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Fifth Freedom, 1975-01-01

The Mattachine Society of the Niagara Frontier

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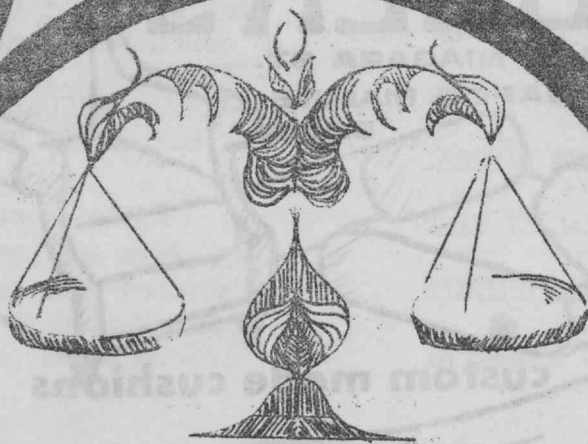
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Freeth Freedom

JAN. - FEB. 75

VOL. 5

NO. 1 AND 2



**Hibachi Room Justice Done
International Congress Report
Lesbian Mother Fights For Custody
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Deadline for the MARCH ISSUE of the Fifth Freedom is Monday, February 10, 1975.

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We welcome feedback on articles, ads, etc. Send all correspondence to above P.O.Box address. We retain discretion in publishing correspondence unless you advise otherwise. If you do not wish your name used, please specify.

Hibachi Room Triumphs !

On January 16, 1975 a unanimous decision by the Appellate Div. of the State Supreme Court in Rochester, overturned liquor license revocation proceedings against the Hibachi Room, a favorite Buffalo night spot for gays.

It all started in early June, 1974 when the Buffalo Police Vice Squad sent one of their undercover agents into the Hibachi Room to uncover violations in their usual sordid manner. Over a period of 2 weeks, the undercover officers compiled several charges and they were submitted to the State Liquor Authority (SLA) for disposition. On July 17, 1974 the SLA advised the Hibachi Room that proceedings to revoke its liquor license were under way and that owner Dave Chipman, was to appear at a hearing to 'answer' the charges.

The whole process for the Vice Squad and the State Liquor Authority was routine. They had done it so many times in Buffalo against bars that cater to the gay clientele. But this time they got more than they expected. Dave Chipman was prepared to fight back on behalf of his Hibachi Room and the Buffalo Gay Community. The entire proceedings dragged out over the period from mid-July 1974 until the final decision by the courts on Jan. 16, 1975!

Throughout the long and costly ordeal Dave Chipman and his lawyers fought back through every legal avenue of approach. While waiting for a determination on revocation proceedings from the SLA headquarters in N.Y.C. back in the Fall, the October 1st annual license renewal came up. When the local SLA office tried to refuse renewal of the Hibachi Room license, Chipman's lawyers slapped the SLA with a show cause order. The SLA backed down and granted conditional renewal. Then when the SLA's N.Y.C. office decided to revoke the license, Chipman's lawyers fought back with an injunction against their decision, pending appeals through the courts.

With its show cause order, injunction and victorious outcome in the courts, the Hibachi Room has set a Buffalo area precedent, particularly important for bars that welcome the gay clientele. Dave Chipman, Hibachi Room owner, granted an exclusive interview to the Fifth Freedom. Following are excerpts from the interview by F.F. representative Don Michaels:

HIBACHI, CONT.

D.M.: Dave, did you have any qualms about the possibility of losing your case?

D.C.: Let me put it this way. I was very worried since last July. No one has ever won before in Buffalo. This was a sink or swim effort.

D.M.: What made you decide to take the case as far as you did? Was it simply a matter of livelihood or were there other issues involved that you were concerned about?

D.C.: Well, livelihood was one, but it was important that someone did take a stand, finally. My attorneys thought we had a very good chance at it, so we started, one step at a time.

D.M.: In the decision and throughout the proceedings, references were made to "bouncers" as such, employed by you to keep their eye out for trouble. Do you plan to continue this system of using "bouncers" to maintain order?

D.C.: Oh yes, we would have to. I think we would have to be even more so on our guard, because we don't know how the S.L.A. is going to view this. They may get nasty, and tell the vice squad to press even harder. On the other hand, they may say, "well, we lost this one and we best ease off." We don't know how they're going to view it.

D.M.: This has, as we all know, been a very costly proposition for you. Good legal cases and lawyers don't come cheaply. In your winning decision, the S.L.A. now must reimburse you for a great deal of the expense. Can you give us an idea what kind of expense we're talking about?

D.C.: Well, the total cost through the Court of Appeals, was roughly \$4000 and out of that the State has to repay slightly over \$1000 of the court costs.

D.M.: Dave, what do you think the benefits to the gay community are going to be, having won this case with homosexuality as a principal issue?

D.C.: Well, I think more people will feel at ease to go out to the bars. In past history, people were always afraid of raids and their name getting in the paper. A good portion of the gay community stayed away from the bars because of this.

D.M.: Dave, we wish to extend our appreciation for your winning efforts, and I think the entire Buffalo gay community appreciates your efforts. Thank you, again.

D.C.: Thank you, Don.

