

the empty closet



NEW YORK'S OLDEST GAY NEWSPAPER ISSUE NO. 97 SEPT. 1979

Houston Sparks March

BY VERN HALL-SMITH

On July 6 through 8, history was written. The first national conference with sexual parity and over twenty percent third world representation was held in Houston, Texas, to make the final plans for the March on Washington For Lesbian/Gay Rights. In his welcoming address, Ray Hill, gay activist and delegate from Texas, reminded us of what we were doing and what we were trying to accomplish.

What all did we agree on? That the march be non-violent. That a third world lesbian contingent lead the march in recognition of the long held and deep oppression which they have gone through. That we will march in regional sections with a banner identifying where we are from. That speakers will only address lesbian/gay issues, and that furthermore they have to be approved by the areas from which they come. That child-care facilities be provided. That there be signers for the hearing-impaired and that Spanish translators be provided. That all materials and media releases be non-sexist, non-racist, and non-ageist. That one speaker, at least, must address the problem of the homophobic immigration laws. Logistical problems, if any, be handled by committee rather than by the plenary

session. We also declared October 15 as Constituency Day, in which a delegation from each congressional district call on their respective representative and present our demands. It was adopted that ten percent of all transportation be provided free to the economically deprived, specifically third world lesbians and lesbian mothers. This can be extended to mean gay men who are in low-income groups. The income figure was set at those earning under \$5000 per year.

A new national overview committee composed of two co-sexual representatives from each of the seven regions to review actions of the standing committees and implement policy. A gay youth advisory committee was set up to review all policy concerning gay youth, with a gay youth defined as any person under twenty-one years and college persons under twenty-five. The national coordinating committee to consist of two persons from each of the standing committees, with gender parity and twenty percent third world representation. The standing committees to be—fund-raising, media, logistics, outreach, constituent lobby, and culture. All positions are filled, with upstate New York being represented on the media committee. We have a national office in New York City and a Western office in

Denver, Colorado. The national logistics office is in Washington, D.C. Over the same weekend as the march, the National Conference of Third World Gays/Lesbians is being held. There will be a national gay lesbian sports event that weekend also, plus many other celebratory events. As these become known to us they will be passed on to you. The Houston conference had been planned by the earlier Philadelphia conference which had decided to hold the march—a march which had been requested in the will of HARVEY MILK. There had been many doubts as to whether or not to hold the march this year; that there would not be enough time for planning. In Houston we never questioned whether the march would be held this year or the next, it will be October 14. We addressed ourselves to the wording of the central demand adopted at Philadelphia, and to the five specific demands. After a great deal of debate, not always harmonious, we moved and accepted the demands and the central demand as they came out of Philadelphia, with the revised wording of number five, which dealt with youth. There was a request from the transpersons that we change the wording of the central demand. However in light of the fact that we constitute all aspects of the greater culture, that the term

"lesbian/gay" did include all of us. We did agree on a listing in the separate literature for all of our minorities. The religious caucus addressed the homophobia of the organized churches and resolved to intensify the education process to accelerate change in attitudes by the churches. The most effective flyer that I saw was a sheet folded in half, with the words on the outside, "What Jesus Christ said about homosexuality." When you opened it, it was blank. On the back, it said, "That's right, J.C. said nothing about homosexuality."

My personal reflections: I came away from Houston a changed person. I came away proud of my gayness, and proud of my brothers and sisters who are also in the struggle. I came away with an emotional & exhilarating high that even now sustains me. It is very easy to recapture that feeling every time I think of what we wrought in Houston; we are national, we are not going to hide in our closets any more. The revolution continues. Make no mistake about it, it is a revolution, and nothing less. We are revolting against oppression. I know that we will succeed. It is now only a matter of when. We now know how. In order for it to happen, it will take the efforts of as many of us as will do it. We know that not everyone will participate or even agree with us. We are family.

Global Conference

BERGEN—Sixty-five men and women representing lesbian and gay organizations from seventeen countries met at the first annual conference of the International Gay Association in this northern Dutch city April 13 to 16.

As a result of the conference the IGA, which was founded in Coventry, England, in 1978, will seek consultative status with the United Nations as an international body speaking on gay rights.

One of the first questions to be tackled by the meeting was the underrepresentation of lesbians in the IGA. The principle of "gender parity"—equal representation of lesbians and gay men—was adopted as an ultimate goal. Special outreach to lesbian and women's groups, the formation of a women's caucus and work on proposals to make the IGA program more relevant to lesbians will take place during 1979. The women's caucus will be co-ordinated by Ginny Vida of the NGTF(USA), Truus van Buren of the COC(Netherlands) and Julia Scharnhorst, of the AG Lesben im KB(West Germany).

Different member organizations will contact national liberation movements in the third world to determine the position of lesbians and gays in those countries. A special workshop on the question will take place at an informal gathering in Brighton, England, in August, and a newsletter will be published once the

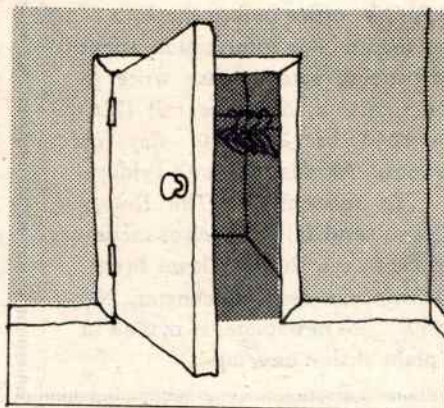
necessary information is gathered.

Several international organizations will be targeted during 1979. The World Health Organization will be tackled on its continuing official categorization of homosexuality as a disease. The Council of Europe will be pressed to recommend the decriminalization of homosexuality in member countries. The International Labour Organization will be contacted about the rights of gay people at work. The IGA will be working with Amnesty International to supply information about gay prisoners and a network will be set up to smooth the passage of gay refugees.

Representatives will be sent to Moscow on the opening day of the Olympics in 1980 to protest the oppression of gays in the USSR. Demonstrators will picket Soviet embassies throughout the world at the same time. Spanish laws against gays will also be singled out for attack.

A week after the first annual conference, we in Amsterdam are still in a glow about what was gotten done and the way it was gotten done," said Rob Pistor of the COC, one of the conference organizer. "There is room for improvement and mountains of work to be done ... but the commitment to making gay rights international has been confirmed. We can all be quite excited about this."

—The Body Politic



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Third World Gays Speak out

Washington— Twelve representative third world gay men and women met June 5 in the White House with members of President Carter's staff and told them that minorities within minorities face problems unique to themselves that are easily buried by larger group concerns.

The meeting, arranged last March by the National Coalition of Black Gays, was a continuation of the White House gay conference in 1977 when the National Gay Task Force met with then Presidential Assistant Midge Costanza. The group consisted of Black, Hispanic and Oriental gays. They met with White House aides Jane Wales and Abigail Havens to deal with such issues as affirmative action programs; job protection of gays in federal employment; the Equal Rights Amendment; Carter's international human rights policy; anti-gay Hispanic discrimination by the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service and Social service budget cuts.

