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Contributors

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F***sheet

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F***SHEET SPECIAL. JUNE 1994. FREE

GAY MEN FIGHTING AIDS: YOUR ARMY!

BY PETER SCOTT

Welcome to this special edition of the GMFA Newsletter. It's a round up of who we are, what we stand for and what GMFA is doing, so you can be as involved as you want to be.

GMFA started because a group of gay men working and volunteering in the HIV field were aghast and angry!!! We were going around like walking exclamation marks!!!! It looked like everything that could go wrong in the handling of the epidemic for gay men was going wrong... It seemed like there was a multi-million pound AIDS industry, very little of which gave a toss about, or understood gay men. At the same time we could see that there were large numbers of well-meaning individuals who cared a lot but had become trapped in an organisational culture, basically heterosexual and homophobic. A professional bureaucracy had taken over which devalued the skills and experiences of gay men.

GMFA is different

You might be asking 'But why create yet another AIDS organisation?' Because we're different and our name says why:

- **Gay Men** — we know who we are, we're gay men who care about other gay men, we are gay sex positive
- **A fighting** organisation. Fighting neglect, indifference and burial of history, as well as the epidemic. Fighting on the beaches, in the beds, in the AIDS organisations, on the cruising grounds. Fighting the tired old dogmas of the AIDS industries of the 80s (eg that HIV is an equal opportunity infection)
- **AIDS**. Our main focus. But we know that tackling AIDS means that we also have to fight homophobia, campaign against laws about the age of consent and obscenity and

About the Newsletter

Gay Men Fighting AIDS publish F***sheet regularly. It is primarily intended for volunteers and contacts of the organisation but includes articles of interest to anyone involved in work with gay men and AIDS. To be included on our mailing list write to GMFA, Unit 42 Eurolink Centre, 49 Effra Road, LONDON, SW2 1BZ.

GMFA'S AIMS AND PRINCIPLES

Aims

- To prevent HIV transmission among gay men
- To minimise the harmful consequences of infection with HIV for gay men
- To minimise the harmful social consequences of HIV for gay men in general

Principles

- That gay men should be equal citizens and entitled to the same rights and respect as other members of society
- That discrimination against gay men undermines the efficiency of prevention and care
- That HIV continues to affect gay men more than any other group in society
- That prevention and care should be designed and resourced in a way that accurately reflects the epidemiology of HIV rather than inappropriate models of equal opportunities
- That gay men are best placed to plan, implement and evaluate HIV prevention for gay men
- That in the absence of a vaccine safer sex is the best way of preventing HIV transmission
- That HIV prevention work should enable gay men to choose safer sex strategies independently of moral or political considerations
- That supportive and positive models of gay identity are essential for HIV prevention
- That the diversity of gay men and their consensual sexual choices should be respected

fight for our right to love, life, liberty and happiness. Does this earnestness mean we're boring? No — we're passionate and sexy gay men.

- We are a second generation organisation, committed to good planning to avoid mistakes of the past
- We are grassroots and volunteer-led
- We have a strategic responsibility as the only national AIDS organisation that puts gay men first

What's in it for you?

You can be caring (without being boring), have fun, develop skills, have sex. What can you achieve? The sky's the limit. Look at what we have done in only two years with limited resources. Now we have five plus workers, one hundred volunteers and project money, just think what we can do together! GM FA

GROUP STRUCTURE AND NEWS

Directors

The Directors hold ultimate legal responsibility for the company. Initially they made all the decisions about what style of work GMFA should do, who should do it, when and where. Now most of that decision making has been devolved to Groups and Coordinating Committee. The Directors remain responsible for making sure that GMFA's work is consistent with our founding principles, that we comply with company law and that GMFA conducts itself in a way that we can all be proud of. Each year, after the AGM, the Directors elect the Chair, vice-Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. **Meetings are Quarterly.**

Coordinating Committee

Coordinating Committee is where nuts and bolts decisions about the organisation are taken. It consists of a representative from each group, plus the chair and company secretary. Use your representative to bring up points from your group. **Meetings are on the 2nd Thursday of every month.**

Stop AIDS London

SAL is the HIV prevention project funded by the London

Regional Health Authorities which GMFA is running and which forms the bulk of our funding and staff time. There is a steering group made up of funders, SAL workers and two volunteer representatives — Edward King and Peter Scott.

Fundraising Group

At present a subgroup of the directors this group will be establishing itself over the next year. Robert Janes has agreed to do the initial set-up and we are looking for members with experience of fundraising for voluntary organisation — on whatever scale. *Contact Jeremy on 071-738 6872*

Strategy Review Subcommittee

Set up by the Directors in June. The specific aim of the subcommittee is to look at how well the organisation is adhering to it's aims; particularly at the moment the second aim.

