

PLAY BALL!

by Cindy Craft

Organized Lesbian and Gay softball in Kansas City began as a fast pitch league in the spring of 1976 at Waterworks Park in Turner, Kansas. There were no sponsors, no entry fees and volunteer umpires. Men and women competed against each other. There was no budget. Awards were purchased with profits made from selling concessions during the games. The first board of directors consisted of two people, Paul Rogers and Aggie Wheeler.

Seventeen years later, the Heart of America Sunday Softball League (known in the early days as simply "Sunday Softball") has teams sponsored by many of K.C.'s Gay and Lesbian businesses. The league also has professional umpires, a men's and women's division, and is currently in the process of obtaining a not-for-profit status. The league was honored in January by their placement in the K.C. Gay Archives. The board of directors currently consists of seven volunteers: a commissioner, assistant commissioner, secretary, treasurer, men's and women's communications coordinators, and an activities coordinator. These volunteers donate many hours of their time and talents to assure that all facets of the league run smoothly.

Sunday Softball switched to a slow pitch league in 1980 and in 1983 joined a network of Lesbian and Gay softball leagues called the North American Gay Amateur Athletic Alliance (NAGAAA). Leagues from across the United States and Canada are members of NAGAAA. Each city sends teams from their league to play in the Gay World Series and Recreational Invitational tournaments held in the fall of each year in a different NAGAAA member city. The first Lesbian and Gay world series was held in Chicago and will be played in Los Angeles this year.

In 1981 the first Heart of America Classic softball tournament was put on by the Kansas City Coed Sports Association and was played in Swope Park. Gay and Lesbian teams from many cities came to Kansas City to compete. The tournament was later played at Rosedale Park, and for the last four years has been at Cottonwood Park in Lenexa. This year will be the 11th annual tournament and will be held the weekend of September 19th and 20th. Teams will be divided into three divisions: men's competitive, women's competitive, and men's recreational. Games are tentatively scheduled to be

played at 140th and Holmes in Kansas City, Missouri, where the third classic tournament took place.

The Heart of America Sunday Softball League (HASSL) began an annual scholarship fund in 1989. The first scholarship monies were provided by an anonymous donor. Subsequent scholarships have been provided by the league and by donations from community groups such as the 10400 Club. Scholarship applicants must meet a list of requirements which are included in the application. If you are interested in applying, applications are available from any HASSL board member. Applications must be received by HASSL by July 30th. After all applications are received, they are reviewed and a recipient is selected by the board of commissioners. The scholarship is presented at the Heart of America Classic awards ceremony.

Sponsors play a very big part in the league. They help teams to get organized, help them with entry fees, uniforms, equipment, and team fundraising. Many teams hold fundraisers that range from beer busts, dinners, and talent shows; to selling cookbooks and holding garage sales; to help defray costs for fees and to raise money for travel to out-of-town Gay and Lesbian tournaments. Cities holding Lesbian and Gay tournaments include Atlanta, San Francisco, New York, Dallas, Boston, Minneapolis, Washington, D.C., and Houston, to name just a few.

HASSL is dedicated to promoting amateur softball for all persons with special emphasis on participation of members of the Lesbian and Gay community. People join HASSL for a number of reasons—to form friendships, for the exercise, for the rigorous competition, or to just plain have fun on a warm Sunday afternoon. HASSL currently has approximately 175 playing and non-playing members and in 1991 had four mens and six womens teams in the league. The season runs from late April until early August. Games will be played this season at City Park in Kansas City, Kansas. At the end of each season, playoffs are held in each division to determine Kansas City's representative to the Lesbian and Gay world series. HASSL makes a donation to each team to assist with traveling expenses. An All-Star game is also played at the close of each season. Two players are chosen from each team to participate. Players are divided into two coed teams who then compete against each other in a fun-filled afternoon.

cal action committee in Missouri (HRPac).