LESBIAN MOTHER FIGHTS FOR CUSTODY

...EILEEN KATZ

Ms. M. (name withheld to protect her privacy), a Western New York mother, was denied custody of her three small children (aged 8, 5 & 3) as the result of court action initiated by her ex-husband out of anger over her love relationship with Ms. P., a close friend of hers who often babysat for the children.

The allegation used by Mr. M. to claim Ms. M. unfit as a mother was that she was a lesbian and therefore would exercise an "unhealthy influence" on their children. In his testimony he brought forth no evidence that implied Ms. M. was an unfit mother except for the fact that she was alleged to be a lesbian. His only witness was a psychiatrist who testified to Mr. M.'s stability and went on to make general derogatory statements about homosexuals. The only other witness called by Mr. M. was his fiance, who was inexperienced in dealing with children.

The information brought out during the hearing highlighted the discretion used by Ms. M. in separating her sexual and family life. There were no incidents of overt sexual activity in front of the children. The only factor which was expressed in court was that the children had seen the two women in bed. However, two experts testified (a psychologist and an anthropologist) that seeing women in the same bed is a common occurrence which would have no traumatic effects on children.

The testimony to support Ms. M. as a fit and loving mother was overwhelming. Her mother, an ex-employer, and a male friend of the family testified to the warmth of Ms. M.'s household and of her responsibility to the children. Clergy from the Catholic Church, United Church of Christ, Lutheran, Unitarian and Jewish faiths testified to the changing attitudes of their congregations and to their religions' acceptance of homosexuals into their specific faiths. Superb testimony was given by a psychologist, a specialist in sexual and gender identification, to the fact that Ms. M. is an extremely fit mother who is able to handle both her love and familial relationships without harm to her children. The psychologist stressed that Ms. P. (Ms. M.'s lover) was a very positive influence in the children's lives, and in no way presented any harmful influence. The anthropologist supported his statements with many studies all clearly implying that Ms. M.'s relationship with her lover did not hinder her role as a

MOTHER, CONT.

loving mother. Despite two days of such testimony, the judge, in a one page opinion, granted custody of all three children to the father, with visitation for the mother on weekends--if her lover is not present.

The amount of weight given to any testimony by the judge is questionable since his opinion does not reflect any matter upon which his judgment was made nor does he list acts that imply unfitness as a mother. His opinion is more of a punitive measure, criticizing Ms. M. for her lesbian relationship. What it is really saying to all gay parents is: It doesn't matter how fine a parent you are, you have no right to raise your children.

The change of permanent residence to the father's home meant both school age children will be forced to change schools and all three children will be miles away from their friends.

Ms. M. does not have much money and any help readers can give is urgently needed to pay for the appeal. We are appealing to the NY Appellate Division, 4th Dept., located in Rochester. There is no New York appellate case regarding the custody rights of gay parents. Achieving a victory on the appellate level in this case could set a precedent protecting the right of a fit and loving parent not to lose custody of his or her children solely because of his or her sexual preference.

Please send contributions, ideas, and correspondence to:

SOS Mother's Defense Fund
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MUGGERS ATTACK!

Sick, sick men were on the prowl recently in Buffalo, trapping gays for extortion purposes. Late Thursday night, January 9, Mattachine received word that 3 men were 'enticing' gay men to a motel room downtown and then extorting money from them under threats of physical harm. One of the men, described as a good-looking white male in his mid-twenties, acted as a decoy in the local gay bars long enough to meet someone interested in him and would then ask the unsuspecting gay man to go to his motel room. Once there, the other 2 men joined the decoy and, under threats of bodily harm to him, coerced the gay man into giving them money.

Our reports indicate that several gay men were trapped by this perverted trio. Fortunately, one gay man unwittingly had 2 of his friends join him in the excursion to the motel and the odds were evened out, resulting in a stalemate. But, others were not so fortunate.

Immediately upon hearing of the scheme, Mattachine printed up a warning leaflet and distributed it to the gay bars in the area. The leaflet described the decoy person and urged anyone approached by him to immediately advise the bar management and notify Mattachine as soon as possible.

A friend of Mattachine who is connected with a local branch of a Federal agency, checked into the incident and found that the 3 men involved left town the following day for Detroit. We were advised that authorities in Detroit would be notified. Management of the Travelodge Motel at Main and High Sts. - where the incidents occurred - were apparently unaware of such happenings and were unavailable for comment.

We urge anyone who discovers or falls prey to such schemes in the future, to contact Mattachine immediately at 881-5335. You will be doing a great service to the gay community by helping to expose and apprehend sick people who prey on others, before they can do further harm.

need someone to talk to? we're here...

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ON JULIUS EASTMAN'S SECOND PERFORMANCE LASTING ONE HOUR

This is written with the understanding that no art form is divorced from other art forms. Some readers may not find my terminology entirely appropriate for a musical concert. This is for two reasons. One, my musical background is that of a lay person. Secondly, and most importantly to my interpretation, the performance was not a traditional concert and cannot be perceived as such.

Art is found somewhere between anarchy and order, chaos and boredom. Either extreme cannot be tolerated for very long. Too much structure becomes boring. Total lack of order is insanity, destructive and pointless. To be able to merge these two extremes is a process performed by a successful artist. A creative artist searches and finds new means of merging these two polarities. Julius Eastman's performance can be viewed in these terms.