—Gay Life



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR AND YOU

Why Vote?

May 17, 1979

Try a little test.

A. Last week, under trying conditions, the percent of people who voted in Rhodesia was: 65%; 54%; 37%. (circle one)

B. Last year the percent of Americans who voted in Congressional races was: 65%; 54%; 34%; 37%.

C. In 1976, the percent of Americans who voted for President was: 65%; 54%; 37%.

(Answers: A. 65% B. 37% C. 54%)

These figures shouldn't surprise us. We can see what is happening locally: our registration is the lowest since 1968, with only six out of ten adults registered. And of those six only 70% made the effort to vote last year. That monster, *VOTER APATHY*, has clearly been growing of late and we have to respond somehow. Consider these facts: *Fact One: Registration is easy.* Now that we have voter registration by mail, you can register in just a few minutes. And once you register, you remain eligible to vote unless you move or fail to vote in two consecutive November General Elections.

Fact Two: Mail registration forms are very available. You can find them in almost every bank, library or governmental office in the County. Or, if you prefer, you can call our offices at 428-4550 and we will gladly mail you a form that day.

Fact Three: Absentee voting has been simplified. If you are confined because of illness or if you will be out of the County on an election day, you can vote by absentee ballot. Just be sure you are registered, then call us or write asking for the absentee application. And, if you are called out of the County on an emergency just before an election, you now have the right to come in to the Board of Elections, complete your application, and cast your absentee ballot right there.

Myth: Your vote doesn't count; Whoever perpetuates this myth just doesn't know the facts. Each year in our County important elections are often decided by very small numbers of votes. Take the County Legislature races two years ago, for example. With several very close races determining which political party had a majority in the Legislature, less than twenty votes out of over 2000,000

cast decided those close races and ultimately decided political control of a county of over 700,000 citizens.

The real fact is that those who do vote decide who governs us, and each one of those votes *does* count. And that fact is the crux of the whole matter and the cornerstone of our democracy. Those of us who are administrators will not solve the problems of a declining electorate. Nor will the legislators or the political leaders alone. The simple, haunting fact is that a people who do not work to maintain their democracy will lose it. Your efforts are needed, too. Remember Thomas Jefferson's caution: "Yes, we did produce a perfect Republic, but will they keep it, or will they, in the enjoyment of plenty, lose the memory of freedom?"

(signed) V. James Chiavaroli
Commissioner of Elections

(signed) W. Michael Losinger
Commissioner of Elections



Clean Up Your Act

As I write this item, it is the Sunday afternoon after the open form meeting at the YWCA. I'm feeling angry and betrayed. Why? Because I just came back from Durand-Eastman Beach, and while there I heard one of my younger brothers who was out in the water yell out in a very loud voice, "I want to suck a c****," twice. When he said this, two young men, who were obviously of a type that had committed the assault on our brothers two weeks ago, were passing by.

This is typical of the kind of behavior which in part was the provocation which happened two weeks ago. Last night about forty of our brothers and sisters were willing to go to the beach and put our bodies and lives in jeopardy in defense of just such comments. As I looked at him I couldn't help but think, "I was willing to put myself in jeopardy for this?" While I feel that we all have the right to say what we will, I still feel that that setting and those words were very inappropriate, especially in the context of what has happened over the past two weeks.

As a gay rights organization we have gone through a very trying time. If we had carried out the march back to the beach, we stood in the very real position of losing the financial support of many people and businesses. If we did

nothing, we would have been condoning the violence that happens to us. We were caught between the rock and a hard place. Under the circumstances we did what could be done in a non-violent way. We maintained our stance within the gay community and the greater Rochester community.

The young brother in question obviously spoke without regard to the consequences. I have mixed feelings as to whether I would have gone to his defense if the two persons had punched him out. There were people nearby with families. Thoughtless actions such as this make me wonder if it is really worthwhile fighting for our rights. I know that I will not quit, but at these times it makes it very difficult to stand up and be proud and to love my brothers. I hope that the person involved reads this and takes it to heart, and realizes that the fight is his just as well as mine. His actions have a bearing on our cause just as much as my own. In the setting of the bars, or a private place, the comments are not offensive. In a public place in which there are gays and non-gays, it is offensive. This is what we should bear in mind when we are out, this is what is meant by "Clean up your act, brothers." We cannot do it alone. Education begins with our own.

Vern Hall-Smith

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The Empty Closet is produced eleven times a year (July-August combined) by The Empty Closet Press for the Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley, Inc., at 713 Monroe Ave., Rochester, NY 14607, sole owner and publisher. Approximately 3000 copies of each issue are distributed on the first weekend of the month by mail and carrier.

The publication of the name or photograph of any person or organization in articles or advertising in this newspaper is not an indication of the sexual or affec-

tional orientation of that person or organization.

For publication, submit news items, letters, stories and poetry, art, etc., by mail or in person at the G.A.G.V. office before the 15th of the month. For information about advertising rates please write to the G.A.G.V. office or call (716) 244-8640 or 244-9930, day or evening, Monday through Friday.

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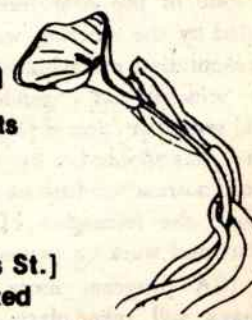


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COLLECTIVE THINKING

Is a Good Man Hard to Find?

by M. L. WELLS

In 1976 I refused to take on the job of being president of the Gay Alliance. It was definitely too big to take on by myself. I did not want to fail, not only because I would be the first woman president, but because I saw that we were going to grow in ways that would establish us as a very viable organization in this community. We needed someone who could appear before the television cameras, someone who would sit in on all the various standing committees that were mandated by our by-laws. We needed a president who could work on the various Alliance projects at least eight hours a day, five or six days a week. I knew that I could not, and I did not want such a strenuous job all to myself.

The solution was to amend the by-laws so that I could have a co-president. We wanted to model ourselves after the National Gay Task Force and so we wanted a male and a female co-president. Bill Copland enthusiastically filled the co-chair, and we have

found this to be a very workable solution.

In 1977 Pat Collins and Michael Robertson filled the same positions that Bill and I filled the year before. In 1978 Marge David and James Ide took over the job, and in the beginning of this year we had the dynamic duo of Sue Cowell and George Mohr. But like most dynamic people, George had to move on to his next adventure.

The Gay Alliance has taken on many more projects than could have been conceived back in the early days, and is more imperative today that Sue have someone to work with— someone to share what seems like one-crisis-a-month situations. Sue feels that she will be able to continue this pace by herself for only a short while longer. Help! The Alliance needs You!

