

Center for the Study of White American Culture, Inc.

# MEMBERSHIP NEWSLETTER

*A multiracial organization*

SUMMER 2003

## MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM RADICALLY REVISED

*Second major revision in Center's history... Transition to a web-based community... Member sponsorship becomes voluntary... Emphasis on social interaction and networking... Membership Newsletter to be retired*

### We last left you...

Six months ago, in February, we last mailed our newsletter to members. At the time we proposed a radical change in our membership program. Then, seemingly, we disappeared from view. Despite our lack of visibility, we've been busy revamping our membership program along the lines we suggested in our last newsletter (see Program Plans, page 2). Our concern is to develop a collective white antiracist voice.

During the past six months our labor resources have remained constant. The Center was faced with a choice between either developing our new membership program or maintaining our existing one. The latter would involve producing our quarterly Membership Newsletter and sending renewal notices, updating contact information, and processing donations.

Obviously the receipt of donations provides needed resources. But the labor demands of maintaining the old membership program conflicted with the labor demands of designing a new membership program. We decided to put our resources into the development of the new program. Given that decision, we thought it best not to continue to solicit donations and membership renewals under the old program.

Now we are ready to put the new program into

operation. It is time to reach out to our loyal membership to thank you for your past support. We invite you to continue with us on our future journey.

### What's WACAN?

Our new program consists of a web-based community called the White Antiracist Community Action Network (WACAN). Members do not have to make a donation to join WACAN. However, they must endorse a set of four beliefs (see WACAN beliefs, page 3).

The WACAN website is password-protected. Members must register in order to gain access. The site contains various tools for networking and communicating among members, including, at present:

- 1) an online registry that allows members to view contact information for other members by state (e.g. all members from New Jersey) or by interest group (e.g. all members with an interest in social work);
- 2) a forum in which members can post messages and hold online conversations;

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see Changes, page 4

# Program plans

Members may recall in our last newsletter we said we planned "to organize our membership program in a way to give greater presence and voice to members who are looking to network, organize, and participate in a process supporting a collective white antiracist voice."

We then went on to list eight things we planned to do. Below are each of the eight points, in bold text. Each point is accompanied with reflections on our new online membership program, the White Antiracist Community Action Network (WACAN).

**Focus on organizing closer to home, among our membership.** The WACAN project is fully under the control of the Center. We can see it through its formative period without concern that it will be sidetracked by competing commitments or alternative plans of other individuals or organizations. WACAN allows our existing members to step into the process, as well as inviting new members to join.

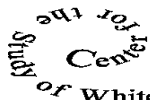
**Streamline our membership administration. Right now it's labor intensive and a roadblock to growth.** Membership registration is now automated along with the collection of donations. Thus we can support a far greater number of members and concentrate on developing services to meet members' collective needs.

**Emphasize member participation. It can't all come from our office.** The WACAN system supports communication and networking, but members will be called upon to provide the content. While the majority of members may not want to provide written material, the large membership base available on the web should be sufficient to draw several members into creating and sharing content.

**Foster networking among members. To begin, we plan to develop a member directory, and on [www.euroamerican.org](http://www.euroamerican.org), a password-protected section dedicated to member concerns.** A member directory and password protection are features of the new WACAN website. Rather than [www.euroamerican.org](http://www.euroamerican.org), however, the system has been set up under [www.wacan.org](http://www.wacan.org).

**Begin to develop a position statement and a program that makes it clear what we stand for.** The WACAN set of beliefs is a beginning to this process (see WACAN beliefs, page 3). In time we hope the community on WACAN develops means for voicing more specific positions on contemporary concerns.

**Support development of local and regional units, chapters, discussion and action groups.** The directory features of WACAN allow people to identify other mem-



White American Culture, Inc.

The *Membership Newsletter* is a publication of the Center for the Study of White American Culture, Inc. sent exclusively to its members 4 times per year. The Center for the Study of White American Culture is a multiracial organization whose mission is to define and examine white United States culture and to address its role in, and impact on, the greater American culture.

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bers in their state and region. The system will support development of smaller interest groups.

**Provide this initiative with its own identity, including a name (Center for the Study of White American Culture does not convey the organizing and action component of our plans).** "White Antiracist Community Action Network" is the name we have chosen, or WACAN for short.

**Continue to collaborate with like-minded organizations and pursue collective projects. For instance, we continue to support the regional structure that was initiated in New Orleans [at the organizing conference for the white Antiracist convention].** The WACAN system has the capability of supporting collaboration with and between other organizations, as well as initiatives begun by WACAN members. We hope this capability will be put to use.

**Keep our ongoing programs in place. Our publishing, speaking, and training operations will continue.** Although our resources have been taxed, we have continued to support our other programs.