To anyone listening to the performance the artistry displayed was beautiful. It was obvious that the people listening enjoyed the first twenty minutes of the performance, but were restless for the remainder. The part of the audience that seemingly had a musical background were more intent, but eventually several of them showed signs of boredom. For myself, I was restless after about twenty minutes until I started to perceive the performance as a process. I began to see how I thought the concert was created as a process.

As I viewed the performance I noticed each musician had a single sheet of music. Each sheet was different; establishing several isolated themes. From my listening the themes were not synchronized. If they were, the relationships of sound would have repeated themselves and become immediately boring. The juxtaposition of these themes seemed such that there was no time when there was a repetition of the same relationships between themes. This created a beautiful variation of sound. Instead of progressions and variations of themes prearranged by the composer, chance was given free hand providing spontaneous and unplanned variations of sound.

To hold the constantly varying sounds the remainder of the performance was set in motion mechanically. The duration of the sixty minute performance was determined by a clock. The hour length may have become monotonous, but it also intensified the mechanical predetermined structure of the process. The musicians themselves became almost machine-like units contributing to the whole experience. An interesting and sometimes humorous part of the evening were electric bells. These provided a continuum of sound surrounding the audience. This added yet another interesting dimension that worked with the entire experience.

EASTMAN, CONT.

Beyond the beautiful artistry, the beauty and excitement in the performance was in the dynamics of the process that was created and set in motion by Julius Eastman.

-John M. Yanson

Ed. Note: The Julius Eastman concert reviewed here was the third in a continuing series of concerts which began at the Center in November. Concerts scheduled for the future are Julius Robinson, concert pianist from New York City, in solo performance on Friday, February 21 at 8 PM and The Buffalo String Quartet on Friday, March 28 at 8 PM. Admission to the concerts is \$2.

"OUR COUNSELING EFFORT: HOW, WHY, WHO and WHEN" At the Mattachine Meeting on Sunday, Feb. 2 at 8:00 P.M. we will have a special program dealing with the Center's Counseling Service. Members of the staff have prepared an exciting presentation that will incorporate group participation in exercises geared to everyone interested in a learning experience in the field of counseling. Join us for this unique effort.



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report on

THE INTERNATIONAL GAY CONGRESS

by don michaelis

The occurrence of a genuinely momentous event is indeed a rare thing. Few of us are privileged enough to personally share in an actual milestone of gay liberation. The First International Gay Congress, held in Edinburgh, Scotland from Dec. 18 to 22, 1974 was truly a landmark in the history of homosexuality.

A new frontier in the struggle for gay liberation was established by the more than 350 delegates from around the world, who laid the groundwork for the many difficult tasks that lie ahead.

Derek Ogg and Ian Dumm, the two people from Edinburgh who organized the Congress, did so in the spirit of bringing together as many of us as possible, in order to create an entity through which we could all work together for our common goals. It was a lot to ask of over 350 people, on a 4 day schedule. Much had to be done in that short amount of time. All the preliminaries - registration, housing accommodations, followed by a ceremonious reception and then a steady pace of panel sessions, workshops and debates on issues.

No conference, big or small, is complete without an overriding issue. Sexism became the Congress issue from the very outset, and was the issue that pervaded nearly every aspect of the 4 day schedule. The issue arose when it became apparent that too little effort was made to provide opportunities for participation by the women. This was obvious from the opening reception Wednesday night, right through the closing sessions at the end of the week. There was much conflict and debate over the sexism issue, but it was necessary, and it was good. It helped cut through a lot of pretentiousness that often accompanies a conference, and it helped many of the delegates to achieve a greater degree of unity and self-awareness.

Much was accomplished throughout the Congress, and much was learned. The interaction and the sharing left an indelible impression on us all, and expanded our awareness of our own oppression as well as that experienced by others. We all shared the moving speech by the delegate from Spain who recounted the horrible forms of treatment that known homosexuals are subjected to by the Spanish government and the Catholic Church. We listened as the delegate from the Irish Republic told how homosexuality is still punishable in Ireland by life imprisonment; we soundly applauded Bernice Humphreys, Sappho of London, as she finished her incredibly stirring speech on

CONGRESS, CONT.

the plight of the Lesbian mother; many of us had some unpleasant memories recalled as we listened to 15 year old Stewart Hunt speak to the oppression of gay youth; and many of us felt the pangs of guilt, as Frank Bishop, of CENTRE, London, chastised us for failing to understand the needs and the search for love by older homosexuals.

In workshops we shared personal experiences and individual ideas with one another. Among the many workshops were those on education, gay theatre, Marxism and gay perspectives, women working in national homophile movements, the media, men's health and sexual minorities (pedophilia, S&M, asexuality, transsexualism, transvestism).

There were incidents, of course, that charged the atmosphere: a Friday afternoon march on the Edinburgh Scotsman newspaper office and the B.B.C. offices to protest lack of media coverage; a discotheque Friday night that turned out to have 'straight' male bouncers who harrassed several gays, particularly women; the 'straight' Edinburgh University students (males) who were running around the Student Union (where the Congress was being held) writing "Poofs Go Home" on the walls - Poofs being the local word for 'faggot'; and a near walk-out by the women, when it was found out that the Saturday panel on setting up an international organization was comprised entirely of males!

