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# GAY ERA

vol. 4 no. 4

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JUNE 1978

**GAY RIGHTS REPEALED  
IN WITCHITA & ST. PAUL**

**GAYS BANNED IN ALLENTOWN**

**GAY STUDENT CONFERENCE**

**GOD, COUNTRY & DECENCY**

(appearing together for the first and last  
time in this magazine)

**THE RETURN OF THE  
DISH DEMONS**



**COMING OUT:**

**\*AT HARVARD**

**\*AS AN OLD MAN**

(BACK COVER)

# In the News

## ALLENTOWN BATTLE CONTINUES: GAYS BANNED FROM CITY FORUMS

By Dave Leas

ALLENTOWN, PA — Another wrench has been thrown into the works of the Citizen's Concerned for a Better Community's (CCBC) efforts to pass a gay rights ordinance here. The group's main opposition is a conservative organization called Citizens Organized for Decency (COD), composed mostly of church leaders and their followers.

Three gay rights proponents were among the speakers in a human relations workshop sponsored by the Allentown Council of Youth on Tuesday, April 18. The following night, at the City Council meeting where CCBC was again asking for passage of the gay rights ordinance, parents of those students who attended the workshop demanded an explanation for the program. The parents demanded to know why the 90 high school students who attended were subjected to a one-sided view of homosexuality.

Dr. Frank McVeigh, a leader of COD asked city council to pass a resolution that would prevent any repetition of the gay rights workshop. Dr. McVeigh demanded that the staff of the Human Relations Commission, which recommended passage of the gay rights ordinance, be directed "to cease and desist from future efforts to advocate homosexuality." Mayor Frank Fischl has presently refused to do so.

McVeigh also called the Council of Youth workshop "a blot on the reputation of our community." The funds for the workshop came from proceeds from the Youth Council's concerts. Though the youth group did not have the approval of Mayor Fischl, the group planned the workshop and decided that the subject of homosexuality be discussed nonetheless.

The Allentown Evening Chronicle called McVeigh's remarks "an insult to city's youth" in an April 20 editorial. The editorial stated in part that "Nothing could be more ridiculous than Dr. McVeigh's statement that the Council of Youth's workshop Tuesday 'is a blot on the reputation of our community'... These Council of Youth kids are not mindless lambs... (They) should be commended for having the courage to tackle one of the most widely ducked issues facing our time, and not burying its collective head in the sand."

Also present at the city council meeting were Allentown Human Rela-



tions Commission Executive Director Robert Manley and Timothy Uhrich, City Information and Services Officer who is also Mayor Frank Fischl's council advisor. They indicated that "the kids received a number of warnings that the topic of gay rights would generate heat. But they chose to go ahead with the agenda originally presented."

Uhrich added that "While we attempted to discourage them, we did not forbid them from including the topic as part of the workshop, which also reviewed the topics of prejudice and discrimination, and marriage as an alternative to college."

### FREY INVITES ANITA TO CITY

On April 21, just two days after the protest at the city council meeting, Council President Alton Frey Jr. made a telephone call to H. Edward Rowe, executive director of Protect America's Children. Frey disclosed the information to the Evening Chronicle saying that he made an offer to bring Anita Bryant to Allentown "to, personally, bring her viewpoints on homosexuality."

Frey was hoping that Bryant would pick up the tab for her appearance since the city could not legally pay the fee. Rowe told Frey that his "foremost concerns involve scheduling and an assessment of what the situation is there in Allentown and whether this (the Allentown visit) would be a worthwhile appearance."

Council President Frey told the Evening Chronicle that he was prompted to invite Bryant because, "personally, I feel this movement by the homosexuals in regressive, appalling and disgusting. Homosexuality violates every principle of the Bible and all religions."

"It is my opinion," continued Frey, "that homosexuals are not born, but are conditioned."

Frey added, "I do not quarrel

over their freedom of choice. However, they should be cognizant of the fact they must face the consequences of their activities. It's ironic that they come to City Council in full view of the media and tell us that if their employer knew they were homosexuals, they'd be fired."

Frey, in the past, has insisted that gay people are not discriminated against in the areas that are protected under the proposed ordinance.

### MAYOR BARS GAYS

Meanwhile, Mayor Frank Fischl announced his intentions to bar such individuals and groups from participating in city-sponsored forums. Fischl maintained that he never authorized the Council of Youth workshop that had homosexuality as one of its topics, an authorization which the Council of Youth didn't feel it needed in the first place.

Council President Frey has since insisted that gay rights is a "dead issue." Frey released an opinion April 24 claiming that Allentown cannot ban discrimination against gays. According to Asst. City Solicitor Jack Kaufman, "the city would be inviting a lawsuit" if it goes beyond state guidelines.