Safer Sex Group

The group is made up of different working cells each beaver away at their own projects. There is a plenary meeting monthly to keep tabs on what's going on, but these meetings are not compulsory. There is plenty of scope to work on the projects below without attending endless meetings.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Held yearly in early October, the official function of the AGM is to elect a new board and approve the accounts. It is also a chance to ask questions, find out what is going on and to meet the movers and shakers within GMFA.

Regular meeting: First Monday of the month 7pm at Central Station. Coordinator: Jeremy Canty. Contact Robert Connor: 071-738 6872

GUM Cell

We've done the questionnaires and now need to analyse them. Initial indications from that data suggest that there is a real need for a gay men's clinic. Our next step is to write up a report on this needs evaluation. We now want to look at setting up an effective gay men's clinic. *Contact Martin: 071-738 3712.*

Zap! Cell

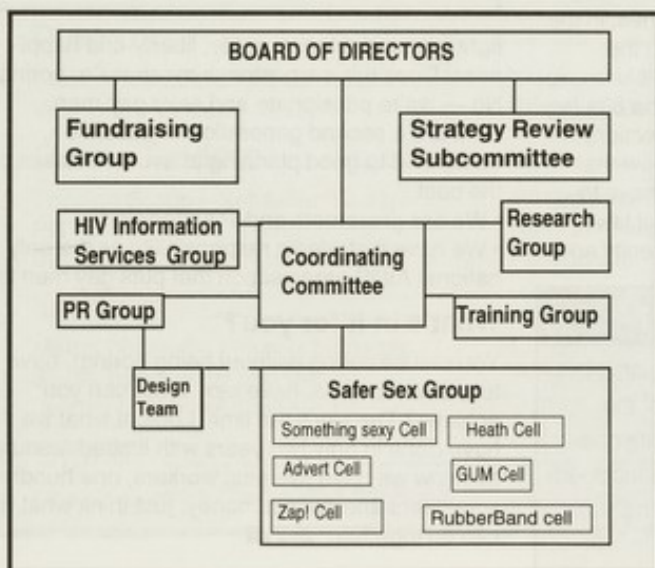
It's going to happen — like a lot of things "after Pride" (and perhaps a little at Pride). *Contact Robert: 071-738 6872*

RubberBand Cell

We have armbands, condoms and lube. The idea is that the armband will indicate to people that we can be approached for advice about and equipment for safer sex you can be a Rubber Band Man any time you go out on the scene. *Contact Robert: 071-738 6872*

Heath Cell

Aims to enable and celebrate gay men's usage of the heath for sex, by providing condoms, lube, tissues and safer sex info to gay men who want them. Designed by volunteers to be in keeping with the atmosphere of the heath — a great idea and a good laugh. We'll be on the Heath every Friday, Saturday and Sunday from 11pm till 3am. *Contact Julian Hows on 071-738 6872 or Peter Rawlinson on 081-905 9779 or 071-738 6872.*



Joint Ads Cell

Working with other voluntary groups on safer sex adverts for different groups of gay men. We contacted groups in autumn '93, but didn't make much progress beyond this. We are now trying to revive the group. *Contact Jamie: 071-738 6872*

Something Sexy Cell

Hold SexNights in pubs the length and breadth of London. These comprise of games, often compared by the lovely Jean T, strippers and lots of fun. You don't have to have meeting mania to get involved – we need volunteers on the nights. *Contact Robert: 071-738 6872*

Out Cell

We have produced two 30 second commercials for the Autumn series of *Out*. They will be shown from the beginning of August. *Contact Jamie: 071-738 6872*

Design Team

Design team do work for other groups laying out adverts, postcards, taking photos, writing copy. We also work on our own initiatives. Last year we produced the 'Fighting AIDS' posters. We are always looking for experienced volunteers with design, DTP, writing (and modelling) experience. *Contact Jamie: 071-738 6872*

Training Group

Training Group are responsible for our famous SexDays. We are branching out into targeted SexDays. We also run induction evenings, 'Mouthing-Off', and are looking at internal training for the organisation. We are always looking for new volunteers and have started running a 'Training The Trainers' course. *Coordinator Sebastian Sandys. Contact Chris: 071-738 6872*

PR Group

The Newsletter, PR, advertising, campaigning, recruitment and getting our name in the press every week. We can barely keep up with it all so we need you to join us. We especially want people with PR, journalism or lobbying experience. We also want people to help with the newsletter. **Meetings on last Wednesday, every month.** *Coordinator: Edward King. Contact Jamie: 071-738 6872*

Research Group

Conducting research and advising and carrying out evaluation for the organisation. *Coordinator Aidan Vaughan. Contact Chris 071-738 6872*

HIV Information Services Group

Has working cells on nutrition, needs assessment, researching and writing a leaflet on available services and more. We always welcome new members. *Coordinator David O'Donnell. Contact Robert: 071-738 6872*

Goodies

A host of goodies are available – either to buy or give out.