Applications for the Co-president's job may be obtained from Rick Dixon Monday through Friday from 9 to 4. If you have any organizational experience or skills, the Alliance is the place for you. Call 244-8640, or stop by and find out if you qualify for this demanding but very exciting position.

Cruising in trouble

BY JOHN HRYUNAK

The controversy over the filming of "Cruising" continues, and it looks like Director William Friedkin will be forced to leave New York City for a more hospitable community in which to shoot his latest project. "Cruising" is the story of a psychotic killer who finds his victims in the leather bars and sex clubs around the Greenwich Village gay ghetto. There is much fear among the gay community that the presentation of such a small negative aspect of gay life will bring an inevitable backlash of anti-gay feelings.

Much of the reaction was prompted by Village Voice columnist Arthur Bell's scathing article on "Cruising," calling it homophobic and non-representative. There have been large rallies of concerned persons, and subsequent protests to disrupt the filming. Unfortunately the New York Police Department (and indirectly, Mayor Koch himself, by ignoring appeals to have the filming permit revoked) has been providing security for the filmmakers while they

use the gay neighborhoods to film. Even though this emotional issue has caused beatings and arrests of protestors, the disruptions continue.

Many gay businesses have backed out of agreements to use their premises for shooting, resulting in delays to find new locations.

Director William Friedkin ("The Exorcist" & "The French Connection") and producer Jerry Weintraub have refused to allow any gay input into the script, and a meeting with representatives from the National Gay task force proved useless. Friedkin and Weintraub claim they are just making a murder story that happens to have an S & M background— but many people disagree. It's about time the media stopped fearing censorship and realized their influence in shaping public opinion. America has too many ill-conceived views of gays already, making the production and presentation of "sensationalized entertainment" such as "Cruising" intolerable.

More Staff

On August 4 and 5, twelve prospective peer counselors took part in a marathon weekend training course. This was the first time the peer counseling committee offered a marathon training program. The curriculum included mini-lectures on counseling intervention, crisis theory, active listening techniques, making referrals, suicide intervention, and

the management of harassment calls. Group members also had opportunities to role-play being peer counselors and gays seeking information or assistance. After two days of intense togetherness and hard work, a group of new peer counselors parted company, exhausted but looking forward to their roles as LRC and GBR peer counselors.

March on Washington

BY VERN HALL-SMITH

This year marks the tenth anniversary of the Stonewall riots, the historic rebellion that helped launch the current wave of lesbian and gay liberation. What better way for us to commemorate this anniversary than by mobilizing our sisters and brothers, as well as all our supporters, in the first national march for lesbian and gay rights. The march will be a celebration of our community solidarity and a sign of our political strength.

We must recognize that our strength lies in our diversity. It lies in our ability to organize a genuine national movement for lesbian and gay rights. Let the march on Washington on October 14, 1979, lay the foundation for such a movement. Our five demands are:

- 1) Repeal all anti-lesbian/gay laws.
- 2) Pass a comprehensive lesbian/gay rights bill in Congress.
- 3) Issue a presidential executive order banning discrimination based on sexual orientation in the federal government, the military, and federally contracted private employment.
- 4) End discrimination in lesbian mother and gay father custody cases.
- 5) Protect lesbian/gay youth from any laws which are used to discriminate against, oppress, and/or harass them in their homes, schools, jobs, and social environments.

turn to p.5

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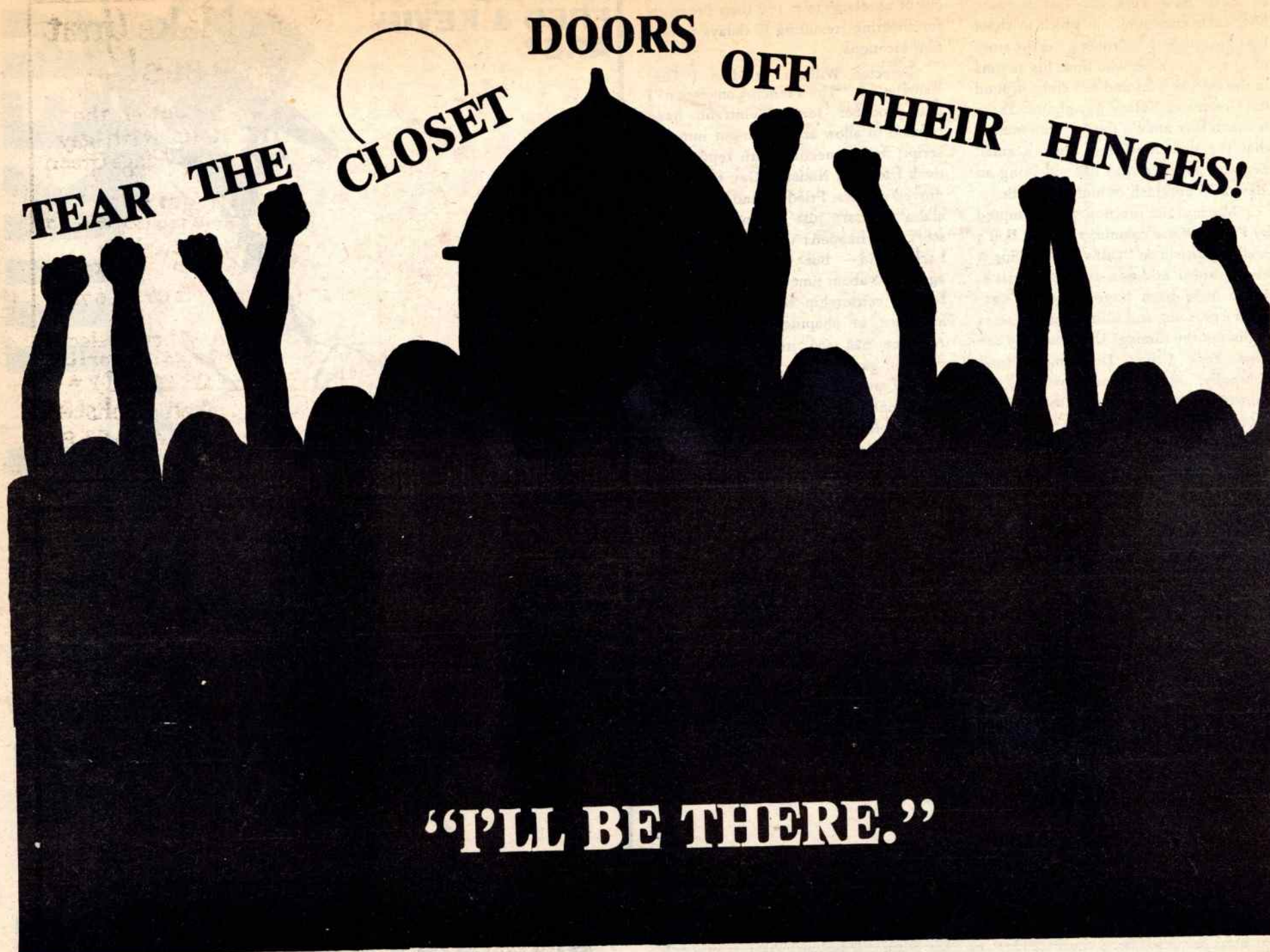
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The More News Page

Gay Youth — It Isn't Easy

BY DR. WALTER D. SZYMANSKI,
A.A.M.F.T.