The information was based on the assumption that a municipal Human Relations Commission cannot exceed the provision in the state law. Pennsylvania has no law protecting gay people from discrimination. Frey's opinion is contrary to the ruling of the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission.

Sanford Kahn, general counsel to the state commission, has told Robert Manley, director of the Allentown Human Relations Commission, that municipalities could extend protection against discrimination.

The state law, Kahn explained, allows municipalities "to establish the machinery to supplement the efforts of the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission to deal with the evils of discrimination."

### CITY COUNCIL REFUSES SPEAKERS

Since the controversy and Mayor Fischl's effort to bar gay people from participating in city-sponsored forums, Council President Frey refused to recognize any speaker on the issue of the gay rights ordinance. Hope of introduction of the ordinance was further postponed when the city solicitor gave his opinion stating that Frey's actions were perfectly legal.

As the GAY ERA goes to press, it is not known whether the practice has

been continued at the recent council meeting.

It was also announced that Anita Bryant would not appear in Allentown due to yet another alleged threat on her life.

### POSTERS TO FOSTER AWARENESS

WASHINGTON, DC —Posters bearing the introspective message that "Someone in Your Life is Gay" will be appearing soon aboard Metro buses and on downtown trash receptacles, according to Doug Haller, coordinator for the Gay Activists Alliance's "Project Awareness" poster campaign. Featuring an open page from a "family"-style photograph album with mounted snapshots of a wide variety of gay people in everyday life situations —including men and women, singles and couples, blacks and whites, the old and the young— the posters are an effort by GAA "to awaken the general public to the presence of gay people and to encourage the formation of positive



photo by David Dahlquist  
Douglas Haller (L.), GAA's "Project Awareness" coordinator, leads discussion at a recent planning session.

attitudes about gays by means of mass advertising," Haller said.

The introspective theme is designed to stimulate the viewer's own thoughts about their attitudes towards gays, Haller explained. "While aimed primarily at the heterogeneous non-gay community, the



poster is being fashioned in such a way that it will be appealing to as many segments of the gay community as possible —and may help to unite them," he said.

"It's a responsible statement about being gay," he emphasized. "A lot of careful thought and study has gone into this campaign... We really labored over both the philosophical and esthetic aspects of this poster."

Careful consideration and lots of hard work have gone into the project since its inception in October 1976, Haller said. "We wanted this campaign to reach the largest possible cross-section of the general public," he explained. "It had to be worked and reworked many times over to be as effective as possible. The result," he said, "is a group effort in the truest sense. It is totally an effort of the gay community itself. The artist is a member of GAA, and those people whose photographs are in the poster are all volunteers who have donated their face to the project. There are a lot of people who gave of their time and energy to make this poster a success."

The path towards success is not yet free from obstacles, however. Looming large is the spectre of financing. "To put it simply," Haller said, "advertising is expensive."

Haller says that posters with similar themes are being considered for the future, but that the success of this initial effort would deter-

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mine whether or not the project would be able to continue... "Awareness advertising will succeed or fail depending upon its appeal to the community as a whole — whether gay, non-gay, or both," Haller says. "Individual contributions from the entire community are necessary—financially, and for the sake of involvement."

Interest in the GAA poster campaign has come from as far away as Ohio and Maine. As a result of previous articles on "Project Awareness" that have appeared in the Blade, gay groups from many areas around the country have contacted GAA and have expressed interest in purchasing posters for use in their own respective communities.

Haller says that souvenir posters are available to donors of \$5 or more towards the project. Write Project Awareness, c/o Gay Activists Alliance, Box 2554, Washington, D.C. 20013; or call 667-5139 for further information on various fundraising activities.

— The Blade

### 4-YEAR-OLD RIGHTS MEASURE REPEALED IN ST PAUL

ST PAUL — An "angry and hurt" gay community here has vowed not to "stop fighting for our rights as human beings," after the voters of St. Paul repealed the four year old gay rights law by a nearly 2 to 1 margin. Craig Anderson, a spokesperson for the St. Paul Citizens for Human Rights, stated that "we are not going away...this is our city too. This vote demonstrated that we must be open and honest about who we are." Anderson expressed disappointment and "outrage" that the vote in St. Paul was so overwhelmingly against the rights law that has been on the books since 1974.

In complete, but unofficial returns, the vote was 54,090 to repeal and 31,690 to keep the ordinance banning discrimination in housing, employment and public accomodation.

The unusually heavy turnout climaxed a long battle between the Citizens for Human Rights and the Baptist-led Citizens Alert for Morality.

