

RMC NEWS

A RESOURCE FOR MEN THROUGHOUT NORTH CAROLINA AND THE REGION

PUBLISHED BY THE
**RALEIGH
 MEN'S
 CENTER**
 (EST.1986)
 723 W JOHNSON STREET
 RALEIGH, NC 27506
 (919) 832-0509

April/May/June 2003

www.theraleighmenscenter.org

Vol. 17, No. 2

President's Message

By Doug Jennette

Greetings,

Since the founding of the Raleigh Men's Center over sixteen years ago, support groups continue to be vital for men—both in the Men's Center and in the community at large. My experience in my own group has been deeply rewarding for many years, and I cannot imagine facing the challenges of the past decade and a half without the support and brotherhood of the men in that group.

In the early meetings held to organize the Men's Center, many men expressed a strong need for establishing small groups where men could connect with each other on an emotional level and express support for each other in their life journeys. The groups would provide a "sacred space" where men could—without fear—learn, tell (and, with

deep caring, listen to) their authentic stories. The Support Group Program has been a cornerstone of the work of RMC for nearly two decades.

Initially, the groups consisted of awkward attempts at emotional closeness by men with little experience in connecting at that level. But, over time, men found that, given the opportunities provided by a support group, as well as its relative safety and its collective permission to practice (and to fail) with dignity, a group allowed them to grow personally—and also allowed the group itself to develop: to grow in emotional and spiritual ways. It gradually became apparent that men of good will could create unexpectedly close, healing relationships that carried over into enhanced relationships with partners, children, and families in daily life.

Over the years most of the RMC support groups have been "general purpose" groups, i.e., not focusing on a

(Continued on page 2)

RMC News Goes Quarterly

By Lee Elliott, Editor

Beginning with this issue, the Men's Center newsletter, *RMC News*, will appear at quarterly intervals—in April, July, October, and January. This change from bimonthly publication will, over time (we hope), result in a larger, richer newsletter filled with more articles, personal essays, poetry, reviews, as well as announcements of a greater variety of events that will interest not only our membership but non-members who happen to see *RMC News* in therapists' waiting rooms, libraries, bookstores, and places such as Whole Foods and Weaver Street Markets.

Eventually—especially if the Leadership Council is able to hire part-time staff—we hope that the newsletter will sustain itself solely by revenue from advertising. If that can happen, *RMC News* can be distributed in large quantities in places throughout the Triangle—free of charge, much like

(Continued on page 3)

	April	MAY	JUNE
RMC e v e n † s	April 1, 7:30-9:00 PM: Durham-Orange Men's Council Monthly Meeting, Pilgrim UCC, Durham	May 6, 7:30-9:00 PM: Durham-Orange Men's Council Monthly Meeting, Pilgrim UCC, Durham	June 1: Deadline for Submissions for July-August-September issue.
	April 13, 5:00-7:00 PM: Leadership Council Monthly Meeting at RMC Offices	May 18, 5:00-7:00 PM: Leadership Council Monthly Meeting at RMC Offices	June 3, 7:30-9:00 PM: Durham-Orange Men's Council
	April 19, 8:00 AM: Building Spirit Sauna for Spring Gathering		June 15, 5:00-7:00 PM: Leadership Council Monthly Meeting
	April 25-27: Spring Gathering		June 28: "Issues and Isms"

RMC Events

Volunteers Needed!

What: for building the Spirit Sauna for the Annual Spring Gathering

When: the Saturday before the Gathering, April 19, starting 8:00-9:00 AM

Where: Camp Chestnut Ridge, near Efland, NC

What to Bring: Rocks of any kind but quartz

For directions, please see Gathering page in this issue.

For further information, contact Gregory Blaine at gregoryblaine@yahoo.com.

Concessions Wants YOU!

After membership and support-group dues, the concession stand at the RBC Arena is the Men's Center's second largest source of funds. We can always use more volunteers. If you are interested, contact Gregory Blaine at 833-5300 or gregoryblaine@yahoo.com.

