water. Seeds.
Earth is our much-favored planet.
There is no end.

Light follows light.
Roots go down and
Sprouts always go up
When the breath of the flute
Awakens spring on the earth
One more time.



RMC

President's Message

When you are inspired by some great purpose, some extraordinary project, all your thoughts break their bonds;

Your mind transcends limitations, your consciousness expands in every direction, and you find yourself in a new, great and wonderful world.

Dormant forces, faculties and talents become alive, and you discover yourself to be a greater person by far than you ever dreamed yourself to be.

--Patanjali



The quotation above can be found in the book *Wisdom of the Ages*, by Wayne Dyer. These words were written in India one hundred to three hundred years before Christ. I find them fascinating because they are so true for me today. I have been doing my personal growth work for over fifteen years, with twelve of those years doing men's work. I am finding myself in a new, great and wonderful world for the last seven months. Now, I am doing what I love and loving what I am doing. It has been a long journey just to find this road.

Several things inspire me these days. By the way, it's worthwhile to note that the word "inspire" means "in spirit." I feel that these days. Three things inspire me and keep me very busy. They are (1) men's work, (2) coaching, and (3) healing.

My men's work consists of, first of all, the Raleigh Men's Center, its Leadership Council, and the challenges of being an agent of change. I am challenged by the new directions of community service that the Men's Center is moving into. Also, I am blessed by what I have learned about myself by being part of the Mankind Project. I have learned something about being responsible, accountable, and being in integrity with other men.

Unfortunately, I have given up some things

in the process. I have given up short term depression that I frequently used to avoid getting things done. I have given up expecting others to "take care of me." I have given up being an accommodator. The shadow parts of me really miss these things. But the good part is that I have become as good a friend to myself as I desire to be to others.

Patanjali said, "Dormant forces, faculties and talents become alive." Many things that I thought were outside my power to manifest themselves have awakened in me. I am experiencing the power of co-creating with Spirit. I have also given up believing that I am in control. Doing my own work has led me to have the courage (which I never had before) to embark on two new and exciting adventures. The first is personal coaching.

I am in a year-long program to become certified as a personal coach--a spirit coach. I have found that my previous careers of teaching, business, and just being a "friend" have prepared me for this adventure. My coaching class is as important to me as my support groups are. I find it easier to set boundaries for taking care of myself when inspired by this important purpose.

I am also in a 2 1/2 year program to become a certified Cranial Sacral therapist. This is a healing art that involves energy healing. Over the last ten years, I have been trained in Reiki, healing touch, and reflexology. This new healing skill has added purpose and excitement to my life.

All these events have happened because of my opportunity to do personal growth work and healing with men. I believe in the Men's Center because it has changed my life. We change ourselves and the world when we are committed to some purpose bigger than ourselves. I invite you to step up and support the Men's Center and its outreach to the men, women, and children of our Carolina community. I invite you to discover yourself to be a greater person by far than you have ever dreamed yourself to be.

Frederick Whitmeyer

RMC/NCSU Research Project

By Charles Fisher

RMC is once again working with a group of communications students on research of particular interest to us and our planning for the future. The current project is focused on the fatherhood issues and our partnership in the Wake County Fatherhood Task Force. With the help of Bill Finger, we have defined the project as narrowly focused on what research has been done on the "deficiencies" in men that affect their fathering:

- emotional wounds from their own fathers (abuse and father-loss)
- men in prison - how guilt about not being good fathers affected their behavior; changes for those who get out
- shame in fathers who feel their manhood is determined by providing

The project should be completed in two months. Future reports in RMC News will let our readers know what the results were and how we expect to use them.

Ripplets lapping....

by Rodney Bryant

Ripplets lapping on soggy brown wood
The bobbing of soggy blackened sticks
Molded grasses, crumpled wet leaves ebbing
At the boundaries of clay and mud banks,
Embedded with gray-veined rocks which
Received the cold bath,
While chiding, shush, shush, shush
To the old, cracked red-and-white fishing
float nearby.
The southern wind caresses our pond today,
I am happy.

To the 2000-2001 Men's Center Concessionaires: A Year's Thank You

By Bill Switzer

For the second fiscal year, the Raleigh Men's Center has worked concessions as a fund-raising project. The books are not closed yet on the year, but this activity should net the Center almost \$5000 since July 1, 2000. We have worked 27 of the 29 events that will be scheduled by the end of June 2001. I would particularly like to thank Barry Weston and Doug Lester, who along with me, have either led or co-lead each of the events. With two events yet to go, a total of 23 Men's Center members have worked this season along with 6 non-members. Members who have worked include: Gregory Blaine, David Fleshood, Sid Harrell, John Harvey, Kevin Hedeem, Richard Kevin, Art Kirwin, Jim Knopp, Lauro Lazo, Daniel Lebold, Doug Lester, Bennett Meyers, Sam Mozley, Dan Ryan, Ray Schuh, Bert Singer, Mark Smith, Tim Smith, Hugh Stohler, Doug Svehaug, Bill Switzer, Jim Ward, Barry Weston. The non-members were personal friends or family of David Fleshood, Sid Harrell, Barry Weston, and me.