As a priest and a doctor, I rarely come across the pain that equals that as experienced by gay youth, more particularly gay adolescents, in either my pastoral or clinical interventions. I know of no population more fearful and ambivalent of their futures than that of gay youth. My commitment to helping with the problems of gay youth is no small one, and it troubles me to know of the vast lack of resources available to these young people. No only is there a lack of places to go to meet friends and understanding peers, but there is a basic lack of places to go to speak to an understanding adult friend, or an understanding and non-judgemental counselor.

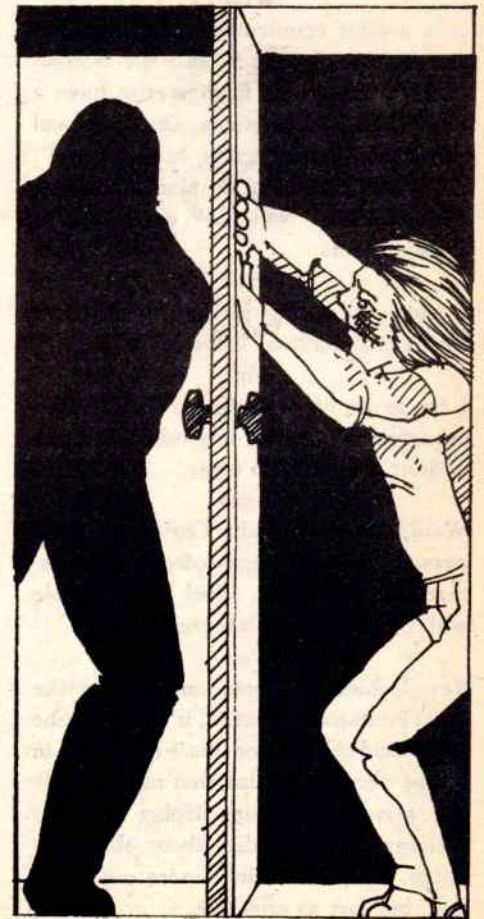
In my discussions with high school students, it is apparent that they have an open and healthy attitude towards the multiple realities of society's different life-styles. However, what was at once an open attitude suddenly becomes too frequently an attitude of judgement, ambivalence and even ridicule when the subject of different life-styles switches to the life-style of a gay person. Most certainly a gay youth would be very reluctant to have any of his or her peers

to know in the slightest of his or her gay identity. Such a revelation in a high school setting would set the pattern of ridicule from peers and probable treatment as an outcast. It is very difficult for most to understand or comprehend the overwhelming loneliness and fear that is experienced by young gay persons at the threshold of their entering a very difficult adult life-style.

One of the difficulties experienced in gay adolescence is the lack of being able to participate openly in dating and other supportive social events taken for granted by their heterosexual peers. Social development and participating in close relationships with a significant other person are essential to gain the confidence needed to move on to more successful adult relationships. Adolescents need social support openly from their families, their schools, and their peers. A gay adolescent unfortunately does not have this support and this then takes a toll on that person's ability to catch up with the dynamic social growth patterns of surrounding young heterosexuals. When you also consider the fear and loneliness that a gay youth contends with, it is remarkable that many gay youth still survive the problems of their youth and are able to eventually maintain a healthy adult social life as well as mature and loving relationships with significant others.

Adult modeling behavior is very

important to the adolescent youth. The examples of parents, teachers, clergy and the like display for the young adult examples of coping with various life situations. These adult examples also are important in the area of demonstrating mature patterns of social relating and the participation in intimate and loving relationships. Dating and courtship for the young person often follows a pattern learned from a successful heterosexual couple such as one's parents. We learn in our youth how to have confidence in dealing with social and relational matters by observing the success of adults we would like to model ourselves after. The problems that confront gay youth are fairly obvious from this. How does the gay youth model behavior particular to his or her own gay social and relational situation from heterosexual adults? Certainly there is a lot of social good that gay youth can learn from their parents or other adult models, but there is a big gap when one wants to deal with gay social behavior. I think it would be challenging for the gay adult community to take on the responsibility of becoming examples for gay youth. Sponsoring discussion groups for gay youth would be one example of sharing adult values. Being a big brother or sister to gay youth could also have advantageous effects. The gay adult community needs to deal squarely with the social skill needs of gay youth and



be a resource for their younger gay brothers and sisters who suffer so much. A lot of unnecessary pain and disillusionment would be removed in adult gay life if one were helped earlier in youth.

cont. from p. 3

It is important to remember that the organizing work in many ways is as important as the event itself. This is because a network of organizations and organizers will be established. Presently there is great isolation between groups and especially between different regions of the country. The march can capture the imagination of those who have not participated in local events. Local groups will be strengthened by reaching out to their communities and involving new people and tapping new resources.

The march will have other positive effects. It will heighten national awareness of our issues in a way that a small local campaign cannot. It will serve as an important educational tool for both our own community and the non-gay community. A demonstration will support lobbying efforts by showing beyond any doubt that a strong gay constituency exists in this nation, a constituency that

is politically active and ready to mobilize. Congress must be pressured by a major escalation of our visibility and power which a massive convergence on the nation's capitol can provide. Most of all, the march will be exhilarating for all of us and give us the boost we need to carry on our work. We will be "coming out" nationally, and greeting our brothers and sisters in a unified demonstration of our pride, our spirit, and our determination to have our rights.

Volunteers are needed now for the march. They are needed in the following areas: media, fundraising, outreach, etc. If you can't help with your presence, send money. Blatant enough? Yes, We will go by bus. So far we have one

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Coming Out —an interview with Walt Szymanski

BY SUSAN YATES

Walt, what exactly is "Dignity and Integrity?"

Walt

It is a joint ecumenical effort between the Episcopal Church and the Roman Catholic Church in Rochester to have a forum for gay Christians. On a national level there is "Dignity International" consisting chiefly of Roman Catholics, and "Integrity National" comprised of Episcopalians.

Susan

Is your affiliation with the Episcopal or the Roman Catholic Church?

Walt

I try to be of pastoral service to both organizations and of any other denominations that want to come.

Susan

Would a born again Christian, or a person who had Pentacostal or Charismatic experiences, feel comfortable within Dignity and Integrity?

Walt

Yes, I think that sometimes when the word Pentacostal is used, it's to describe some kind of behavior that's displayed in public worship. I think that most people are private in their display of their feelings and attitudes about the Holy Spirit. They are a little more conservative, but just as effective.

Susan

I was banned from my church when I came out.