For more information about concessions at the arena, visit the Men's Center Web site at <http://www.theraleighmenscenter.org/>

"ISSUES AND ISMS" A Multicultural Workshop

When: Saturday June 28

Where: Community United Church of Christ, Raleigh, NC

CO-SPONSORED BY THE RALEIGH MEN'S CENTER AND THE MANKIND PROJECT

For information, contact Jud Lawrie at Jud@Lawrie.com.

(President's Message continued from page 1)

single issue but including whatever concern a man might bring to the group's conversation. Since a support group, compared with a therapy group, lacks a trained facilitator, it is up to the group to monitor itself for the quality of its discussions and conversations, its adherence to basic group-process guidelines, and its occasional need for consultation with a trained facilitator about difficult issues. The Men's Center has been blessed with dedicated group members and, with a few exceptions, has been able to place any interested man in a compatible group.

As RMC explores new ways to respond to men in the Triangle community, it is important that the Support Group program lead the way in this effort. To this end, the Leadership Council is currently involved in assessing RMC's support groups and offering additional training and consultation to them as a way of enhancing their quality and establishing links from their members to the broader Men's Center community. Also the Council believes that many men who are already being served by other agencies in the Triangle can benefit from opportunities to explore their lives as men and to find support for the increasingly complex expectations and challenges of today's society. The RMC Support Group Program can provide such opportunities.

In addition to enhancing the Support Group Program, the Men's Center is working to make a quarterly newsletter a reality—a newsletter (*The RMC News*) replete with poems, essays, articles, and the announcements of events pertinent to men's lives. The RMC is also planning to develop cooperative ventures with other organizations, to enhance diversity among our membership, to provide a new, up-to-date, accessible website, and to resume the monthly meetings that provided gathering—and learning—occasions for members and newcomers in the past. If you

would like to facilitate or provide help for these new and revived activities (or for other RMC activities already in progress), let us know by e-mail or letter. The Men's Center will find a place for your time and talents.

Support Group Update

The Raleigh Men's Center Support Group Program was recently assessed by the Leadership Council, which sent out a survey to all current group members. The results of each group's survey will be made available to each group for discussion or action—as the group chooses. Criteria in the survey included: 1) the promptness of both the beginning and ending of the group meeting, 2) the presence of safety and confidentiality within the group, 3) the acceptance by the entire group of the charged personal concerns of each member, 4) the presence or absence of making judgments and giving advice, and 5) each member's overall satisfaction with the group experience. Members' overall satisfaction with the group experience was rated high. The criterion ranked lowest was the promptness of the start of each group's meeting. (This was a concern for members in all but one of the six current groups.) Some members expressed the need for better orientation and integration of new members, as well as the need for enhanced communication between the groups and the Leadership Council. Some groups requested help from outside the group in redefining their process and direction. This aid could be occasional assistance from a trained facilitator. In the coming weeks, the results of the survey will be addressed by members of the Leadership Council in direct contact with each group. The Leadership Council hopes the survey will lead to enhancing the health and well being of the Support Group Program, since the program is vital to the continued health and growth of the Raleigh Men's Center.

(RMC News Goes Quarterly continued from page 1)

The Independent Weekly and the biennial *Change Works*.

The Council won't be hiring staff immediately, but, in the meantime, *RMC News* can begin its transformation into a mass-distributed newsletter—first, by its new quarterly publication dates and, second, by two or more men from the membership who would like to volunteer as solicitors for advertising. The soliciting need not require large commitments of time—and can focus, initially, on a few clients. Who knows? From the work of such volunteers, by the time RMC can pay, say, a part-time person whose main function is to publish the newsletter (his duties would also include advertising), *RMC News* may start being seen in bunches, available for free, at Weaver Street Market, Barnes & Noble, The Regulator, Borders Books, and other places where interested men gather. (If you think you'd like to volunteer to help solicit ads, please contact me, and we can agree on a meeting time and place to discuss the logistics of obtaining advertising. I can arrange an "expert" to be on hand to give us advice.)

For now, however, the newsletter's goals are, by necessity, more modest: we invite you to us send your news articles, personal essays, poems, event announcements (any new poetry or drumming groups forming, for example?), reviews of movies and books, and letters to the editor. (By the way, the editing process has changed a bit from past newsletters: if the editor receives your contribution by the submissions due date—mentioned in the Calendar—he will edit your work and then send back to you both the edited version and your original, and you'll have the opportunity to review the editorial changes and accept all, or some, or none.)

