

NCSF Newsletter

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NCSF Publishes Two Important Mental Health Guides

by: Susan Wright

NCSF and the Foundation are thrilled to announce two new and valuable additions to its line of publications.

The first is *A Guide to Choosing a Kink-Aware Therapist*, created by Keely Kolmes Psy.D. and Geri Weitzman Ph.D.

People who engage in BDSM need to be able to find a therapist who can accept them without judgment or prejudice. Some therapists cause more harm than good when they slap a label of mental illness on a client simply because they enjoy kinky sex. Fortunately, there are some therapists who have acquired the education necessary to work with people who practice BDSM, and who are accepting of their clients' BDSM lifestyles.

A Guide to Choosing a Kink-Aware Therapist will teach you how to locate such therapists, and how to choose from among the different kink-aware therapists that are available. NCSF is dedicated to ensuring that everyone can find a mental health professional who is understanding and supportive of your lifestyle, and believes this guide is an important addition to the Kink Aware Professionals list and the DSM Revision Project. You deserve a therapist who understands about the diversity and range of sexual expression, and this guide will help you find them.

The second publication has been five years in the making: *Therapists Guide to Polyamory* is edited by NCSF Foundation Chairman, James R. Fleckenstein, B.A., and Carol Morotti-Meeker, M.S., M.L.S.P. NCSF is dedicated to ensuring that therapists are educated about the varieties of sexual expression and relationship structures that our communities enjoy. Polyamory is gaining more visibility as more adults engage in consensual relationships with more than one person. But how does a therapist gain the understanding they need to deal with the many issues that arise when polyamory is involved?

Therapists Guide to Polyamory answers all of a therapist's questions about the purpose and practice of polyamory. Everything from the motivations and benefits of polyamory, to emotional and social concerns such as discrimination and family disapproval are covered. And of course, the relationship issues that arise from navigating more than one intimate relationship are explored, from safe sex to attaining parity and negotiating agreements. This guide is for polyamorists who need to explain their lifestyle to their therapist, and for therapists who understand that personal value systems may sabotage their goal of enabling their clients to explore options and life experience in a neutral or supportive way.

NCSF Protests Raid on Atlanta Eagle

by: Leigha Fleming & Susan Wright

Lawless cops are a threat to everyone in America

The Atlanta community was stunned when the Eagle was raided on September 10th: the local police illegally detained 62 patrons and 8 employees, searching them without a warrant, reasonable suspicion, or probable cause. Some were forced to lie face-down on the floor for over two hours. The strong use of force included the presence of the "Red Dog unit" which typically deals with crimes such as gang violence.

The police arrested eight employees for dancing in their underwear along with patrons during "Underwear Night", a weekly fetish event. The APD alleges that behavior violates a local ordinance that requires the bar to obtain a license for adult entertainment. According to the patrons, police officers shoved people to the ground, threatened to hit them in the head with barstools, handcuffed people, made racist and anti-gay comments, and forced patrons to remain flat on the ground, with their faces against a floor covered in some areas with spilled beer and broken glass, even long after they had been searched and found to be unarmed.

A Federal lawsuit alleging multiple civil rights violations was filed on November 24th on behalf of the patrons and the employees of the Atlanta Eagle by Lambda Legal, Southern Center for Human Rights, and Dan Grossman as representation for the plaintiffs. NCSF is actively involved in supporting the Atlanta Eagle and the plaintiffs in this suit. In speaking with Leigha Fleming NCSF Board Chair, Wednesday afternoon, attorney Dan Grossman said, "NCSF's publicity and support is very welcome and needed in this effort. The police believed that they could violate the rights of these men precisely because they were in a gay _leather_ bar." "We need everyone in the Atlanta community getting involved in this," says Fleming. "There's a mayoral election coming up. Ask your candidates their opinions of the police action at the Eagle and whether or not they support the kind of bigotry and discrimination exhibited. Blog about it. Talk about it. All the various Eagle's around the country should link to this. Support this lawsuit and support NCSF."

NCSF joins state and local representatives in urging everyone to file a complaint if they were present at the Eagle on September 10th. You can file a complaint with the Atlanta Police Department and the Atlanta Citizen Review Board who are investigating the raid:

<http://atlantaeagleraid.com/how-to-file-complaints> If you need to maintain anonymity, then please contact Mr. Grossman, who represents the Eagle and many of the patrons in connection with the raid, at (404) 654-0326, or at a special email address established for this matter: AtlantaEagleLawyer@gmail.com.

