

Welcome new members

Though new to membership status, most of you have been with us for a long time, some as long as three years. With your support we continue to work upon the country's consciousness of whiteness and its impact in our lives. Our mission remains, as always, to examine white American culture in the context of the greater American culture.

We've been working on a membership plan and policy. Like many organizations, we are now developing a membership list and a larger mailing list. The main question we face is how do we treat members who offer financial support, versus people on the general list who do not. Our mission includes raising awareness before a broad public, but our closest supporters deserve extra attention. Apparently other groups struggle with these issues as well; there is no simple way to handle them. For now we are sending our newsletter to members only. Members will also receive all mailings to the general list. As we grow, we will continue to develop and refine our policy along the way.

In the meantime, please enjoy our first member newsletter.

Names in print

Do you have any concerns about your name appearing in 1) a membership directory, or 2) our newsletter? We are thinking of compiling an annual directory, available to members only, containing name, title, affiliation, address, and other contact information (email, fax, web site) as members may desire. Our assumption is this is okay with our members. If not, let us know. We also plan to list the names of new and renewing members in our newsletter.

Sharing our mailing list

We plan to make our mailing list available to other persons and organizations who propose to contact members about conferences and projects that are consistent with the Center's mission. For instance, we will share our list with the National Conference on Whiteness. Members should receive a conference brochure. We also have a request from a member that we allow him to mail other members concerning a research project on white racial identity.

No one likes to get "junk mail." But we assume members have a specific interest in projects like those described above. Bringing projects, conferences and similar events to the attention of our membership is a service we can provide. We can also provide support to fellow members who need to reach a specific audience such as our membership comprises. The Center, of course, will screen requests, and we will not make our list commercially available.

Third National Conference on Whiteness

This year's conference takes place at the University of Chicago on November 6,7 and 8, from Friday evening through Sunday. Mark your calendar. **We've enclosed a Call for Presenters with this newsletter.**

The conference is one of our successes. From its start with 54 people in 1996, we've grown to an anticipated size of 500 people in Chicago. Also from the start we intended to spin the conference off. Not that we didn't want to keep a successful project, but it was our feeling a "national" conference needed broad sponsorship to develop the largest following and impact. Now in it's third year, the conference is beginning to develop its own organization.

Still, the conference remains a lot of work for us, and without our leadership and hard work, it wouldn't be taking place. In a year or two, perhaps the conference will truly be able to sustain itself. But for now, if you wonder what we're doing over the next several weeks, bringing this conference to fruition is a big part of it.

NCPCR

Speaking of conferences, once every two years between 1500 to 2000 people meet at the National Conference on Peacemaking and Conflict Resolution (NCPCR). Center director Jeff Hitchcock was invited to speak at a race relations plenary at the last conference in May, 1997. The Center is now a consultant and planning partner with the NCPCR planning committee for the 1999 conference in Phoenix, Arizona.

NCPCR is a predominantly white conference that is working to become multiracial. The 1997 conference reflected this effort and the transition continues. The 4-person committee overseeing the 1999 conference, for instance, contains 3 people of color and one white person. At the next level down, where we fit in, about a two-thirds majority of the 30 plus members of the larger planning group are people of color. NCPCR displays an interesting structure, being multiracial at the top and predominantly white at the bottom.

Initially plans for the 1999 conference created several affinity groups, including race and culture-based groups of African/African Americans, Asian/Asian Americans, Native Americans and Latinos/Hispanics. No group was created for white people. Rather, the planners theorized that concerns about whiteness, given how wide spread they were, could be covered under a group called Intercultural Communication.

The Center, when asked, suggested that a group for white people be created and, consistent with the naming of other groups, that it be titled the "European American" group. Our concern was that the previous structure left whiteness unnamed, and thus central and normative. At the same time it invited reac-

tion from whites who might ask "Why is there no white group?"

Now there is, and as it turns out, the planners have devoted 1 day each of the five-day conference to a specific racial/cultural group. The European American group is being asked to sponsor a plenary on Tuesday, June 1, the final day of the conference. Conference planners would like to see a public examination of whiteness that can engage white Americans who have not given it much previous thought. The European American group is also responsible for soliciting and developing workshops and other events to take place throughout the conference.