# How to join

1. Go to [www.wacan.org](http://www.wacan.org)
2. Click on the Registration link
3. Affirm each WACAN belief, and complete the registration form
4. After registering, enter your screen name and password
5. Send us email if you have problems

[www.wacan.org](http://www.wacan.org)

After registering, enter your screen name and password

BEGIN HERE with the Registration link

Send us email if you need help

## White Antiracist Community Action Network

Screen name:


Password:

Like to register? [CLICK HERE](#)

[System requirements](#)

Forgot your screen name? [CLICK HERE](#)

Forgot your password? [CLICK HERE](#)



[Send email to WACAN](#)

### Purpose

The White Antiracist Community Action Network (WACAN) offers a protected online space where white antiracists and people of color who support and encourage white antiracists can assemble, network, share in community, and act to transform our larger society to one that is racially just.

In time we hope WACAN will meet the technical, social, and leadership challenges needed to become a large, self-supporting community of a thousand or more members.

**WACAN depends on the financial support of its members.** Giving is not mandatory, but we periodically hold fund drives. At all times we make available a link to accept donations in support of WACAN. If you are the type of person who makes charitable donations at all, please place WACAN on your list.

## WACAN BELIEFS

At the start of the registration process, you will be asked to affirm each of the following beliefs:

- White supremacy has shaped the history, institutions and culture of northern North America (US & Canada).
- The present mainstream culture and institutions of northern North America preserve a status of privilege and advantage for white people and impose a status of disadvantage and oppression on people of color.
- The racial structure and status quo of northern North America is a white problem. White people created it and it remains in place because of the active and tacit support of white people.
- White people have a responsibility and moral imperative to work collectively with one another in alliance with people of color, to transform the racial structure of northern North America from one centered on white values to one centered on multiracial values.

## Changes, cont. from page 1

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- 3) a calendar which can be used to post events of interest to members;
- 4) a news manager that can be used to post news stories and announcements.

There are many additional tools on our wish list, including polls, chat rooms, and webcasting.

The burden of labor and administration of our previous program was tied closely to the number of members enrolled. With the transition to an online setting, the Center is able to support a much greater number of members. The existing setup, for instance, can readily support a few thousand participants.

This is not to say the new system is free of labor demands. Programming the system, adding new features, and fine-tuning old features is a constant and labor-intensive process. The degree of sophistication and capability the WACAN site ultimately achieves relates directly to the labor and expertise the Center can obtain. However, some of the contingencies are different from our previous, print-based, snail-mail operation. The basic operation, once it has been set up, can operate without constant maintenance and intervention.

## What do members do now?

### **Go online to [www.wacan.org](http://www.wacan.org) and sign up!**

Since WACAN does not require donations to register, anyone is free to join, provided, of course, you agree with the WACAN beliefs. We encourage you to continue your participation by signing up.

Unfortunately the labor demands of the new program will not permit the Center to continue the old program. Our Membership Newsletter will be retired. This is our final issue. We realize some members may not feel comfortable participating in an online forum. Some members may also miss the print-based newsletter. If and when the Center develops more resources, we may be able to publish a print newsletter again. Perhaps a cooperative effort will develop among WACAN participants to support such a project.

If there are any members who feel they are not receiving fair value for the donation they have made to us, please contact us. We will refund the

portion unused as of the spring of this year.

We anticipate that the majority of our membership will join the White Antiracist Community Action Network, and we hope that everyone will. We're beginning a new adventure that promises more excitement and impact than ever before.

## Thank you for your support

The transition the Center is undergoing is not the first in its history. In 1995, the year of the Center's founding, we began publishing a subscription-based Quarterly Newsletter, which at 12 pages was more a mini-magazine. Between the fall of 2003 and the summer of 1997 we published six issues and sold a total of 89 subscriptions. Ultimately the burden of writing new material for the Quarterly Newsletter proved too much to sustain. In its brief lifetime, the Quarterly Newsletter raised \$2,295 for the Center.

After a hiatus of a year, we began our membership program in the fall of 1998. Members received a much more traditional Membership Newsletter, usually 4-pages long and focused on the activities of the Center itself. The membership program ran for four and one-half years until the spring of this year. Just prior to September 1991 we reached our highest enrollment with 105 members. Following the events of 9/11, membership declined. Over the entire four and one-half years of the program members gave the Center \$13,675 in 383 donations. Annually the program averaged 85 members and \$3,000 in donations. The present number of members (as of March 31, 2003) is 73. This number may be a little lower than our long-term average because we stopped sending renewal notices at the end of 2002. If you receive this newsletter, you are one of our 73 members.

The financial support of our members has been key to the Center's operation. Just as important have been the many relationships we've developed over the years with our members. Every new member, and each renewal, has given us a boost in confidence when pursuing our mission. Thank you, members, for your support. We hope you continue with us in our new program.