Concessions and private donations account for most of the funds available to try new activities. I wanted to take this opportunity to thank the many volunteers and look forward to working with many of you again next season.

Healthy Mothers/Healthy Babies Information Sharing Network

Greetings! Healthy Mothers/Healthy Babies would like to share information about MediaWise: the Coalition for Responsible Media. The Coalition meets the third Friday of each month at 12:30 PM at the YWCA on Oberlin Road for the purpose of "Creating Positive Alternatives When Media Promotes Violence."

Upcoming Projects for the MediaWise Coalition:

Developing a Resource Guide for Parents on Positive Alternatives to Media Violence

Partnering with local libraries to promote Feature Films for Families

Sponsoring a "Train the Trainer Day" to educate community leaders on how to speak on issues of media and violence

And much, much more with your participation!

For further information, contact Carol Anne Lawler, Faith Coordinator of WCHS at 212-9394.

Note: The Healthy Mothers/Healthy Babies Coalition (HMHB) is the Raleigh Men's Center's partner-agency in the formation of the Wake County Fatherhood Task Force. This partnership is part of the Men's Center's ongoing commitment to the commu-

Wake County Fatherhood Task Force Holds First Meeting!

by Charles Fisher

The new Wake County Fatherhood Task Force held its first meeting Thursday, May 31, 2001. The Task Force has grown out of a partnership between the Raleigh Men's Center, the Healthy Mothers/Healthy Babies Coalition, and Wake County Human Services. To bring this group together, RMC Director Charles Fisher has been working with Laura Oberkircher, Executive Director of HM/HB and Melissa Martin, HM/HB staff person.

Mitch Braswell, Director of the Governors Commission on Responsible Fatherhood, participated in the meeting and used statistical information to demonstrate the need for this Task Force. At the same time, Braswell was very clear about the difficulties arising in a state government in the midst of major cutbacks. The fatherhood commission was the brainchild of Jim Hunt. It came about in his last

year in office, and it is the usual practice for a new governor to want to emphasize his own initiatives rather than those of his predecessor. Braswell went on to suggest that those interested CONTACT THEIR RESPECTIVE STATE REPRESENTATIVES TO MAKE KNOWN THEIR CONCERN ABOUT FATHERHOOD ISSUES AND THE FATHERHOOD INITIATIVE.

Sheila Bazemore was acknowledged at the meeting as the "Mother of the Fatherhood Movement in North Carolina." She has been responsible for the state's Fatherhood Conference, which convened June 14-15, 2001. Ms. Bazemore is a Parent Education Program Consultant and the Fatherhood Development Coordinator for the Division of Public Health. Her vision of the fatherhood project is enlightening and inspiring.

Bill Finger, long-time member of the Raleigh Men's Center, was in

attendance and made significant contributions to the flow of ideas and energy. Fatherhood is an issue dear to Bill's heart, so he was able to bring his passion along with his wealth of knowledge. Along with Charles Fisher and others from the Task Force, Bill attended the Fatherhood Conference in mid-June.

A long list of general objectives was developed in the course of a brainstorming segment of the Conference. The next meeting is scheduled for July 19, 2001, where those general ideas will begin to evolve into more specific tasks. This partnership between the RMC and the HM/HB marks the RMC's first entry into this arena in about ten years. Frederick Whitmeyer, President of the RMC Leadership Council, was unable to attend the June meeting, but has expressed his support of and excitement at this development in the emerging vision of the Men's Center as an important partner in community affairs.

detach here

RALEIGH MEN'S CENTER MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

Yes, I want to support the Raleigh Men's Center Please send me information about support groups

Name/Organization _____ Phone(h) _____ (w) _____

Address _____ City _____ State ____ Zip _____

Email _____

Please make checks payable to
The Raleigh Men's Center
Mail this form with your check to:
Ray Schuh, 4705 Baybridge crossing, Apt 1319
Raleigh, NC 27604

Total enclosed: \$ _____ Thank you

Subscription and Membership Services

Membership—\$30/year—which includes subscription to the newsletter RMC News.

Support Groups

All men are welcome at the Raleigh 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 per week, Monday through Thursday. Most groups meet at the Raleigh Men's Center on the second floor at 723 West Johnson Street in Raleigh. There is a small charge to help pay the cost of the rent for the Men's Center facilities. To join or for more information about general support groups, contact Charles Fisher at (919) 832-0509.

Newsletter Contributions

Send all contributions to Charles Fisher via e-mail at raleightmenscenter@hotmail.com or mail to Raleigh Men's Center, P.O. Box 6155 Raleigh, NC 27628

Calendar items will be included as appropriate and as space permits. Deadline for the September-October issue : August 1

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