Walt

There's the fundamentalist's literal scriptural traditions that for some reason scapegoat homosexuality. It takes a lot of scholarship and appropriate biblical interpretation to deal with the subject of homosexuality.

Susan

How do you personally interpret the scriptures where gays are concerned, particularly St Paul?

Walt

Well, first of all you have to interpret the cultural significance of the word "homosexual" at that time and put everything in context. For example, St Paul in the book of Romans talks about condemning this and condemning that and homosexuals. In context he was condemning idolators who hated God, who were thieves and murderers. He put everything together and spoke about unnatural lust for each other. But today if you talk to a Christian homosexual I find that they do love God, they're not idolators, they're not thieves, they're not murderers, and in fact they are pretty good people. St Paul failed to differentiate. He probably didn't culturally understand the word gay either. We didn't understand the use of the word Black twenty years ago. Today black is accepted as something very good, very important, because there was a cultural consciousness raising that black is beautiful. Black God, Black theology, Black Jesus, and say the word "gay"

and what does that mean? Proud to be who you are, constitutionally gay in personality, and being gay as a responsible member of the community and so forth. That concept of gay Paul never understood, so Paul never wrote about gay because that concept never existed.

Also, when St Paul was writing about homosexuality, he was talking about behavior among heterosexuals. Paul and the people at the time the Bible was written, didn't understand or comprehend constitutional homosexuality. They didn't understand the fact that personalities were gay. Their understanding was built into the idea of procreation, to populate the world, to bring children and to multiply. That was

anything about homosexuality in the Gospels, and I don't think Jesus ever would. Good, solid biblical scholarship is no problem on the subject of homosexuality. It's the lack of scholarship that gives people the problem. People do not understand the bible that they read, and use it against people. That's what so pathetic.

Susan

Walt, what is the driving force that has made you want to help the gay community?

Walt

When I was in the Roman Catholic seminary I had a lot of questions about sexuality in the church and how it wasn't being dealt with. I was very concerned



the charge of the scriptures. Basically in the minds of scripture writers, like St Paul and the Prophets, everyone was heterosexual! There's no psychological homosexual! Everyone was charged to procreation and all sexuality was revolved around procreation. Homosexuality was seen as a non-procreative life-style. But still I think most scripture scholars would agree that most people who wrote scripture in those days were talking about behavior among heterosexuals. Homosexual behavior is natural only for people with a homosexual constitution. Paul couldn't comprehend that.

Then you've got to think about procreation too. Today heterosexuals can get married without having children. They can have genital pleasure without having children. What's the difference in heterosexuals having genital pleasure without children and procreation? Is not the primary aspect of sex, be it two people of the same, having genital pleasure? Both couples are not going to produce children. But biblically it wasn't a part of the consciousness of the writers. Jesus Christ never once said

about the amount of homosexuality in the seminary. There were men training to be celibate priests who had no opportunity to realize their sexual potential and personality. I found that rather disturbing. In the seminary it wasn't a question of gay or straight, it was a question of sex! You were taught not to think in those terms. I found that rather unhealthy. I couldn't believe that many of my friends, who I loved very much, were gay because no one would dare say anything about it. I wondered about myself. Then I heard of this Gay Liberation group at the U. of R., so I went. I wore my collar, thinking I was going to bring the church to the gay community and that died! What I didn't realize was that there was a lot of bitterness with the church and representing the church with my collar wasn't the way to open up any sort of mission. I had to realize that I had to become friends first. I had to take the collar off, join the group myself and let the people know who I am. That I'm Walt, rather than a representative of the institution. When the Gay Alliance was formed in the metropolitan area I stayed with it. I

had very close relationships with my gay friends and I felt very committed to that. Regardless of whether people are gay or straight, it's the affectional relationship between two human beings that's something very special, to be celebrated. I always wanted this when I was studying to be a priest. I wanted a very close priest friend, so that we could be attached and very affectionate, regardless of being of the same sex. I saw my turning point when I saw the gay community celebrating close relationships. It's the turning point for our culture, not only for gay people, but for straight people as well.

Susan

If a couple was interested in being united, what would your advice be to them?

Walt

I would bless their relationship, and I would bless them. Any two people have the right to ask the church to bless them. They have the right before God to make promises that they'll support each other and that they'll be honest and faithful to each other. The Bishop and I talked about this and we both agree that any two people have that right.

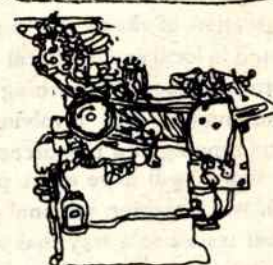
Susan

Do you have any long range goals that you would like to see happen with the gay straight community within the church?

Walt

First of all I'd like to see mixed socials and fellowships. I would like to see more blessings of gay people and straight people celebrating that. I'd like to see gay people develop a sense of gay spirituality. I want to see us thank God we're gay and to say that this is good.

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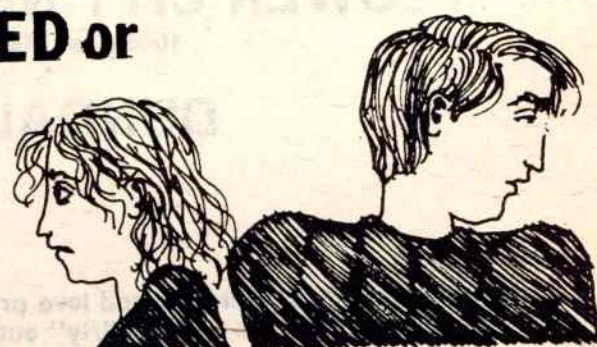
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lay minister speaks —

Gays and the Church

by JIM BRADLEY

Occasionally, a member of the gay community is given an opportunity to speak out in their own behalf. I was afforded such an opportunity on June 10th when our minister was to be away from the church and I was asked to take the service on that Sunday.

I had already worked on a service of this sort some time ago but augmented the material which I had with some up-to-date figures. Using the text *I Samuel*, I formatted the sermon in three parts: "Who am I? Who Are You? Who are We?" At the beginning of the sermon, I stated that I would accept the fact that the story of David and Jonathan in *I Samuel* could be interpreted as a "gay" love story. I went on to describe that a "gay" individual is before declaring to the congregation that I am a member of the "gay community." There were a few heads dropped and a few surprised expressions. Fortunately, no one got up to leave.

The second section of the sermon dealt with the members of the congregation and what their attitude should be towards all people. Almost everywhere in the New Testament, as well as in some parts of the Old Testament, there is an admonition to "love thy neighbor as yourself," "Love one another," and many

other phrases including one which declares that you cannot worship God unless you love and respect your fellow man. Henry Ward Beecher stated, "I never learned how to worship until I learned how to love."

The third section of the sermon dealt with who and where the "gay community" is. There was a declaration that the "gay community" is all around us. It is made up of men of all races, creeds, colors, and nationalities. No field of endeavor is without a certain amount of the "gay" element. There is a "gay" population in the United States estimated at between 40,000,000 and 45,000,000. The "gay community" cannot be avoided.