CONFIDENTIALITY IS GUARANTEED UNDER ATTORNEY-CLIENT PRIVILEGE. If you ask a lawyer for legal advice, the lawyer can't reveal anything you tell him, including your name: the police can't require it, your name can't be subpoenaed, and the court can't demand it. If a lawyer breaks attorney-client privilege, he or she will be disbarred.

"It's so important that our patrons come forward," says Richard Ramey, co-owner of the Eagle. "Everyone needs to hear how badly our civil rights were violated."

"Please call today!" urges Susan Wright, spokesperson for NCSF. "This is a clear human rights violation. If we don't speak up, they won't stop persecuting us. We are the only ones who can fight for our rights."

Shortly after the raid, NCSF sent a letter to Atlanta Police Chief Richard Pennington, Major Khirus Williams (Zone 5), Mayor Shirley Franklin and the City of Atlanta Human Relations Commission demanding an apology for this illegal behavior by the local police. Atlanta Police Chief Richard Pennington held a press conference September 14th, stating that the gay leather bar was raided because of anonymous complaints that came through the mayor's office.

"There was no need to show up with three paddy wagons and over 20 police officers. No drugs or weapons were found," says Fleming. "Doesn't the Atlanta Police Department have better things to do with taxpayer money than conduct witch hunts against men who may have been dancing in their underwear?"

For the month of June 2009, the last month criminal statistics citywide for the City of Atlanta were available (see the Uniform Crime Reports on the Atlanta Police Department website at <http://www.atlantapd.org/index.asp?nav=Stats:10> murders, 6 rapes, over 2,000 robberies and larcenies and over 500 auto thefts were committed. In Zone 5 where the Atlanta Eagle is located, more than 35 crimes against persons including murder and aggravated assault and more than 700 crimes against property including auto theft, robbery and burglary were committed.

The Atlanta community spoke out against the violent police raid on September 19th, calling it a blatant "disregard for civil rights and common sense". The rally was organized by GLBTATL and members of Atlanta's LGBT community and supporters in front of Atlanta City Hall. According to GLBTATL's press release about the rally:

"To concerned citizens, such as GLBTATL, it seems that this police raid was not meant to investigate or deter crime. Rather, it sent a message that the LGBT community, comprising as much as one-eighth of Atlanta's residents, is second-class and not deserving of the same basic human respect as others. With only a paltry apology issued via the A.P.D. media office, this message of disrespect, a message that can easily turn into hate, has begun to echo throughout the gay community, and Atlanta as a whole."

To read more about what happened at the Atlanta Eagle, visit <http://AtlantaEagleRaid.com>

Consent Counts, Get Involved!

by: Judy Guerin

Now is your opportunity to become involved in our community's most important long-term project, a nationwide sexual freedom effort that-if we work together-will rank with the Civil Rights Movement, the Women's Movement and the LGBT movement. The Consent Counts project, dedicated to decriminalization of BDSM-leather-fetish activities, is in the early stages of organizing under the leadership direction of NCSF. Leather leaders launched this community-wide project in 2006 and NCSF recently took a leadership role.

We need volunteers in many areas: strategic planning, marketing and public relations, legal, fundraising, organizational, political, Internet, policy, legislative, grass roots organizing and administrative. And, we will need a lot of money to achieve this goal. We need and want your support and involvement. If you can volunteer or help us raise funds, it would be a big help.

To volunteer, send an email to consent@ncsfreedom.org.

Coalition Partnership Stewardship

by: Ron Zimmerman

NCSF Appreciates Our Coalition Partners (CPs)

Everyone likes to be appreciated and the NCSF Board of Directors has come up with a concept that we hope will demonstrate the organization's appreciation and commitment to our Coalition Partners. At the last NCSF Board Meeting in Dallas, Texas, considerable conversation was devoted to what NCSF can do to continually improve our overall communication strategies. The concept of developing a "Coalition Partner Stewardship" program was one of the key concepts that came out of those discussions. One board member, was tasked with designing the plan.

The NCSF board is eager to announce the CP Stewardship initiative being named, the "Reach Out" program. The concept is to divide the CP list into Regions and to have a Board Member(s) specifically assigned to each CP. The forward plan is to have the assigned Board Member make it a priority to "reach out" and make contact with their assigned CPs during the 1st month of each quarter. These contact(s) will be tracked to ensure that each CP has been contacted. Additionally any issues/ideas that might result from the "Reach Out"

We hope that the CP Stewardship Program is viewed as valuable by our Coalition Partners and contributes to NCSF's overall strategy to continually improve our organizational communication. To become a Coalition Partner visit our website for more information. Look under JOIN, and read about the different levels of membership!

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