

## Bringing Accurate Information to College Campuses

By John J. McCartney, Jr.

*A NARTH member describes his bold attempt to reach university students.*

Much is said these days about the gay activism at our colleges and universities. Recognizing this, a group called Heterosexuals Organized for a Moral Environment, (HOME) was started by Wayne Lela of Downers Grove, Illinois. Wayne recruited friends interested in public-opinion formation to help him do something to counter the promotion of gay activism on college campuses.

All of us (and I'm one such friend) have taken to heart Ayn Rand's dictum about the necessity of intellectually challenging the absurd—lest it, by default, become accepted as the norm.



*John J. McCartney, Jr. with wife Connie*

HOME goes about getting a campus information table through: following a simple procedure. First, we contact the student activities office and request an application for an information table; we submit it, together with specimens of the material we will be offering. Second, we negotiate distribution dates—usually two a year. Third, we appear on the agreed-upon dates and begin answering student questions.

Our team sets up an information table on campus, identifying ourselves with a banner reading "The Uncensored Truth About Homosexuality." We proceed to offer material on gay issues, as well as an opportunity for passersby to question us—parrying whatever unfriendly comments which come our way. Surprisingly, our experience has been that faculty members actually outdo students in unfriendliness.

Although we have had only a few incidents which I will describe later, we've learned that it's wise to ascertain the location of the security director's office just in case we're assaulted by extreme verbal abuse.

If I'm giving the impression that all overtures to the student activities office will result in quick access to the students and faculty, this would be misleading—they won't. At one community college, we were led to believe that we had gained permission, so we set up a table. But upon the complaint of an "offended" student, a male, we were speedily escorted off campus by a security officer.

Attempts to clarify our future status on campus were fruit-

less, so we sought legal counsel from The Rutherford Institute, which advised us to directly challenge that particular college's stonewalling. So we went on campus at the next opportunity, distributed material, were questioned by security officers, and then in ten minutes, were provided with a table. The school's attorney (their resident legal officer) was heard saying, "I know a test when I see one!" This confirmed our belief that unless we forced the issue, we would never be permitted to take part in that college's limited public forum, even though the Constitution guarantees such access.

Should any NARTH members want to set up a similar information booth to correct the false notions about homosexuality abounding on college campuses, they should ask for a legal briefing from either of two institutions: The Rutherford Institute, Box 7482, Charlottesville, VA 22906-7482, or The American Center for Law and Justice, Box 64429, Virginia Beach, VA 23467.

Once public institutions allow an information/advocacy speaker access to students, they cannot arbitrarily refuse similar groups. The institutions know this, but they bank on organizations not knowing it. However, when they get a letter from an attorney, they then realize an applicant knows his rights and intends to exercise them. For a most helpful manual offering step-by-step guidance in gaining access to educational institutions, contact Family First, Inc. Box 260131, Littleton, CO 80163, and ask for "A Parent's Manual to the Homosexual Agenda in Public Education." A call to (303) 471-8067 will get the current price and shipping cost.

We are often asked, "What type of material do you distribute to stimulate discussion?" As a rule, we have available three pieces: one sheet is devoted to the health risks associated with homosexual behavior. A second deals with causes of homosexuality, life expectancy, domestic violence, and relationship stability. It also addresses income, education, and occupational status of homosexuals, specifically because those three categories form the legal grounds for the addition of new anti-discrimination laws—and we point out that because all of these categories are above the national average, there is no legal basis for singling out homosexuals as a special protected class. We also point out

the impact on our culture due to the tragic loss of talented Americans because of the AIDS epidemic. The third piece is NARTH's "Myths" brochure.

Most important, we strive to be informative, but not provocative.

Have we had many tense moments? Generally, our reception has been far less hostile than one might expect, although we have had some problems. University faculty and students are usually more hostile than those at community colleges. At one university, a male student showing off for his lesbian friends yanked our cloth, materials, and coffee off our table and then ran off into the crowd.

At another state university, Wayne, working alone, was surrounded by not-so-gay activists who destroyed his materials, and verbally harassed him to the point where five campus police officers were required to protect him as he exercised his First Amendment right to free speech in—ironically—the university's Free Speech Zone!

At a private (church-sponsored) college outside Chicago, an angry woman who identified herself as a lesbian dumped toilet tissue on our table to symbolize what she thought of our message.

At the same church-sponsored school, an elegantly dressed female instructor shouted repeatedly, "You should not be here!" and began circling the ring of potted palms next to our table. While doing so she shouted over and over, "I'm offended, I'm so offended!" Quite an example of *professorial gravitas*.

### Student Journalists Distort Story

At one community college we were interviewed by the newspaper's reporters—two young journalism students—who seemed absolutely astonished that political incorrectness should have actually gained admittance to the campus. They followed up their interview with a sharply slanted article which was published in the student newspaper—complete with the obligatory cartoon which likened us to Hitler. This prompted Linda Nicolosi to contact the paper's faculty sponsor; she reminded this professor that he was paid to teach objective reporting, not sophomoric defamation. The unfair and inaccurate references to the NARTH brochures we were distributing, and to reparative therapy in general, fired her righteous anger.

Our next visit to the same college showed that the journalism department must have gotten her message: this time, no reporters, no articles, no cartoons.

If Wayne and I were to record the crude remarks from students and faculty (many, especially, from faculty) we'd have an interesting collection. Among the uncivil remarks: "Why the hell don't you guys go get laid and quit obsessing about what we're doing?" "Why don't you both get a job instead of hanging around this campus?"

### We Just Keep Going

We've also had the full range of obscenities directed at our table at times, but everything considered, we have met much less hostility than we expected at the start. Our quixotic spirit hasn't waned in the least!

Some further advice: we find community (two-year) colleges more receptive to our message than universities. It seems that intolerance and incivility generally increase in direct proportion to "higher" education.

We always discourage any comments by the rare student who—taking our position to the ugly extreme—voices a "Rev. Fred Phelps attitude," by condemning and insulting homosexually oriented individuals. We make it very clear that we are presenting factual information about behavior and not encouraging hostility toward persons. We mean our critique to be taken in the same spirit of a critique on smoking—we focus on the behavior, not the individual, by pointing out the toll it takes in health and lives. They are not smoker-bashing, and we are not gay-bashing.

*Bulletin* readers who would like to set up a college information table will experience some trepidation and, inevitably, frustration—but they should keep in mind that their very presence, as well as the truth they offer, can actually break the spell cast over our nation's younger generation by the incessant gay-activist propaganda of misrepresentation and half-truths. Breaking the one-sided stranglehold on information is a great service to both students and faculty—particularly to those young men and women struggling with same-sex attraction—and for those who are open to listening, the information we offer benefits body, mind, and spirit.

Those desiring more information should contact Wayne Lela, HOME, P.O. Box 711, Downers Grove, IL 60515. ■