With this issue, we are introducing a new feature, "Memories, Dreams, Reflections," a section of *RMC News* devoted to poems and personal essays—of which, for April-May-June, we have quite a number—spirit-charged and spirited. We'll continue publishing the President's Message,

the Calendar (for three months), announcements of events happening soon, and contact information for your Leadership Council.

If you have questions about our new dates of publication or our aspirations for the future, or if you would like to volunteer your services as newsletter designer or solicitor for advertising, please contact me at leetituselliott@earthlink.net or by phone, (919)-286-2357, or by postal mail, 1019 Iredell Street, Durham, NC 27705.

ADVERTISING

There are three ways to submit an ad: 1) Using an e-mail attachment: send a graphics file of the exact ad in the correct size to leetituselliott@earthlink.net. Graphics formats supported by our current system include .bmp, .pcx, .jpg, .tif, and .gif. Using your graphics file, the newsletter designer will insert your ad as a picture; 2) Using the Postal Service: mail a PC-formatted diskette, containing a graphics file as described above, to the following address: Lee T. Elliott, 1019 Iredell Street, Durham, NC 27705. Again, the newsletter designer will insert your ad as a picture; 3) Using text only: E-mail or P. O. mail the text for your ad. We will create the ad using your text and appropriate graphics and logos. (If you wish, you can mail us hard copies of graphics/logos you want to use, and we will scan them into your ad.) See the e-mail and P. O. addresses above.

Sizes and Costs per insertion (all measurements are in inches):

Whole Page	\$75	9.0 x 7.0
Half Page	\$50	4.5 x 7.0
Quarter Page	\$35	4.5 x 3.5
Business Card	\$20	2.25 x 3.5

If you buy 3 insertions or more there is a 20% discount. All orders must be prepaid, with checks made out to The Raleigh Men's Center. Deadlines for submitting advertising are the same as for submitting articles. See the calendar page for deadline dates. Send checks or money orders to Lee Elliott's address above.

RMC Events

Durham-Orange Men's Council

All men are invited to attend any of the Durham-Orange Men's Council's monthly meetings. The meetings are held on the First Tuesday of the month at the parish house of the Pilgrim United Church of Christ, in Durham on Academy Road (Route 751) just south of 15-501 Business. There are small signs on 15-501 Business for the Route 751 exits shortly before the 751 overpass, less than a mile east of South Square.

April Program

On Tuesday, April 1, we will be focusing on our role in our family of origin, on our experiences with and attitudes toward our family as we were growing up, with special attention to any siblings or to the lack of siblings. How has this childhood experience stayed with us as adults?

May Program

To be announced by e-mail or via telephone contact.

June Program

To be announced by e-mail or via telephone contact.

NOTE: To be placed on an e-mail list for Durham-Orange Men's Council program announcements, contact Ken Wahl at (919) 933-8353 or at wahlesq@earthlink.net.

Memories, Dreams, and Reflections

Poems, Stories, Essays

My Earliest Memory of My Father

By Mike Vaio

In 1957, when I was four, my father took me to my first dentist appointment. While we sat in the waiting room, a tough-looking ten-year-old who'd intimidated me with his baleful stare preceded me to the dentist's chair. All that separated the dentist's working area from the waiting room was a translucent glass screen perhaps six feet tall that started about a foot from the floor.

Minutes later, I heard the high-pitched whizzing of the electric drill and the bigger boy's cries. I glanced at my father, who explained that the other kid had something called a "cavity" and made a perfunctory explanation: that the dentist had to drill out the "bad stuff" before filling up the hole. Listening to the renewed screams, I silently wished I'd have no cavities. My father glanced with disapproval in the other boy's direction, then looked at me solemnly and said, "I sure you don't carry on like that."

When my turn in the big chair came, "Dr. Bob" poked around inside my mouth and matter-of-factly pronounced, "14 cavities." Since four smaller ones were grouped together, he proposed to fill those during this visit and make future appointments to handle the remainder. My father agreed and added, "You can skip the Novocain. The damn needle hurts as much as the drilling."