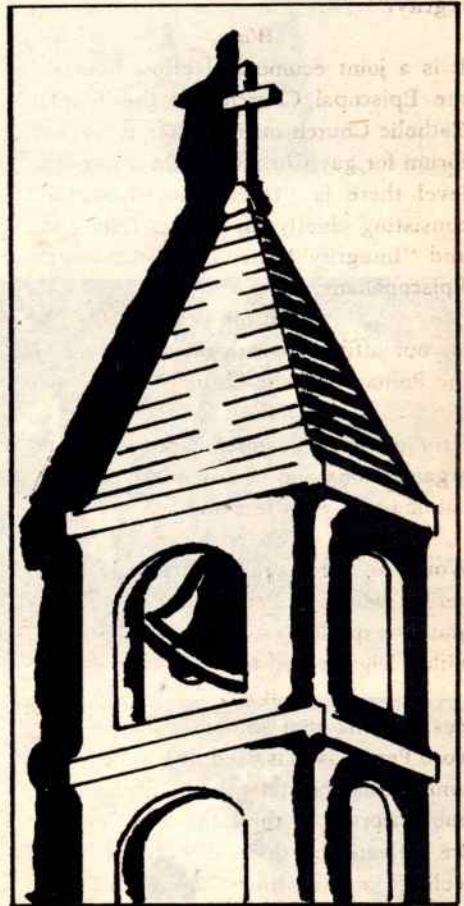
There were many comments after the service. An 18-year-old man came to me the first thing and said, "It took a lot of guts to do what you just did. You could hurt no one but yourself." "Every time you preach a sermon, you sock us right between the eyes with something that we should be more aware of." "Your friends (carefully avoiding the word "gay") are welcome here at South Church any time they would like to come. They would never be turned away. There were many other statements of the same nature. Not everyone spoke with me after the service but every single person has been in touch with me since. None have made any derisive or derogatory

remarks, and, to a man, all have extended an invitation to the "gay community" to come and worship with us.

On Tuesday, following the service, my minister called me and his first remark was "Boy, you got guts. I could never have done that." He asked me to stop at the church and talk with him. After asking quite a few questions, he told me that there was no reason for the "gay community" to feel that they were not welcome at South Church and would I try to make some liaison with the Gay Alliance and apprise them of the fact that South Congregational United Church of Christ would welcome any member of the "gay community" without a reservation of any kind. I would like to take this opportunity to extend a hand of welcome to my church.

One interesting thing to note: There is a verse in the Bible which states, "The truth will set you free." I have felt more free with myself and with other people since I had "the guts" to openly declare myself.

If you have no Church or you feel that the Church does not want you, come and worship with us; South Congregational United Church of Christ, corner of Alexander and Pearl Streets. Our next worship service will be on Sunday, September 9, at 11 a.m. I hope that many of you will join us.



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LESBIAN LINES

Why do They Say I'm Gay When I Feel So Sad?

by DEB MAKARSKI



I slept with my mother until she died from gall stones when I was eleven. My father raised me as his only child till he died. I rebelled against my loss, my hurt, and myself. I cried a lot then. I cried until I began to figure out what I was crying about.

For twenty-two years I denied myself the human right to be. I became involved with men to prove my femininity. Sure there were men I liked as people, but when it came down to the bottom line, I didn't (nor did I care to) know what to do with them.

Would there ever be a time when I knew I was attracted to someone and would actually go out and do something about it? Either I was afraid of being rejected for being gay, so I made people love me for myself; or I was afraid of being rejected for myself, so (assuming my gayness wouldn't be accepted) I took control of the situation and rejected the other person. Either way I was rejected. Either way I was right.

An attempt at compromise could have been made. A "let's be friends" deal could have been set. Better than nothing? But I knew that being gay meant being in a tricky situation. It had been proven to me that being accepted as a person could be all-of-a-sudden spoiled by being rejected for being gay. Who wants a friend who wants to be your lover? Who wants anybody who loves them more than they do? It puts the other person down. They can't feel enough. Who wants an unequal relationship? But how many relationships are there that are unequal and dishonest? It's a mutual "I-know-we're-not-right-for-each-other, but-I've-

nothing-better-to-do" relationship. It's unspoken and accepted. If someone better comes along the other person will act hurt and deny this in defense. But an honest "I'm gay" will drive a friend a hundred miles away.

Maybe it's because we're so constantly reinforced that 'gay' is inferior, immoral, and insane, that we actually

that the thing won't work? Is it a parallel to straight society's assumption that all gays are inferior, immoral ... etc?

Or do we all just have a problem with feeling? Women afraid to love men, men afraid to love women, women afraid to love women, men afraid to love men, women afraid to love women loving men?



begin to believe it. It starts to affect our relationships. Nothing will work if we believe it won't. It's hard to stand up and resist the brainwashing.

Is there really a difference among people? Will a gay person run away from a straight person who insists upon straightness? Is it all in the assumption

Sure hurt is a reason. It deletes energy from the human heart, soul, and psyche. But why make straight the master race for loving? Why make it twice as hard for gays to feel? Why make it easier for a man to strike out with a "chick" (I always thought of chickens when I heard this term) than for a

woman to strike out with a woman? Somehow the guy knows it's his role to strike out. Another one will cluck along soon. He can shrug it off. He has his dignity. He knows he didn't do anything wrong. He knows he's not immoral.

But for a woman to strike out with a woman is a whole nother matter. God knows where she got the strength to shatter all the shackles to begin with. She begins to question herself, her motives, her sanity. Why? Why must she feel ignoble? Why can't she feel it's her role too?

Maybe it's because gays are so many times depicted as a bunch of animals having sex with "their own kind," a bunch of nymphomaniacs whose id has gone haywire; a bunch of lascivious lusterers who mainline sex. "They can't get it any other way," someone shouts. "They can masturbate," I say.

There must be a reason for the gay/straight dichotomy. It must be our link with God. God made two of everything. Noah knew that. We were put on this earth to produce. Produce both physically and mentally. "Mush! Mush!" I hear Anita Bryant say while whipping her muskies. Now that's animalistic. To think that something as sensitive as love for another person can not pass as product! This logic may only come from the absurd minds of Phyllis (Schlafly) and Anita, our 'sisters' of the sleigh.

But in this world, a person who is trying to be a person is in the minority. Our goals have been set prior to creation. Produce! Produce! And so we do.

A Hymn (or A Her)

GAY: "Produce laws to make us strong!"

STRAIGHT: "Produce laws to prove they're wrong!"

GAY: "Produce laws to end this waste!"