Our new **T-shirts** come in these four designs, in a range of colours (grey, black, blue) and two sizes – large and children's for that navel-gazing experience, £12.50 each.

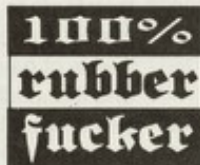


There are four new



postcards –

using the four poster designs and texts from Safer Sex Group, HIV Information Services and PR Group.



These complement the four **cards** available already – 'My friend is positive..', 'Rubber up', 'Hard facts' and 'Talk about it'. Also coming is

GMFA's low down on going down.

Of course we have the four **posters** still available as well as the famous **cruising card** and the **London lube wallet**.

RubberBand arm-bands are also here – why not get kitted out and become a RubberBand Man?



We should also have lots of lovely **stickers** – get some supplies from the office.

Last, but not least, the long awaited rewrite of our **leaflet**, *The GMFA Guide to Fighting AIDS*.



If you want copies of these to give out let Jamie know. 071-738 6872.

TWO CHEERS FOR GMFA

By MARTIN DOCKRELL AND DAVID O'DONNELL

Last May at Heaven, GayMen Fighting AIDS celebrated its second birthday. Only twenty-four months ago we were just a dozen gay men meeting in a front room. We knew we had to fight AIDS on three fronts. Gay men's HIV prevention was to go hand in hand with campaigns to minimise the harmful effects of the virus on gay men with HIV and, in turn, on our community as a whole.

Since then, some would say we have changed the face of HIV prevention in the UK by leading the movement to re-focus HIV prevention on gay men. Our name has become synonymous with the re-gaying of AIDS. Our Stop AIDS London project is one of the biggest voluntary sector prevention projects in the UK and we are helping other groups set up similar projects up and down the country. This newsletter "the UK's leading gay men's HIV/AIDS journal" (*sic*) now goes out to over 100 organisations and 800 individuals in five continents.

So, two cheers for GMFA. Proud though we are of our achievements, some of us have been worried for some time that

our programme has become distorted by the priorities of the state's AIDS paymasters. Now, we are not suggesting that we have accepted money for work which we don't believe in, but rather we have followed the funders' preoccupation with prevention. Look back at our founding goals. In two years what have we achieved for gay men with HIV?

This month the Directors agreed to make sure that the needs of gay men were not confined to the emerging HIV Info Services Group. They have established a strategy task force to ensure that the overall strategy reflects the needs of gay men with HIV and that each group continues to work to its chosen targets. Look out for the *If You Are Positive* section in the new edition of the *What You Can Do About AIDS* booklet, the HIV Positive Men's Needs Assessment and sexual health work for men with HIV. Services for men with HIV are now the top development priority for GMFA and a proposal for a new central London information centre where volunteers will

run an information and advocacy project is under development. This complements the groups other work on nutrition, the audit and needs assessment and a booklet for those infected and affected.

That's what we are doing. What about you? If you think it's time for GMFA to beef up its work for positive men, HIV Information Services Group is a good place to get involved. **GMFA**

Call Robert at GMFA, on 071-738 6872 for more information.



THIS IS TO AROUSE YOU.

(GMFA's first card from May 1992)

Who's who in GMFA

Directors

Chair of the Board – Peter Scott
Vice-Chair – Jeremy Canty

Treasurer – Brian McElroy
Company Secretary – Martin Dockrell

Group leaders

Training Group – Sebastian Sandys
PR Group – Edward King
Safer Sex Group – Jeremy Canty

HIV Information Services Group – David O'Donnell
Research Group – Aiden Vaughan
Fundraising Group – Robert Janes

Workers

Martin Dockrell – Projects Manager
Jamie Taylor – PR and Design
Jeremy Cohen – Administrator

Chris Markham – Research and Training
Robert Connor – Safer Sex and HIV Information Services

Office

Unit 42, Eurolink Centre, 49 Effra Road, LONDON, SW2 1BZ. Tel 071-738 6872. Fax 071-738 7140.