While "Dr. Bob" filled those four cavities without Novocain, I sat in silence, staring at the point where two walls met the ceiling. I didn't cry. I didn't even whimper. After an eternity, when it was over, my father and I were putting on our windbreakers to begin the walk home. It was a fine autumn day and I was feeling pretty proud of myself. After all, I'd shown up a kid twice my size and done exactly what my father wanted. Maybe we'd even stop somewhere for a 7-Up. For sure, he'd love me and be proud of me. It was worth the pain, I decided. I felt on top of the world.

As we were departing the office, my father eyed me with a look of unspeakable disgust. "My God, Michael," he said, "I'd rather have you cry than sit there making those horrible faces, as if you were in pain." The words penetrated me like a lance, and I felt a deep hollow space inside my chest. I had no words to express that pain. For the remaining 43 years of his life, I never told my father how deeply he hurt me that day.

For many years afterwards, I struggled to please him, to somehow earn his love. I never once felt that I succeeded. He's dead now, and I am approaching 50 years old. Often I still catch myself saying things or doing things that make no sense, except as a puerile attempt to impress him. But I learned early that I could never be right for him, even when I gave him exactly what he wanted.

Copyright 2003: © Mike Vaio

Dear God

Dear God
I have a label for my plea
Give me the peacefulness of peace
The thee ness of thou
The we ness of us
Lastly the I ness of me,
Where salvation is solitude.

While for You
Is reserved
The great
I am

Let me neither squander or squash
The speech and image of God ness
Just strain me in your sieve
Let the remains be blessed
That they in turn
May bless.

The world already and always hurts too much.

—Grady Bennett Myers, Jr. March 1, 2003

How It Happened

Politicians came into my room last night,
big bears banging on very little drums,
asking for love. Hard as a rock in the wind
my heart did not give, though their glad tune

tugged and tugged, and I with so many feet
wanting to dance. Sooner would the Himalayas
waltz, the Alps break into tap, than I would
rock and roll with these dank men. But then

the music stopped. And then they turned to me
their awkwardness, strangely dear, and in
the shaggy darkness all perfumed, I saw
and felt for the first time the glow of their great,

bad hearts—How savagely they held me then,
how gratefully I trembled in their arms.

Copyright: © Mark Smith-Soto

From *Shafts*, Winner of the 2002 Randall Jarrell/Harperprints
Chapbook Competition sponsored by the North Carolina Writers'
Network

Leadership Council Retreat: Feb. 15, 2003

By Jud Lawrie, Leadership Council Member

At its retreat on Saturday, February 15, the Leadership Council spent several hours discussing the vision and mission of the Raleigh Men's Center, and setting short- and long-term goals. The LC used a "multi-voting" process to rank the goals. In order of priority, the top goals were the following:

Short-term Goals

- ◆ Fundraising and more RMC participation in it. (This was also a long-term goal.)
- ◆ Becoming a catalyst and a resource for men's work in the larger community by defining and focusing on 2-3 key community projects.
- ◆ Establishing stronger communication between RMC members and the larger community.
- ◆ Enhancing the quality of RMC's support groups and strengthening their liaison with the Leadership Council.

Long-term Goals

- ◆ Hiring paid staff.
- ◆ Forming partnerships with women's organizations.
- ◆ Attracting diverse and creative energy.

After setting goals, we divided into small groups to develop specific plans to achieve the goals—a process we called "action planning." Four teams formed and began developing action plans as follows:

\$/Finances Team

- Get help in "grantsmanship" and other financial/grant matters by joining the NC CENTER FOR NON-PROFITS.
- Seek grants (e.g., from TRIANGLE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION.)
- Attend to existing revenues—those obtained from working concessions, from membership dues, from support group dues.
- Develop a budget and financial plan. (A 2003 budget was adopted at the meeting.)
- Look into a fundraising event (e.g., inviting a well-known speaker such as Robert Bly).

Catalyst/Resource/Defining-and-Focusing-on-Key-Projects Team

- Clearly define 2-3 key RMC projects or programs.
- Submit proposals to Leadership Council within one month of retreat.

Support Groups Team

- Meet with the support group liaison men on March 8 at the RMC offices (a lunch meeting). Present a model for better group functioning and group process.
- Plan a joint support group meeting.