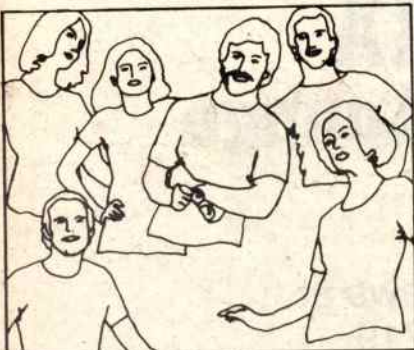
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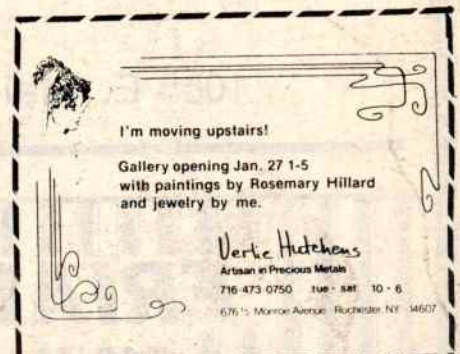
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NEW POLICY. Beginning with this issue of *The Empty Closet*, we will print personal (non-business) classified ads free of charge. These should be no longer than forty words and should be consistent with our publication policies. We also reserve the right to refuse any ad which we consider not acceptable. Messages or greetings to persons or the public, offers of goods or services for sale, announcements, want ads for roommates, friends or jobs, are the sort of thing we will run free. Rentals, job opportunities, business or professional services, resorts, organizations, publications (unless offered free) will still need to be paid (in advance) at the rate of \$3.00 for 40 words or less, and ten cents for each additional word. Call 244-9030 or -8640 or write to *The Empty Closet Press*, 713 Monroe Avenue, Rochester, N.Y. before the fifteenth of the month before the intended publication.

NUCLEAR FREE FUTURE CONCERT IN BUFFALO

Sept. 14. (8 p.m.) Holly Near, G.T. Thomas, Susan Freundlich. \$5. Call 454-3925 or 546-2679.

LESBIAN RESOURCE CENTER

Sept. 5 (8 p.m.) Open dialogue about drag shows. Two men who do drag will be coming to share their thoughts.

Sept. 19. (8 p.m.) Lesbian's religion— an open dialogue with women from Dignity/Integrity.

Sept. 22. (9 p.m.) Fall Dance! Disco, refreshments, fun. Place to be announced. Call 244-9030.

Oct. 3. (8 p.m.) Third World Women and Lesbian Nation.

GAY BROTHERHOOD

Sept. 12. (8 p.m.) Open discussion.

Sept. 26. (8 p.m.) Discussion of March on Washington.

DIGNITY/INTEGRITY

D/I Choir forming, Tyler House, 175 Fitzhugh.

Sept. 23. D/I Choir forming, Tyler House, 175 Fitzhugh.

Sept. 23. D/I Rochester Fourth Anniversary Dinner. Brother Roberts from NYC will speak on "Gays and the Church."

PEER COUNSELING INSERVICE

Sept. 18. (8 p.m.) Working with couples.

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ROOMMATE, male or female to share house or rent room. Available immediately. *Must be employed.* Near Keeler Street Parkway. On bus line (St Paul). Rent negotiable with space rented. Contact John at 342-2185 after 9:30 p.m.

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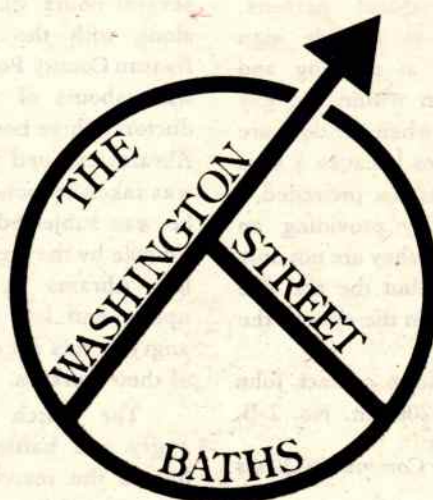
DISCOUNT RIDES TO WASHINGTON, D.C. for selected women. The Lesbian Resource Center can provide subsidies for several lesbian mothers, third-world lesbians and poor lesbians for the bus fare to Washington for the October 14 March. Call 244-8640 or -9030 and leave your name and address and we will contact you soon. Deadline for reservations and payment is September 25.

DEADLINE for payment for bus to October 14 March on Washington is September 25. Call 244-8640 NOW!

THE ROMAN needs part-time help, to begin in the fall or as soon as possible. Must be over 21, have a clean police record and be able to work weekends. Call 454-1074 and ask for Managua.

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NEWS

O'Leary Replaced

Lucia Valeska, 39, a sociologist and a leader of the lesbian-feminist and gay movements in Albuquerque, New Mexico, was named to the position of Co-executive Director of the National Gay Task Force by the NGTF Board of Directors, meeting in New York last week. She joins Charles F. Brydon in the top administrative position of the nation's largest and most influential gay-rights organization.

Upon being notified of her appointment, Ms Valeska said, "I am honored to join in the work of the NGTF. It has long been my belief that women and gay people should travel a common road to liberation. NGTF will continue to play a crucial role in this effort, and I am very glad to be a part of it."

Immigration Block

San Francisco (IGNA) An English furniture restorer visiting the United States was stopped by a US Immigration official here because he was wearing a gay pride button. Carl Hill has been ordered to have a psychiatric examination because he has said he is a homosexual, which still makes him a "sexual deviant" in the eyes of the Immigration and Naturalization Service. The Boutelier Case of 1967 apparently still stands in denying homosexuals the right to visit or emigrate to the United States. Don Knutson, executive director of Gay Rights Advocates, who is Hill's attorney, said he is investigating the situation because nobody knows what the law is."

Michael Mason, Carl Hill's lover, who accompanied him on the trip but was not detained since he was not wearing a button, said that he thought the most common form of discrimination is for the US Embassy to refuse visas to known homosexuals in the first place.

Veteran Discharges

Tens of thousands of gay men and lesbian women have been discharged from the U.S. Armed Forces with less than honorable discharges merely because they are gay. It is now possible to have these discharges upgraded. It is essential that you or your friend begin at once the proceedings outlined below to obtain an honorable discharge. In 1976 a limited amnesty bill was passed by both houses of Congress and signed into law.

This law was general in nature. All less than honorable discharges received by members of the Armed Forces in all past wars were declared to be subject to review until January 1, 1980. This law directly affects all service personnel who were discharged for being gay. The reason is Discharge Review Boards and Military Review Boards are holding, in all cases where the discharges were based solely on homosexuality, that the discharge should be upgraded. With proper legal guidance it is now possible for gay men or lesbians to have their discharges upgraded to honorable and receive all the attendant benefits. The reason for this is changing sexual mores. This will not be possible after January 1, 1980, because the statute of limitations on the amnesty bill will pass.

Anybody with a gay discharge can have it changed unless they were convicted of an offense involving force, or conduct

involving sex with minors.

Even if you have an undesirable or general discharge you are now eligible for medical benefits immediately at your local VA hospital.