An effort to amend the city's civil rights law to include sexual orientation failed in 1990. A significant majority of the new council was endorsed by HRP in 1991, and Mayor Emanuel Cleaver has pledged to introduce and pass such an ordinance in his first term.

Cultural Exchange, the Rainbow Awards Committee and dozens of other new organizations have formed in recent years, providing a smorgasbord of social, religious, athletic, entertainment and cultural activities for the Gay and Lesbian community.

Kansas City continues to celebrate and advance its unique and historical place in the national and world-wide movement to secure Gay and Lesbian civil rights and equality. As one local activist put it, "We'll know the real Gay and Lesbian revolution has come when cities like Kansas City secure their civil rights, when we all can justifiably say we're Gay and we're proud."



A Welcoming Congregation

All Souls Unitarian Church

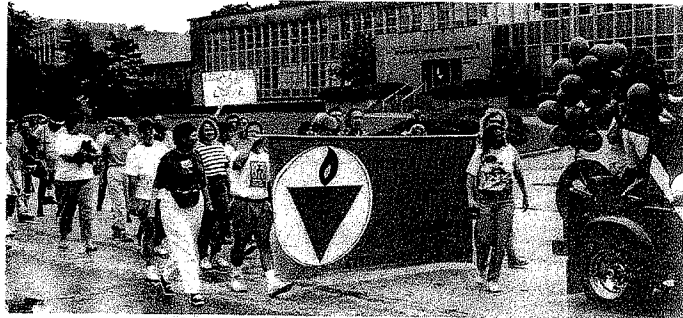
4500 Warwick Blvd., Kansas City, Missouri 64111 • (816) 531-2131
Member congregation of the Unitarian Universalist Association

Sunday Schedule

10:00 a.m. Forum 11:00 a.m. Service
12:15 p.m. the 4th Sunday.... Monthly Potluck Brunch of
Unitarian Universalists for Lesbian and Gay Concerns (UULGC)

The general purpose of All Souls is to be a community of people who affirm and promote:

- ★ The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
- ★ Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations;
- ★ Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregation;
- ★ A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
- ★ The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregation and in society at large;
- ★ The goal of world community with peace, liberty and justice for all;
- ★ Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.



All Souls members marching in the 1991 Pride Parade



Celebrating
our Past-
Preparing
our Future

with K.C. GALA '92

1992 KANSAS CITY GAY AND LESBIAN PRIDE CELEBRATION

FRIDAY, JUNE 12, 8PM
Opening Ceremonies/Concert featuring the
Heartland Men's Chorus and the Kansas City Women's Chorus
SATURDAY, JUNE 13, 9PM
Kick-off Pride Dance
SUNDAY, JUNE 14, 5PM
Skating Party
TUESDAY, JUNE 16, 7PM
Coming Out Workshop with PFLAG
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 17
Cultural Exchange Film Festival
SATURDAY, JUNE 20, 8PM
GALA Variety Show with nationally acclaimed artists
SUNDAY, JUNE 21, NOON
Pride Parade, followed by the picnic
in Southmoreland Park (Kansas City MO)

All events sponsored by K.C. GALA (Gay and Lesbian Awareness '92),
a program of GLSN (Gay Lesbian Services Network).
For info on these and other events,
call the GALA info line at 816-931-4943.

HISTORY from page 8

state legislature. PTPC member Stephanie Joe Kent was selected as a delegate to the Kansas Democratic Convention where she addressed conference delegates.

Gay Services Network has become Gay and Lesbian Services Network (GLSN), an umbrella network for non-profit groups which operates three major programs: Gay Talk, a peer-counseling, information and referral hot-line; Gay and Lesbian Awareness (KCGALA), which organizes Pride events; and Condom Crusaders, an HIV/AIDS educational project.

The Human Rights Project (HRP) is Kansas City's primary political organization today. Formed to introduce and pass a Lesbian and Gay rights law in Kansas City, Missouri, HRP has broadened its scope to address concerns on a regional and state level. The group endorses candidates for elective offices and has formed the first Gay and Lesbian politi-