If you are interested in presenting at the conference, or being involved in some way, let us know. For the social activist, NCPCR provides a wealth of knowledge on conflict resolution approaches. At the same time, it is still pretty white. Many of the conflict resolution and peacemaking professionals and activists who attend need to expand their cultural frame of reference from a white one to one that is multiracial. Raising that type consciousness is something the Center and its members are likely to be involved in doing. NCPCR offers a setting in which there is high level, top-down, support for doing it.

Under development

...is a new consciousness-raising tool by the Center. Many of you may remember the little quizzes that appeared on the back page of our *Quarterly Newsletter*. It was by far the most popular feature. We've decided to compile the questions into a larger packet, 20 questions in all. The packet will consist of a quiz booklet, a separate booklet with answers, and a teacher's manual.

This project has received a \$500 grant from the Black Concerns Committee of the New York Yearly Meeting of the Society of Friends (Quakers). In July we were invited to do a test run of the quiz at an annual meeting of the Quaker community attended by approximately 700 people. Despite a history of activism in social concerns, Quakers have been shy to discuss racial concerns directly and discussion of whiteness is virtually unheard of. In the past, events sponsored by the Black Concerns committee were sparsely attended.

We approached our task by distributing copies of the quiz and promising to give out the answers at our workshop. Thirty people attended, far exceeding expectations and more than had attended any similar event within recent memory. The ensuing conversation, though often scattered, also elicited some forthright self-reflection. Apparently many people shared concerns but had not found the means or forum for discussing them.

We continue to work on the quiz and anticipate bringing it out as a product early next year.

The WHITENESS PAPERS

...is the name of a series of papers published by the Center featuring discussion of whiteness and white culture in the United States and throughout the world. Papers published in the series are intended for use in the classroom and organizational settings to promote discussion of whiteness. Dr. Charley Flint and Dr. Mary Washington are editors of the series. Two papers have been published and a third manuscript is under review. We are interested in additional submissions.

The series is intended to offer a balance of perspectives, a focus on whiteness as a social, cultural and political phenomenon, a concern for the personal experience of people and how they are racialized by society, and an avenue for writers, scholars and practitioners to offer new thinking about how whiteness may be transformed. If you have an idea in mind, contact Dr.

Charley Flint at DrCFlint@aol.com or write to her care of the Center.

A decision is pending

...on a grant application submitted to the National Endowment of the Humanities (NEH). NEH funds summer institutes for scholars, devoted to emerging topics in the humanities. The application was prepared under the direction of Dr. Mary Washington, a member and trustee of the Center, with assistance from Center members and trustees Dr. Charley Flint and Jeff Hitchcock. The original intent was that the Center sponsor the Institute, but the realities of funding, the scholarly focus, and the potential for a negative reaction to the Center's name and its status as a new and independent nonprofit organization unaffiliated with a college or university led us to change our strategy and submit the proposal under the sponsorship of Lehigh University. There are advantages to the more traditional sponsorship. Lehigh offers institutional resources, a prestigious reputation, and is more in line, perhaps, with the scholarly demeanor NEH-sponsored institutes are supposed to embody. Along the way, Dr. Washington was able to secure letters of commitment from several prominent scholars who have published in white studies. The institute is intended for faculty at schools of higher education. A decision is due this month. Should it be favorable, we will tell distribute information on how to apply. The four-week institute is planned for the summer of 1999.

Hire us!

Do you know an organization in need of white awareness training? Do you know one that is ready to act on that need? The Center offers workshops and consultation to predominantly white organizations seeking to become multiracial. We've been told people are "out there using our material to create entire workshops," and while we consider that high praise and an indication we are fulfilling our mission, we need to be part of that training and consulting market ourselves. It's an economic necessity. We're doing what we can to promote our services. If you know anyone who is interested, send them our way.

Time to sign up

When we first began in 1995, we offered people a subscription plan for our newsletters, three free issues and then a 4-issue subscription. Well, after the transfer of those subscriptions to memberships, they now have come up for renewal. Some other members/subscribers are also due for renewal at the end of this month. If this is the case for you, we will be sending you a renewal notice during October. Keep an eye out.

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Keep in touch

Especially now that we are becoming a membership organization, we want to hear from you and learn what can we do to further our mission and meet the needs of our members.