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THE SLR STORY

Sex May Be Legal Someday -- Meanwhile, News of the
Inequities of the Law is Being Printed in Tasteful
Fashion by An Enterprising Young L.A. Attorney

by Roland Morris

In April of 1975, a group of volunteers met together at the Glendale, California home of Attorney Tom Coleman and sat around the dining room table collating, stapling and folding the very first publication of its kind in the world.

It was called the SexuaLawReporter. Many of the volunteers had worked weeks gathering names and addresses from legal and academic publications and professional directories. Others had typed up 3,000 mailing labels. Articles had been written, set in type and pasted up in a format agreeable to Publisher Coleman and then-Editor Joel Tlumak. Negatives and plates were made and printed on separate 8½" x 11" sheets in a back-porch print shop by another volunteer.

From these humble beginnings, the SexuaLawReporter has become a nationally-known publication of considerable prestige and inestimable value. Tom Coleman, not yet 30 years old, has had three head-swimming offers to sell-out but prefers to publish it HIS way, loyally supported by a staff which has doubled in size, though all donate their time and talents! Editorship has passed on to Attorney R. Michael Wetherbee and there is a classic "new look" to the publication which regularly prints up reports on the outstanding court cases affecting sexual civil liberties, state and city legislation, book reviews, Law Review articles of interest, plus special features and bulletins.

University Law Libraries are the primary supporters, and include: USC, UCLA, Stanford, Colorado, Yale, Duke, Columbia, Florida, Wisconsin, Hawaii, Iowa, Loyola, Marquette, New York, Puerto Rico, Texas and dozens of others. Attorneys are understandably the next largest group of subscribers, followed very closely (it's becoming a race) by law students, over half of whom are women. Other libraries include those of governmental city, county and public agencies. Individuals include judges, district attorneys, city and county attorneys, law enforcement officials, city and state government officials, educators, columnists, writers, editors, clergymen, donors, human rights, public defenders, medical doctors, psychiatrists, psychologists, directors of sexual assault programs, lecturers, publications, legal aid, counseling, women's rights groups; plus governmental, political and research organizations in the United States and Canada.

Publisher Tom Coleman is a shy, handsome, young, dedicated attorney, specializing in cases involving civil liberties. Now in his third year of practice, he was disturbed in the beginning when he discovered to his amazement and annoyance that there was a dearth of reference material on sexual civil liberties and the time consumed in researching for a trial was often unrealistic -- the answer for him, and for other attorneys around the country in a similar dilemma, seemed to lie in the direction of a law reporter devoted to court decisions, legislation, comment, reviews, etc., which had specifically to do with sexual conduct, attitudes and orientation. Much as he researched, there was little being published by anyone -- the media "buried" much news vital to sexual law reform -- or ignored it entirely.

Choosing a name which tells it like it is, the SexuaLaw-Reporter was born, was incorporated in 1974, but spent its first year in "limbo" getting financed and collecting intelligent cooperative staff members. From its inception, there has been a certain amount of "trial and error" involved in the matter of content, perspective, layout and all the give-and-take involved in launching any new enterprise. There have been differences

... *The SexuaLawReporter* is a new and important contribution. It is very helpful to anyone concerned with the fast-developing law of sexual privacy.

—ARYEH NEIER
Executive Director
American Civil Liberties Union



SPECIALIZED NEWSLETTER NARROWS COMMUNICATIONS GAP FOR ATTORNEYS, EDUCATORS, SEXUAL LAW REFORMERS

The *SexuaLawReporter*, a bi-monthly newsletter which started publication in April, 1975, covers a field that has been long neglected by the general news media and the specialized press.

In an age in which sexual awareness is developing rapidly, there is a strong impetus toward sexual reform that requires a reliable line of communication if it is to grow and be successful.

The *SexuaLawReporter* is developing a nationwide communications network that will, through the newsletter, inform sexual reform activists, members of the bench and bar, law school professors and students, and others of judicial and legislative efforts—both successes and failures—on the federal, state and local levels.

In addition, the *SexuaLawReporter* will cover related fields, such as sociology, theology, literature, medicine and psychology, among others. The newsletter will explore how various disciplines contribute toward strengthening or loosening current sexual laws and attitudes—and what role they play in reshaping those laws and attitudes.

This newsletter, published by a non-profit corporation, is not a totally neutral publication. While it will not take positions on legislation or lobby for specific changes, its editorial policy contends that many legal sexual restraints, as currently written and enforced, are often detrimental to the exercise of democratic rights.

In its bi-monthly issues, the *SexuaLawReporter* will report the news and analyze key developments in the field. For example: Why legislation passed or failed; the consistency or inconsistency of judicial rulings based on prior decisions and the court's attitudes on sexual matters, or the prospects of new proposals toward reform based on past experience and critical appraisal by informed activists.

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