

Training Handbook Under Fire

NEA Zealously Promotes Gay Agenda

BY PETER LABARBERA

The National Education Association teachers' union is using a manual for training educators on issues involving "gay and lesbian students" that includes such recommendations as bringing openly homosexual adults into classroom as "resources" and replacing the word "marriage" with the neutral term "permanent relationship," HUMAN EVENTS has learned.

The NEA "Handbook for Educators" contains advice from a host of pro-homosexual school-oriented programs across the country—from Project 10 in Los Angeles to the Harvey Milk school for homosexual youth in New York City. Recommendations range from admonitions against violence toward "gay" youth to polemical assertions such as one that says homosexual schoolchildren have a "right" to "legislators who guarantee and fight for their constitutional freedoms, rather than ones who reinforce hate and prejudice."

It also advises stocking school libraries with books promoting "sexual diversity," ridding libraries of "pejorative" books on homosexuality, conducting gay-affirming "sensitivity" training for students, teachers and administrators, changing "heterosexist language," and introducing "gay/lesbian issues into all curriculum areas."

The handbook, created by the NEA's Gay and Lesbian Caucus, has been used in teacher training workshops since 1991. However, it gained serious attention only recently when a sympathetic NEA member leaked it to parents challenging a controversial curriculum on homosexuality in Fairfax County, Virginia, a suburb of Washington, D.C.

Fairfax parents who for months had been fighting a school lesson plan that teaches 9th and 10th graders about homosexuality were shocked to learn that the man responsible for overseeing the development of that curriculum is also a leader in the National Education Association's Gay and Lesbian Caucus. That man, Jerald Newberry, received the NEA's Creative Leadership in Human Rights Award last summer for his efforts. He was nominated for the award by the homosexual caucus.

Virginia parents critical of the Fairfax school system's teachings on homosexuality (and other issues such as abstinence) say Newberry and the National Education Association are using Virginia as a test case for advancing pro-gay programs in schools. Their warnings were bolstered by the NEA teacher manual's recommendation of Fairfax's "Family Life Education" (FLE) curricula as a model for the nation. The FLE curriculum stresses the normality of homosexual attractions; e.g., one teacher's worksheet notes that "children ages 5-11 and adolescents ages 11-19 may have a need to be aware of sexual attractions to others of the same sex."

"Virginia has become a gateway for the promotion of the NEA's philosophy and agenda for teaching homosexuality to our children," said Rebecca Bocchino, a mother of three children in Fairfax schools and one of the leaders in the fight against FLE. "The problem is most parents still don't know about these proposals."

An article in the June 1994 NEA Gay and Lesbian

Caucus newsletter praised Newberry as having worked to "create one of the most accurate and engaging sexuality education programs in the country, which deals honestly with many difficult and controversial topics including homosexuality."

Despite fervent attempts by Bocchino and others to get the media to focus on the NEA manual edited by Newberry, no major media—including the usually conservative *Washington Times*—focused on the recommendations. Steve Twomey, a *Washington Post* columnist, sought to portray Newberry's foes as intolerant extremists, writing, "They pilloried a man, not for his actions, but for his honors, for his associations, for whom he chooses to accept as fellow human beings."

Only a local Roman Catholic newspaper, the *Arlington Catholic Herald*, and several local columnists and radio talk shows dwelt at length with the contents of the NEA handbook. Had more journalists reported on its recommendations, both Newberry's job and the Fairfax curriculum lesson on homosexuality might have been jeopardized. The latter was passed with some changes by the school board March 9.