There were also a number of humorous sidelights to this international venture. There were about 40 of us in the American delegation that travelled together and we were booked to travel by train from London to Edinburgh, on our way to the Congress. Someone with the railway company was obvious confused or embarrassed, for on each rail car that was reserved for us, was an official looking sticker reading: "Reserved Compartment: National Gray Task Force." And on our arrival in Edinburgh, several of us found that we were staying in a hotel called (much to our delight), "The Rimswell House." Add to that, waiting on the wrong side of the street for an omnibus, and the risk of locking the wrong way when stepping off a curb (they drive on the wrong sides of the street over there!) and you've got a trip that is complete.

Resolved from this First International Gay Congress, was the unanimous intent to continue to unite on an international basis. The next Congress was voted to be held in San Juan, Puerto Rico in the spring of 1976. Many sites were considered, but Puerto Rico was chosen for 3 main reasons: 1- To enable participation by South American countries, whose lack of representation at this year's Congress was

CONGRESS, CONT.

sorely missed, 2- To call attention to the newly adopted laws in Puerto Rico, which are very anti-gay and repressive, and 3- To possibly challenge the anti-gay U.S. immigration laws.

An interim structure, based on a proposal submitted by Bob Osborn (Gay Brotherhood, Rochester) was adopted. It consists of task forces which will deal with the multitude of problems facing gays on an international level and will make recommendations for action at the 76 Congress. Among the problems to be tackled are: pressuring for law changes in heavily oppressive countries, such as Spain, Ireland, Soviet Union, Chile, etc.; pressuring for dialogue with the Catholic Church in Rome to secure a halt to its anti-gay positions; forming lines of communication with international bodies such as, the United Nations, The World Court, European Council, the Pan American Union, the International Red Cross, Amnesty International and International Labour Unions; create a Media Task Force that can communicate with groups in all countries and develop strategy to open lines of communication with gays in countries with no groups; and a task force to deal with finances. Further, as a result of a motion made by Bruce Voeller of the National Gay Task Force, the lambda (λ) was adopted as the international symbol for gay liberation. The lambda has been the gay lib symbol in the U.S. for several years.

This First of International Gay Congresses has set the stage for the struggle against gay oppression in the years to come. Those who argue that an international forum is premature and that we should solve the problems 'in our own backyard' before reaching out on a broader scale, have a myopic view of things. If we are to realize success in any arena, we must reach out to a broader sense of unity and purpose in order to strengthen our determination, our resolve and our sharing in the achievement of common goals.

Following the Congress I received a letter from one of the delegates I met there. He expressed something that touched me very deeply, and, I think, speaks with simple eloquence of and for all of us:

"I have just returned from New Hampshire where I spent Christmas. While there I had much time to reflect on many things including all the people whom I had recently met. What a wonderful feeling of pride I get when I think of it. Now it appears impossible to me that the gay world should not win its struggle! Living in New York City makes you feel that the movement lives only in a few great cities, but meeting everyone else demonstrated that the movement lives in great and small hearts! That's unconquerable.

David & Jason's relationship...
it's the same only different.



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SUN., FEB. 9th ~ 2:30PM MATINEE

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MORALS: A MATTER OF WHOSE

DANE WINTERS

"SEX FIENDS! DEGENERATES! PERVERTS! IT'S DISGUSTING. IT'S OUTRAGEOUS." "A debasement of public decency. A corruption of our community morals. Something must be done to rid our city of this depravity and filth."

Such was a recent storm of righteous indignation expressed by the citizens of Buffalo. And it sounds mighty familiar doesn't it? It sounds just like the same old epithets and charges that have been hurled over and over at the gay members of our area. Only this time it was different. Remarkably - ironically! - different. Because this time the target wasn't the lousy queers like usual. This time the dirty so-and-so's were members of the city's supposedly morally impregnable group; those who defend (?) its morals: its police department!

On December 31, 1974 the headlines of the Buffalo Evening News screamed boldly, "Blair (the city's police commissioner) Files Charges In Sex Scandal." Well, well. Happy New Year. Or Hallelujah Honey, now you're getting a dose of your own medicine. How does it taste baby?

The charges themselves were actually quite innocuous and ridiculous. Obviously they were intended to circumvent the real issue and give the whole thing the usual official whitewash. A 28 year old woman had lodged a complaint stating that she was coerced by two Buffalo detectives into committing lewd acts. It should have ended expeditiously and typically: the naughty boys should have had their wrists slapped for getting unfavorable publicity for the department and the whole matter should then have been forgotten. Only that wasn't what happened.

Somehow things got out of control, to the extent that the mayor hopped on it and started to turn some screws. Then it really started to sizzle like a pancake on a hot griddle. And ten days later the News listed a new set of charges that had been served. This time they got right down to the gritty gritty with some clear and explicit phraseology like "deviate sexual intercourse" and "illegal and improper sexual activities." As defined in the New York State Penal Code the specific acts referred to in the charges the News listed are narrowed down to three things: penis to anus, penis to mouth and mouth to vulva. Deciding which one of the three is the one that occurred is not difficult. It has a lot of long fancy names and a few very descriptive ones. The cool name for it these days is "getting head,"

CONT. NEXT PAGE

MORALS, CONT.

Hell's Bells. Buffalo's finest caught in the act with (literally) their pants down. What sensational material for the tabloids. What fabulous grist for the rumor mills.