Communications Team

- Recognize that the communications issue has both an internal and an external aspect.
- Continue reviving the newsletter (*RMC News*)
Lee Elliott has offered to be general editor.
Ask for two volunteers from RMC to assist him with acquisitions and layout/design
- April 1 is the target date for the next issue. March 4 is the deadline for submissions?
- Consider possibilities to pursue for stronger external communication:
Radio talk shows.
Press releases.
News and Observer.
Alcohol Treatment Center (ATC) newsletter.

The Leadership Council agreed that its work for 2003 (and beyond) has only begun. It's relatively easy to set goals: after some discussion and ranking during a few hours of a Saturday's retreat, goals are specified. The trick, now, is to *implement* them. And once they are implemented, it is time for the Council to set new ones.

The Council's four action teams are already starting to make the goals a reality. However, their efforts won't be successful if they are the only men doing the work. From the RMC membership they need help: participation, ideas, energy. What help can you, as a Men's Center member, provide? At its retreat, the LC agreed on these specific needs:

- Someone who has experience in producing a regularly published newsletter, especially in layout.
- Men who can help staff the concessions at the RBC Center, a major revenue producer for the Men's Center. (You can earn some money for yourself too!)
- Men with facilitation skills who can help our support groups become more effective.
- Someone who has public relations or media experience that can help us get some media attention.
- Someone with fundraising skills.

Yes, we will have to *work* to put our goals into action, but we also plan to have some fun. There is also just the sheer joy of working with other men, doing important things. Jump in and join us!

Raleigh Men's Center Support Groups

A support group is a group of 5 to 10 men committed to sharing the events of their daily lives, the feelings stirred by those events, and the history behind those feelings. Support groups are not a substitute for therapy, but comprise a space where men can be themselves. The only requirement for joining a support group is a genuine desire to join with other men in supporting each other's journey. Most groups meet weekly at the Men's Center. Support group dues, are required to offset the cost of renting the RMC office space and paying utilities. Current support group dues are \$10/month paid quarterly in advance. If you are interested in joining a support group or just want to find out further information, contact the Support Groups Coordinator, Kelly Henson, at SFC2001@earthlink.net. Phone: 919-434-4841

The RMC Leadership Council for 2002-2003

FUNCTION	COUNCIL MEMBER	CONTACT INFORMATION
PRESIDENT	Doug Jennette	adouglas@ipass.net
VICE PRESIDENT	Doug Lester	djlester@mindspring.com
SECRETARY	Frederick Whitmeyer	whitmeyer@mindspring.com
TREASURER	Mike Sollins	msollins@nc.rr.com
SUPPORT GROUPS COORDINATOR	Kelly Henson	SFC2001@earthlink.net PHONE: 919-434-4841
	Lou Lipsitz	loulipsitz@earthlink.net
	Jud Lawrie	Jud@Lawrie.com
	Gregory Blaine	Gregoryblaine@yahoo.com
	Mike Vaio	mvaio@ix.netcom.com

The Leadership Council meets on the third Sunday of each month, 5:00-7:00 PM, at the Raleigh Men's Center offices on W. Johnson Street. **NOTE:** for April, since the third Sunday falls on Easter, the LC will meet the SECOND Sunday, April 13. See Calendar.

Raleigh Men's Center Dues Policy

According to a policy enacted by the RMC Leadership Council in 1999, new members joining the Men's Center will be billed as follows:

If they join during the periods of: dues for the current year will be:	Jan 1-Mar 1 \$30	Mar 2-May 31 \$22.50	June 1-Aug 31 \$15	Sept 1-Dec 31 \$7.50
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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 _____

Membership—\$30 per year—includes a subscription to the newsletter *RMC News*
See page 6 for current dues policy.

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

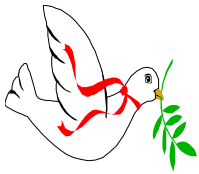
Total enclosed: \$ _____ Thank you

8th Annual Spring Gathering of Men in NC Fri, Sat, Sun - April 25-27, 2003

MAKING PEACE

In Music, Dance, Story, and Poetry

Camp Chestnut Ridge, Efland, NC
For application form and directions to Camp Chestnut Ridge, contact
Gregory Blaine at
Gregoryblaine@yahoo.com



Workshops



Music, Storytelling, Poetry

MAKING PEACE ... BALANCING OUR LIVES



Bring your drum for a circle or any musical/percussion instrument!
Bring an open heart and mind!