Pro-Homosexual Handbook's Extreme Recommendations

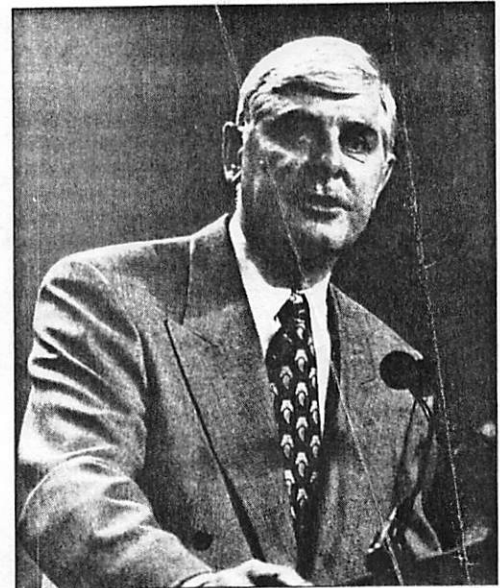
The NEA manual, entitled "Affording Equal Opportunity to Gay and Lesbian Students Through Teaching and Counseling: A Training Handbook for Educators," is a smorgasbord of gay-affirming proposals, broken into several sections. The foreword gives "special thanks" to Newberry, "who participated in editing the final training package and who conducted the first workshop using these materials in Arlington, Va., on April 26-28, 1991, as well as to the NEA Gay and Lesbian Caucus. . . ."

Ron Houston, a program and training specialist for the NEA, defended the manual and criticized the "segment of America's population" who, he said, "find it difficult to understand that the society of the United States is no longer homogeneous."

"What I believe our membership has asked us to address is to create the awareness that there are individuals out there who have a different sexual orientation . . . and should be recognized and should be afforded rights like everybody else," he told HUMAN EVENTS. "We cannot deny these individuals the right to exist within this country or within any other part of the world."

To get a feel for the NEA handbook's polemical and strongly pro-gay tone, one need look no further than the glossary of "Human Sexuality Definitions" on page 10. "Homophobia" is defined as "The fear and intolerance of homosexuality, bisexuality, lesbian women, and gay men. Homophobia is the root of anti-gay violence."

Under "Masculinity/Femininity" it reads: "Sex role stereotypes, totally differing from culture to culture, which get arbitrarily imposed on men and women, denying our true androgyny (similarities) and individuality. Gay and lesbian people are no more masculine or feminine than other people." Other portions of the NEA document rely heavily on research by deceased sexologist Alfred Kinsey to instruct that homosexuality is normal. In a section headline "Research Tells Us," the reader learns that a "substantial proportion (10% according to the Kinsey Report) of the population is gay or lesbian."



National Education Association President
Keith Geiger

(This claim may have been changed in more current versions of the manual; the edition obtained by HUMAN EVENTS is dated 1991, before the large-scale repudiation of the 10% claim by numerous scientific surveys that found homosexuals make up only 1% to 3% of the population.)

The NEA handbook's definition of "Normal," which is also dependent on inflated Kinsey statistics, reads as follows:

Natural (homosexuality occurs throughout nature); not a disease, defect, or disorder (the American Psychiatric Association, 1973); conforms to longstanding expectations (cultures throughout history have had a full continuum of orientations); and statistically common (Kinsey found some homosexuality in 50% of adult men, 28% of women, 60% boys, and 33% girls; many people believe the female would now equal the male.).

More Homosexual-Affirming Goals

Tendentious terminology is rife throughout the NEA handbook for teachers. Under a section headlined "What Is Homophobia/Heterosexism?" the following items are listed:

- "Failing to be supportive when your gay/lesbian friend is sad about a quarrel or breakup;
- "Feeling that lesbian/gay people are too outspoken about gay rights;
- "Using the term 'lesbian' or 'gay' as accusatory."

The source for the above was given as the United Way of the Bay Area on Lesbian and Gay issues. A variety of other pro-gay organizations are listed as sources for the NEA Report, prominent among them Project 10, a counseling program launched by Los Angeles Public Schools that has engendered opposition wherever it has been introduced. The handbook's appendix lists over three dozen agencies and organizations as "resources." All of them—from the Campaign to End Homophobia to the Sexual Minority Youth Assistance League—are pro-homosexual.

Mr. LaBarbera is publisher of the Lambda Report on Homosexuality, a Washington-based publication that monitors the homosexual movement, and is the director of Accuracy in Academia, which monitors "politically correct" abuses on college campuses.