The Fifth Freedom is neither a tabloid nor a grist mill. We are a responsible publication edited with dignity and integrity. Our intent is not to slander the policemen involved for their (mis)deeds. We do not hurl invectives or suggest titillating details. Our objective, though we are angry, is simple and clean. We want to draw attention to the unquestionable hypocrisy of the police that is made clearly and undeniably evident in this case. Because here our accusers stand accused of precisely the same charges that they have repeatedly brought against us.

Of course this type of police behavior is not news to us. We've always been aware of it. Just ask any hooker on Chippewa Street who comes to get the freebies and you can be sure that she'll have men in blue on her list. Okay, so they get their jollies just like everybody else. So what? We never objected to it fellas. Only when we were getting arrested and convicted and ruined for doing the same damned thing that we knew you were doing!

It was always a case of don't do as we do, do as we say. But this is the first (finally, thank God) time it was told to the citizenry and made a matter of public record via the press.

The fact that the police sex acts were/are heterosexual (which is sometimes debatable, too, by the way) and ours are homosexual does not in any way affect the question of their criminality. What they did with that woman is as legally reprehensible as what we do with our partners. Genders are irrelevant in this instance according to the Penal Code.

Probably Commissioner Blair feels off the record that the Penal Code is as archaic as we say it is and he will be as glad as we will to see the abolishment of laws prohibiting sex between consenting adults. Because then he will be able to reassign Captain Kennedy and his squad to something useful and needed like police duties that actually protect people and don't prosecute "criminals" without victims.

In the meantime he should keep his own doorstep clean if he is going to regulate ours. The vice squad should no longer be allowed to persecute us for doing exactly the same thing that they themselves do as soon as they get us safely off the streets and locked up tight.

Let there be a single standard with the same prohibitions and privileges for everybody.

WHAT'S HAPPENING . . .

- TUE, JAN 28: Mattachine Board Mtg, 8PM; Sisters of Sappho Mtg, 8PM
SUN, FEB 2: Mattachine Society Meeting - election of officers and an interesting & informative program on the Gay Community Center counseling program! (see p. 11)
TUE, FEB 4: Counselors staff meeting, 8PM
FRI, FEB 7: FILM - "A VERY NATURAL THING" - 7PM, 9PM & 11PM showings, \$2 adm. (see p. 15 for details)
SAT, FEB 8: "A VERY NATURAL THING" - 2:30PM showing
SUN, FEB 9: "A VERY NATURAL THING" - 2:30PM matinee & 8:00 PM showing, with a discussion to follow.
TUE, FEB 11: Mattachine Board Meeting 8PM; Sisters of Sappho Mtg, 8PM
FRI, FEB 14: Sisters of Sappho Benefit Dance with live band (see p.22)
SUN, FEB 16: Mattachine Meeting, 8PM - program to be announced.
TUE, FEB 18: Counselors staff meeting, 8PM
FRI, FEB 21: CONCERT, with noted N.Y.C. pianist, Julius Robinson, 8PM, \$2 admission (see p.10 & 11)
TUE, FEB 25: Mattachine Board Meeting, 8PM; Sisters of Sappho Mtg, 8PM
FRI, FEB 28: "Feasting With Panthers" - story of Oscar Wilde's trials and tribulations, on videotape. Benefit for NYSOGG lobbyist fund, \$2 adm, with beer & pizza
SUN, MAR 2: Mattachine Meeting, 8PM - devoted to a second benefit showing of "Feasting With Panthers" (above) 8:00PM

EVERY SATURDAY NIGHT! DANCE & PARTY AT THE CENTER, 10PM to 3AM, Beer & Pop Sold, \$1 adm., light show & disc jockey dancing

EDUCATION SERIES AT THE CENTER STARTS ON MONDAY - FEBRUARY 10TH - for details see page 24

COMING EVENTS: FRI, MAR 14 - CARNIVAL NIGHT AT THE CENTER, 9PM - ?, Games of skill & chance, dancing, merriment, beer & pop, \$1 adm.
SUN, MAR 16 - Mattachine Meeting, with program on: "ALCOHOLISM", 8PM;
FRI, MAR 28 - Buffalo String Quartet in concert, 8PM, \$2 adm.

KEEP UP ON WHAT'S HAPPENING! Add your name to our "Center Points" bulletin mailing list - mailed weekly with up-to-date calendar of events and happenings and information about the Gay Community Center - free of charge, first class, in sealed envelope. Just call or mail your name & address to us and we'll add it to our mailing list. Send to: G.C.S.C. - 1350 Main St. - Buffalo 14209 or call 881-5335!

Lesbian Feminists Meet

The first Lesbian-Feminist Conference of New York State was held on the weekend of December 6-7, 1974. Over two hundred women were present to meet other women who felt the importance of discussing issues that would lead to political action.

The workshops were well attended and covered areas such as: Separatism - the breaking away from straight feminist groups and gay groups that seem to be dominated by men.

Media Workshop - dealing with the negative view concerning Lesbians that is presented to the public and the inability of Lesbians to get work in the field of many communications.

Discrimination in all types of work was also discussed.

Other workshops which brought people closer to a feeling of sisterhood were those dealing with the difficulties of being a Lesbian mother, of having relationships and fitting into the expectations of the community. What could be done to support other women was much discussed. The feeling of creating a supportive group that would enhance a feminist view was brought into every topic of discussion.