Lighten your spirit!



A brotherhood of men... for the weekend.

Tentative Schedule

Friday Evening April 25
5:00 - 7:00 Arrive, register, sign up for workshops.
(No Meal served; bring snacks to share)
7:00 - 10:00 Opening of the Gathering
Calling of Directions, Introductions, Stories, Poetry, Music

Saturday April 26
6:30 a.m. Meditation; yoga/stretching
7:00 - 8:00 Breakfast
8:00 - 12:30 Workshops
12:30 - 1:30 Lunch
1:30 - 3:30 Workshops
3:30 - 5:30 Group Activity (includes spiritual sauna)
6:00 - 7:00 Dinner
7:00 - 10:00 Gathering

Sunday April 27
7:00 - 8:00 Breakfast
8:00 - 11:30 Workshops
11:30 - 12:30 Lunch
12:30 - 2:30 Closing of the Gathering... safe trip home.



Questions or Suggestions - Please contact
Gregory Blaine (919) 833-5300 gregoryblaine@yahoo.com

Scholarships - Please contact
Jim Stinson (336) 275-8141 Stins001@mc.duke.edu

Have an idea for a workshop? Please contact
Don Henchel (919) 518 2186 henchstone@msn.com

Cost:
\$95.00 postmarked up to March 25
\$110.00 postmarked after March 25
\$25.00 additional cost for flute making

Checks Payable to:
Men's Council of the Triad
Refund Deadline: Request must be received by April 11
Mail to:

Jim Stinson/NC Men's Gathering
907 Fairmont Street
Greensboro, NC 27401-1724



THE RALEIGH MEN'S CENTER

723 WEST JOHNSON STREET

P.O. BOX 6155

RALEIGH, NC 27628

(919) 832-0509

**Forwarding Service
Requested**

First Class
Stamp

RMC

The vision of the Raleigh Men's Center is a world in which people recognize one another for who they are rather than for 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 the valuable roles men play as friend, brother, sister, husband, partner, and citizen. The Men's Center is committed to strengthening the individual, the family, and the community

The Raleigh Men's Center

We opened our doors in 1986 as a nonprofit, all volunteer service organization dedicated to promoting the wholeness and well-being of men.

Many men struggle with the grief associated with separation, divorce, child custody, death, job loss, and other life stresses. Other men experience the lack of meaningful work in their jobs which carries its own stresses. Added to this our societies changing expectations of men which leaves them further confused, angry or emotionally isolated.

The Men's Center grew from the desire of men in our region to be a part of the healing and growth process for each other. We provide opportunities for self awareness, friendship, support, joyfulness, and play. We are also a place where it is safe for men to reveal their feelings and pain, and where they can learn to more effectively deal with the conflict and anger, and grow to feel their inherent power, perhaps for the first time.

The Men's Center is an important part of an expanding, nationwide network of support for men that recognizes the healing power in the wisdom men find as they share their experiences with other men. We support the strengthening of men's roles as friend, son, father, husband, partner, and citizen.

For more information, contact:

The Raleigh Men's Center
P.O. Box 6155, Raleigh, 27628
Telephone: (919)832-0509

Subscription and Membership Services

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

Newsletter Contributions

Send all contributions via e-mail to Lou Lipsitz: loulipsitz@earthlink.net or P. O. mail hard copy to Lee Elliott, 1019 Iredell St., Durham, NC 27705. Calendar items will be included as appropriate and as space permits. **Deadline for July-August-September Issue: June 1.**

Newsletter Staff

Acquisitions: Lou Lipsitz: loulipsitz@earthlink.net

Editor: Lee Elliott: leetituselliott@earthlink.net

Mailing Labels: Ray Schuh: rschuh@intrex.net

Design/Layout: VOLUNTEER NEEDED!

Advertising: VOLUNTEER NEEDED!