



JUNE 2008

P.O. BOX 250, LEWISBURG, PA

CARE NEWSLETTER

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**Thank you to
the new
CARE
volunteers!**

CARE Announcements

Thank you to our Chair, Lois Passi

We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to Lois Passi for her service over the past three years. As Chairperson, Lois offered CARE vision, leadership, direction and countless hours of hard work. She gave her unwavering support to CARE programs and activities, and she initiated many new CARE programs. In all of these efforts she demonstrated her commitment to fight against racism and all forms of discrimination and to promote change through education. Starting in June, Lois is taking a much needed break from her role as Chair. Over the past year Lois has helped the CARE steering committee to develop a strategic plan to insure that our important work will continue. Thank you, Lois!

For the Bible Tells Me So: Public Showing of Film on Homosexuality & the Bible

The Social Concerns Committee of the Beaver Memorial United Methodist Church will sponsor two showings of a documentary film on homosexuality and the Bible this Summer. The showings will be open to the public without charge. The location will be the hall in the basement of the Parker Building connected to the church at 42 South Third Street in Lewisburg. The film will be shown twice:

Wednesday, June 18, 7:00 pm

Monday, July 28, 7:00 pm

The documentary presents a thoughtful view of the tensions and controversies in the Christian community, while also presenting the case for open acceptance of people whatever their sexual orientation. In part, it portrays the Richard Gephardt (former U.S. Representative from Missouri) family and the way they embraced their lesbian daughter's lifestyle. *For the Bible Tells Me So* explores attitudes and struggles many GLBT people have faced and offers ways to respond in a positive and constructive way. The film also refutes myths commonly attributed to GLBT people. Opportunity for discussion will follow.



Do you have any news or suggestions for us? Please contact us at 570-524-2273 or email care@dejazzd.com

Brothers and Sisters All: An Interfaith Service in Celebration of Gay Pride Month

When: Sunday, June 22, 2008 at 7:00 P.M.
Where: St. John's United Church of Christ
1050 Buffalo Rd., Lewisburg

All Are Welcome!!!

Service will be followed with light refreshment.
Sponsored by: Community Alliance for Respect and Equality (CARE) and concerned spiritual caregivers throughout the Valley

For more info: CARE, 524-2273, care@dejazzd.com or St. John's United Church of Christ, 523-0162

From the desk of Doug Sturm

Love and Marriage

This story is a romance with a lovely ending despite its traumatic beginning. Though they were very much in love, Virginia natives Mildred Fortune, a black woman, and Richard Loving, a white male, could not be married in 1958 in their home state given its miscegenation laws. So they journeyed to Washington, D.C., to wed. Upon returning to Virginia, they were wrested from their bedroom at 3 a.m., and informed by the court that they might avoid prison only if they would leave the state, which they did, though not without difficulty. Five years later, they initiated legal action which ended up in the Supreme Court in 1967, resulting in the path-breaking case argued by the ACLU, Loving v. Virginia, abrogating miscegenation laws across the nation.

Mildred died in early May this year. In 2007, on the 40th anniversary of the Supreme Court decision, she delivered an eloquent statement about the case concluding with the following words:

“I believe all Americans, no matter what their race, no matter what their sex, no matter their sexual orientation, should have the same right to marry. Government has no business imposing some people's religious beliefs over others...I support the freedom to marry for all. That's what Loving, and loving, are all about.”

Footnote: On May 15, the California Supreme Court, by a 4 to 3 vote, ruled that “same sex couples have a constitutional right to marry.” Massachusetts is the only other state to take this action. Maggie Gallagher, a regular columnist for the *Daily Item*, bemoaned, “The court was wrong from top to bottom on this one.” Opponents have launched a ballot initiative to overrule the court.



So, dear friends, what's to be done to get Pennsylvania to take a humane stance on this matter?

Racial & Ethnic Disparities in Drug Arrests & Incarceration

The U.S. has long engaged in a “war on drugs” across the nation, but questions have been posed about the effects of this so-called “war” on differing racial groups. On May 5, two advocacy groups — the Sentencing Project (Washington) and Human Rights Watch (New York) — published reports declaring that “Large disparities persist in the rate at which blacks and whites are arrested and imprisoned for drug offenses, even though the two races use illegal drugs at roughly equal rates.”

Both reports argue that these disparities are caused in part by “an overwhelming focus of law enforcement on drug use in low-income urban areas, with arrests and incarceration the main weapon.”

Human Rights Watch affirms that “Apart from crowding prisons, one result is a devastating impact on the lives of black men: adult black males are nearly 12 times as likely to be imprisoned for drug convictions as white men.”

According to FBI data, “Two thirds of those arrested for drug violations in 2006 were white and 33 percent were black, although blacks make up only 12.8 percent of the population.” Ms. Jamie Fellner of Human Rights Watch cites 2003 federal data as stating that “Blacks constituted 53.5 percent of all who entered prison for a drug conviction.”

A Sentencing Project analyst said that shifting resources from incarceration toward drug treatment and social services would do much “to improve conditions in blighted neighborhoods.”

In a comment on this story (*New York Times*, May 6), a later editorial (May 10), noted that “more than one in 100 American adults are presently behind bars....One in nine black men aged 20-34 are serving time, as are one in 36 adult Hispanic men.”

Union County will soon follow other municipalities by introducing a specialized drug court, but what impact, if any, will that have on arrest and incarceration rates in our region? Does our region in any degree reflect the kinds of disparities mentioned above? Whether or not that is the case, should our authorities be encouraged to shift resource from drug busts toward treatment and services?



Everyday Law for Gays and Lesbians

CARE currently has available a couple of copies of Anthony C. Infanti's book, *Everyday Law for Gays and Lesbians* (2007), for those who might find it useful. Besides a range of chapters, each devoted to a specific topic, (e.g., public accommodation, housing, employment, etc.), the text includes a listing of more than 20 national associations available to support the GLBT community.