Out of this conference came a determination to organize the different Lesbian Feminist groups in the state to form a coalition. This coalition will act to deal with the particular oppression that Lesbian women live with day after day.

In March of 1975 another conference will be held in Binghamton. The conference will deal specifically with organizing the coalition. Those interested in attending should get in touch with: Gay Community Service Center, Sisters of Sappho, Telephone No. 881-5336.



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WHAT IS GAY POLITICS ?

DON MICHAELS

Gay politics is a multitude of things. It's wearing a "Gay Love - It's the Real Thing" button in public; "coming out" to a good friend or to the family; protesting anti-gay newspaper articles; lobbying in legislatures for law reform - a wide range of actions from the personal and individual to those requiring highly organized group effort .

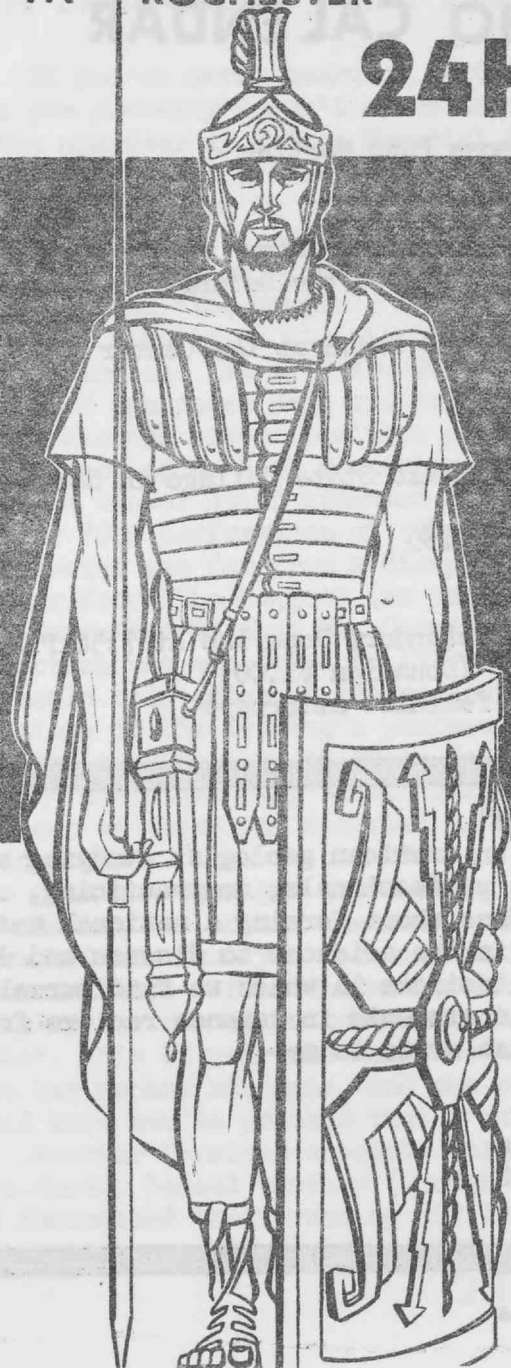
To ask "what is gay politics?" is to beg the question, "Why gay liberation?" Questions often asked of us are, "Why do you wear your sexuality like a badge?," "Why shout 'gay is just as good as straight'?" You people should keep your sexuality to yourselves, instead of parading it before the public!" As a matter of fact, it's precisely because the public makes our sexuality a matter of their concern that we are political. Laws forbid us to do our thing, even in the privacy of our homes; police repress gay cruising spots, bars and meeting places with a vengeance; employers make it a matter of policy to discriminate against 'known' gay employees; comedians 'limp wrist' their way through 'comic' routines involving our sexuality; anti-gay bigots have ready access to the media to promulgate all the vicious myths, fears and hatred which we've had to endure for years. The privacy of our sexuality is destroyed every time someone lets the words 'faggot', 'queer', 'pansy' past their lips; or when they taunt and jeer and give looks of contempt as we show our affection to one another in public - with a squeeze of the hand, a hug, a kiss.

In a basically hetero-sexist American society, the gay movement is perceived as a threat - and rightly so. The gay movement (as well as the feminist movement) threatens the traditional macho role of men in our society. It also calls attention to the homosexual component that exists in all of us - a distinct threat to those who have not fully dealt with their own sexuality - and a profound threat to the heterosexual presumptions that pervade every aspect of our lives. The concept of the nuclear family as cornerstone of our society is also challenged by the advent of the gay movement. All these challenges are good and necessary to move American society from its narrowly defined hetero-sexist orientation, to one in which sexuality can be explored in an ambient fashion and widely varying lifestyles can coexist in a spirit of sharing and good will.