When making applications, go immediately to your local VA office and apply for benefits. When your discharge upgrade is completed, benefits will be retroactive to the date of application.

Thorpe Gets Off

LONDON— "The trial of the century" has concluded in the Number 1 chambers of London's Old Bailey central criminal courts. Jeremy Thorpe, former leader of Britain's Liberal Party, former Member of Parliament, and a man considered by many at one point to be among the primary candidates for ascension to the office of Prime Minister, was acquitted on June 22 of charges of conspiracy to commit murder.

The charges were brought by Norman Scott, a former horse trainer and model who alleged that he and Thorpe had been lovers more than fifteen years ago. Scott claimed that Thorpe had contracted to have him murdered to ensure his silence about their alleged relationship, and to stop the blackmail alleged to have been carried out by Scott.

—Gay Community News

Deaf Gays Organize

NEW YORK CITY— A National Gay-Deaf Awareness Campaign has been launched by the Empire Rainbow Alliance of the Deaf, the New York City chapter of the National Rainbow Alliance of the Deaf. The campaign is aimed at locating gay-deaf persons who are not members of a gay-deaf association or who want to establish such a group, and to "unite all gay-deaf individuals and have their needs and rights recognized.

As the gay-hearing community becomes more aware of the numbers of gay-deaf, steps are being taken toward the inclusion of gay-deaf persons. Groups have begun to provide sign language interpreters at meeting and rallies. "Discrimination within the gay community still exists when the deaf are excluded from activities because a sign language interpreter is not provided," said John Nunier. "By providing an interpreter for the deaf, they are not only including more gays, but they are also taking on a new image in the eyes of the straight community."

For more information contact John O.A. Nunier, 304 E. 20th St. No. 2-B, New York City 10003.

—Gay Community News

Anti-Gay Lobby

Washington, D.C.— A major new lobby, enlisting evangelical Christians and aiming at legislation against gay people, has opened a Washington office and begun a high-powered lobbying effort.

Gay Rights National Lobby Executive Director Steve Endean warned, "There is a strong possibility that Christian Voice may not only scare Congress from legislation designed to guarantee civil rights for lesbians and gay men, but that the Christian Voice campaign could also result in the enactment of specifically anti-gay legislation as well."

Christian Voice, an outgrowth of

American Christian Cause, becomes the first legal lobbying effort against gay civil rights, Endean said. Other groups, such as Anita Bryant's Protect America's Children, are supposed to be restricted from direct lobbying activity in order to maintain a tax exempt status. The prospect is, Endean said, that they will now organize behind Christian Voice and swell its numbers and contributions.

Some members of Congress who have already enlisted as members of the Christian Voice Congressional Advisory Committee are Senators Orrin Hatch and Roger Jepsen, and Representatives Dan Crane, George Hansen, Tom Kindness, Trent Lott, Larry McDonald, and Ron Paul. More members are expected to join.

Endean said that the Gay Rights National Lobby would continue its efforts in Congress through the 1979 Gay Civil Rights Bill and would maintain "watchdog" oversight of possible anti-gay bills and amendments proposed by Christian Voice. Contributions to assist the Lobby should be sent to: Gay Rights National Lobby, 1606 17th Street N. W., Washington, D. C. 20009.

—GRNL

Aussie Gays March

SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA— Five hundred lesbians, gay men and their supporters took to the streets of Sydney recently in celebration of the tenth anniversary of the Stonewall rebellion. Organized by the Sydney Gay Solidarity Group, the march also commemorated the one-year anniversary of the arrests of more than 100 people at last year's gay mardi gras in Sydney and at subsequent marches.

—Gay Community News

Kidnapped for March

NEW YORK— In an attempt to force cancellation of the National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights, Tom Abrams, an unemployed nurse and a member of the New York City media committee for the march, was kidnapped, drugged, and held hostage for several hours while march organizers, along with the New York City and Nassau County Police, tried to locate the whereabouts of Abrams and his abductors. Three hours after his abduction, Abrams escaped from his attackers and was taken by police to a hospital where he was subjected to mistreatment and ridicule by the hospital staff. The ordeal left Abrams bruised and extremely upset, and left the march organizers angry at this act of violence against one of their workers.

The march organizers were left angry and baffled at this attempt to harass the march and intimidate and harm one of the march workers. Organizers felt it was important to inform other people working in the movement of this incident, because of its attempt to intimidate women and men working for lesbian and gay rights.

There was also some concern in the march office about the motivation behind the abduction. While it appears clear to the organizers that this was an attempt to use violence to frighten and intimidate people working towards the march, organizers also feel that the incident may have been planned by people attempting to discredit the march organization. One march worker told GCN, "Whoever is responsible for Tom's kidnapping knew that they would scare

the hell out of us and knew that we would not be able to publicize this incident of violence and harassment without it looking bad for us. This is an example of the way violence is used to hurt an individual and hurt a movement."

Security measures will be improved at the march office and all activists have been urged to take special precautions in the aftermath of this incident.

—Gay Community News

FBI Fires Gay

WASHINGTON—An employee of the FBI was fired on May 1 for his admitted homosexuality. John Calzada, expelled from the organization on the grounds that his being gay violates the laws of his home state of Virginia, has filed a preliminary appeal through his lawyer Frank Kameny. They are awaiting clarification of FBI employment policies before pursuing the case.

There has been confusion over exactly what is the policy toward gays in government agencies. Otis Cox, a media representative for the FBI, told GCN that "There is a policy being worked on between the Department of Justice and the FBI," but that it "hasn't been completed for public disclosure." In the meantime, "we are standing by the statement that we've always made that we do not hire homosexuals," Cox explained.

Terrance Adamson, the department's Director of Public Information, stated that, for the Justice Department, "homosexuality is not grounds for firing unless it can be proven on a case by case basis that it adversely affects the employee's ability to perform his job." Breen said that "the fact that someone says they're a homosexual doesn't mean he's necessarily violating any laws at all if they're in Virginia or anywhere. That can't be the answer, something's got to be job related." The subcommittee on Civil and Constitutional Rights is also awaiting clear policy statements from the FBI and the Department of Justice before taking further action.

—Gay Community News

Cal. Supports Rights

On May 31 the California Supreme Court reversed a lower court's dismissal of a suit against the Pacific Telephone Co. by four persons who claimed to have been fired or denied employment by the utility because they were openly gay. In the process, according to Don Knutson, Executive director of Gay Rights Advocates, a San Francisco-based public-interest law center representing the plaintiffs, the high court "effectively outlawed discrimination on the basis of sexual preference by employers, both public and private, anywhere in the state." The effect of the Supreme Court's ruling is to establish the principle that, despite the absence of a state law specifically prohibiting it, employment discrimination against homosexuals as a class is illegal in California. Lesbians and gay men suffering from employment discrimination anywhere in the state may now seek redress directly from the courts with the assurance that their complaints cannot be summarily dismissed as lacking a legal basis.

—NGTF