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SISTERS of SAPPHO CALENDAR

January 27

Sisters of Sappho/Mother's Defense Fund Meeting
9 P.M. at the Center

February 7,8,9

At the Center showings of "A Very Natural Thing" refreshments
will be sold and the proceeds will go to the Defense Fund

February 14

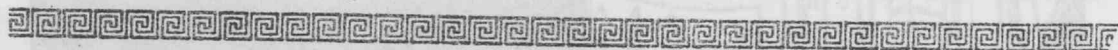
"Friends" - live band at All Women's Dance at the Center
9 P.M. - 3 A.M. Tickets \$1.50

February 15

Dance - live band "Friends" at Buffalo State College in Social
Room of Student Union.
Open to men and women. Tickets \$1.50

February 28

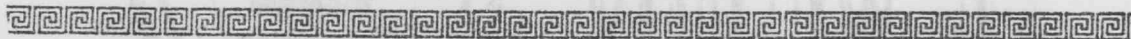
Flo Kennedy lecture at U.B. in Diefendorf Room 148 at 7:30 P.M.
Topic "Pathology of Oppression" (Donation \$1.00)
(Flo Kennedy is a black Lesbian feminist attorney)



ATTENTION! WOMEN!

My name is Judith Schaeffer. I'm an American geologist studying at
Cambridge. For any of you- students, professionals, nonpracticing, or
unemployed women scientists- with ideas about forming a national and
international organization of women in the sciences to discuss and deal
with the very isolated and sexist situations in which we find ourselves
i.e. the lack of encouragement female students in science receive from
teachers and professors, etc. - please write to me-

Judith Schaeffer
Churchill College
Cambridge CB3 0DS
England



IN SEARCH OF "THE FAGGOT" - a review

If you've never heard of Al Carmines (and most people haven't) then you probably weren't aware that he was going to be in Buffalo. As the minister of Judson Memorial Church in Greenwich Village since 1961, and founder of the Judson Peets' Theater, Carmines has become a minor tidal-wave in off-Broadway productions. As composer, producer, director Carmines has averaged one production a year. At the top of the list of his successes are "Promenade", "Peace", "In Circles", and "The Faggot".

"The Faggot", a musical revue on homosexuality, won composer/author Carmines the 1973 New York Drama Desk award. Presented as a series of one scene song and dance acts, "The Faggot" gave a very believable and rather positive portrayal of gay life styles.

Expecting to hear something from "The Faggot", several of us from the Center staff attended the Studio Arena Theater's Monday, January 20th performance of "Theater Songs by Al Carmines". Although the evening was far from a disappointment we are still waiting to hear from "The Faggot" (no pun intended).

Rumor had it that Mr. Carmines "came-out" shortly after the production was completed in 1973. As to the truth in this rumor ... one could only guess at the meaning behind some very obvious deletions in the evening's performance.

The most blatant of these deletions was that although "The Faggot" contained many touching as well as amusing songs ... not some-one of these was included on the program. (Error - or avoidance?)

Carmines does get gay brownie points for some things...

During one of his numerous and entertaining anecdotes, he described his family's reaction to his composing a musical based on homosexuality. After his mother's initial concern for his being "in" the play ... she asked to hear the music "not the words ... just the music". His 87 year old aunt was asked if she felt embarrassed by what her nephew had done, and she responded "No, but 10 years ago I would have had to pretend that I was."

Another Carmines anecdote told of a childhood crush he once had on a Sunday School teacher (gender - very noticeably deleted). He had fantasized their running off to Texas to live on a ranch. (Little elaboration necessary).

CONT. P. 27

EDUCATION SERIES AT THE CENTER

THE GAY COMMUNITY SERVICES CENTER IS LOOKING FORWARD TO THE COMING YEAR AS A NEW HORIZON FOR EXPANSION OF OUR SERVICES. WE HAVE FELT INCREASED COMMUNITY ACCEPTANCE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE CENTER AS A PLACE WHERE PEOPLE CAN COME AND BE WELCOMED; FROM JUST HAVING COFFEE AND A CHAT, TO INVOLVEMENT IN THEIR OWN PERSONAL OR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH OUR PROGRAMS WHICH INCLUDE: HEALTH, SOCIAL, LEGAL, POLITICAL, EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL. WE ARE DEDICATED TO SERVICING THE NEEDS OF THE GAY COMMUNITY OF THE NIAGARA FRONTIER AND BRINGING GAY PEOPLE AND THE TOTAL POPULATION OF THE NIAGARA FRONTIER TOGETHER TO EDUCATE AND OVERCOME IGNORANCE.

TO HELP ACHIEVE OUR ENDS WE ARE SETTING UP A SERIES OF WORKSHOPS AND PROGRAMS DESIGNED TO ENRICH, CHALLENGE AND EXPAND PERSONAL HORIZONS. WE HOPE YOU WILL TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THEM. THE COURSES OFFERED ARE:

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- 2) Women's Self Defense, 4 wks,
starting Sat., 2/15 at 2PM
- 3) Judo, starting Sun, 2/16, 1:30PM
- 4) Modern Dance, starting Sun, 2/16
4PM 8 weeks
- 5) Exercise, starts Mon 2/17, 6:30PM
- 6) Photography, starts Wed 2/19,
7PM, 10 wks
- 7) Figure Drawing, starts Thurs,
2/20, 7PM, 10 wks
- 8) Personal Growth, starts Mon,
2/24, 8PM, 10 wks
- 9) Oriental Massage Arts, starts
Wed, 2/26, 8PM 6 wks **
- 10) Owning Our Bodies, starts Thur
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THE STATE OF THE MOVEMENT

A survey by the Brother Collective

Several months ago, Mattachine received a questionnaire from the Brother Collective, asking for information about our activities and a statement of our general philosophy. We were among nearly 200 organizations from around the country that participated in the survey, which had as its aim the evaluation of progress and politics of the movement as well as an assessment of the tasks that remain to be done.

From the responses, the survey found some general tendencies:

"There are more groups that are specifically gay, than men's groups....

Small project groups, at least among gay men, are more prominent than larger, umbrella type organizations...

One difference ... noted between men's groups and specifically gay men's groups was that there is a much larger number of gay religious organizations like the Metropolitan Community Church and gay caucuses in various denominations...

There seems to be a trend, especially on the West Coast, in socialist and feminist directions among anti-sexist men, especially gay men...

Finally, nearly everyone who responded was hoping for better connections with others around the country who are working in similar directions."

Conclusions were offered by the Brother Collective, as to reasons for the current state of the men's and gay male movements: "The gay movement (has) continued to develop, ... in ... directions such as social services and rap groups, and much of the leadership came not from the left or the women's movement, but from more established elements among gay men. The men's movement has developed since the decline of the radical movement of the 60's (the male-dominated left), in response to the women's and gay movements, and out of introspection on the part of many leftist and other men."

"Currently the men's movement, so-called, seems to be in a period of organization and out-reach, such as the establishment of men's resource centers. In the gay male movement we see a resurgence of radical activity, reflecting a general deepening and strengthening of leftist organization in this country."

CONT. NEXT PG.

STATE, CONT.

"We would like to see men of various groups continue in linking up their work with other forms of social and political struggle. We are encouraged by the beginnings of an analysis and practice linking social and economic class with issues of sexism and political power. The people currently engaged in gay male and men's movement activities are predominantly white and identify as "middle class". If those movements are only a defense of the privileges associated with that social position, an attempt to reform and preserve male power by straights or to gain a share for gays, then they will be self-defeating movements. The struggle against sexism by men can be meaningful only in connection with thorough economic and political transformation."

The Brother Collective would like more response to their survey and, also, contributions to their next issue, dealing with, "Men & Class." They welcome photos, poems and articles. Send to:

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IN SEARCH, CONT. FROM P.23

Probably the biggest gay brownie-point of the evening came in the person of Terence Burk. Introduced by Carmines as a long time co-worker who has performed in numerous Judson productions, "Terry" left little doubt that his talents were not in his on-stage work. Young, blond, and broad-chested, Mr. Burk looked fine on stage until he began to perform. (Quite frankly ... a number of us began to speculate as to exactly why Carmines had brought him along.)

The final gay brownie-point for Mr. Carmines goes for his performance of one (count 'em) song from "In Circles" a musical he wrote based entirely on Gertrude Stein lyrics.

Although "The Fagget" was almost totally invisible ... gay people in the audience (and there were many) could easily pick-up on what Carmines did "not" say.

It was a most enjoyable evening with a very talented and entertaining individual. Carmines however could listen more closely to "The Truth Song" from "Promenade" (lyrics by Maria Fornes: music by Al Carmines)

"You have your truth - I can't live with it
I have my truth - I must live with it"

-Richard McGinnis

AN OPEN LETTER OF GRATITUDE:

Throughout one's lifetime, some of us are fortunate enough to learn that "man is not an island alone unto himself"--that is, we experience the happy awareness of the vitality of good friends and concern of those who care about us, especially in times of need.

Recently it was my opportunity to culminate a long duration dream and while recuperating at the Swedish Hospital in Brooklyn I was thrilled to receive beautiful flowers from so many of you in our Society. Topping this were a large number of cards, several delightful letters and then best of all thoughtful, generous phonecalls from all over.

As some of the folks who were responsible for this thoughtfulness prefer to remain anonymous, may I take this opportunity to express great happiness and joy for your remembrances of all types. In this manner hopefully I shall not overlook anyone and yet respect your wishes. Thanks for the thrills and affection, I do and did appreciate it so very much. Best ever,

Peggie Ames

As with most movements, in order for us to achieve our goals a great deal of effort is required. Gay politics expends its efforts in two directions: outward, to counteract the repressive laws and attitudes; inward, to help our brothers and sisters, as well as ourselves, to undo the personal damage those laws and attitudes have done.

To others we have to call attention to the gross misconceptions and myths about who we are, where we are, what we do and the numbers of us involved. We demonstrate, negotiate and litigate to force an end to the vast inequities we face in this society. We speak before groups of all kinds and sizes as individuals, to lay bare our personal lives as well as our thoughts so that we might accomplish a measure of change in attitudes on a more direct and personal basis.

To ourselves we must affirm a sense of pride and dignity which is not allowed us in our formative years. We must constantly reject and ignore the stigmas brought upon us by the seemingly innate ignorance of others. By developing our own community of spirit and togetherness we strive to offer one another the positive reinforcements which are lacking otherwise.

We in the gay movement have hundreds of years of ignorance to combat. This ignorance kept us in our 'closets' for far too long. But the closet doors are flying open all around us as we proclaim our right to express ourselves, including our sexuality, openly and freely. Whatever form gay politics takes, it's here to stay.

Ed. Note: This article was originally written for and published by STRAIT magazine. We reprint it here because we feel it has validity and real importance to our readers.

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If you wish to join us at Mattachine send the following information with your check or money order to MATTACHINE SOCIETY OF THE NIAGARA FRONTIER Box 975, Ellicott Sq. Station, Buffalo, N. Y. 14205

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