Rev. Richard Angwin, who led the anti-gay forces, said the "landslide victory" showed it was a "small group of misguided politicians" on the City Council that passed the ordinance in 1974. St. Paul Mayor George Latimer supported the retention of the ordinance, said that he still feels "every human being deserves equal protection under the law." The mayor added, however, that he will "abide by the voters' decision."

Citizens for Human Rights spokesperson Anderson challenged "voters' decisions" on the issue of individual rights. "We are disappointed in a system that claims to be based on equal rights for everyone and equal protection under the law, but which puts those basic human rights to the vote without regard to individual rights," Anderson said. The National Gay Task Force in New York issued a statement expressing outrage "that a majority of misinformed voters have once again denied civil rights to a group of American citizens."

The Citizens for Human Rights charged that Rev. Angwin's group ran a campaign based on fear and misunderstanding. Citizens' spokesperson Anderson said that "fighting against fear, misinformation, against hatred...well, that's a strategy that is difficult to overcome."

— Gay Community News

### WICHITA VOTES TO REPEAL ORDINANCE

WICHITA — "People won't be going back into any closets" commented Robert Lewis, co-director of the Homophile Alliance of Sedgewick County, after this city's gay civil rights ordinance was repealed by a five to one margin. The Alliance organized the campaign on behalf of retaining the city ordinance. Opposition to the ordinance is mostly from fundamentalist Christian groups. They organized themselves into Concerned Citizens for Community Standards.

Only 44% of the eligible voters turned out for the election. Exactly 47,246 voted to repeal the ordinance while 10,005 voted to retain it.

Lewis stated "We were very disappointed that so many people turned out to vote against homosexuality. To the voters, the issue was moral versus immoral. They bought the line that we would go out and molest their children and they worried that we would turn Wichita into another San Francisco. We were even more disappointed by the 56% that were so apathetic that they didn't even bother to vote."

While gay activists in Wichita expressed disappointment in the election results, Lewis said that they felt good about what took place outside of the voting booths. "During this campaign we've educated a lot of the public and found the media out here to be very supportive." Lewis continued, "Before last year's Gay Pride Celebration there were no open gay people here. Now that's all changed. People are feeling ener-



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gized and plan to get involved in the Gay Liberation Movement."

Gay activists involved in the referendum campaign expect now to turn some of their energy into organizing for this year's Gay Pride Celebration. Some will be gearing up for the Congressional elections, where Congressman Dan Glickman (D) is running for re-election. Glickman voted for an amendment that would allow legal aid monies to be spent in gay rights cases. His opponent has already begun using this issue against him in the campaign.

Lesbians and gay men in San Francisco and New York took to the streets shortly after hearing of the defeat in Wichita. In New York City several hundred people rallied at Sheridan Square protesting the defeat of the Wichita bill and demanding the passage of New York's gay rights bill — Intro 384. The rally was sponsored by the Coalition for Lesbian and Gay Rights.

It was reported that several hundred people turned out for a spontaneous demonstration in San Francisco vowing to continue the fight for human rights.

— Gay Community News

WICHITA, KS — Robert Lewis, 29, president of the Wichita Homophile Alliance, quit his job as a state social worker on March 1, charging

that harassment from his supervisors threatened his mental health. Lewis, who resigned on the advice of his psychiatrist, has filed suit in federal court against his supervisors at the Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services for \$40,000, claiming he was discriminated against for being gay.

Lewis held the job since last August, and was originally hired to work with families in which there had been child abuse or neglect. However, since gaining local prominence as a spokesperson for the Homophile Alliance in their request for a gay rights ordinance from the city commission last summer, Lewis was changed to a job working only with adults. Lewis claims that the transfer is the result of pressure from county district court judges who were concerned about a possible impropriety in having a gay man working with boys.

— Gaysweek

## GAY RIGHTS IN SAN FRANCISCO

SAN FRANCISCO — The ordinance banning discrimination against gays in employment, housing and public accommodations needs only the Mayor's signature before it takes effect here.

The Board of Supervisors gave final approval to the ordinance on April 4 by a vote of 10 to 1, with no discussion. Mayor George Moscone is expected to sign the ordinance within 30 days. When it takes effect, San Francisco, where officials say an estimated one in seven residents is gay, will be the 43rd city in the nation with such a law.

Openly gay City Supervisor Harvey Milk stated that the law will be the "most stringent gay rights law in the country." "This one has teeth," said Milk; "a person can go to court if his rights are violated." Milk said he was "enthused" about the firing aspect of the bill. Under the measure a person could not be fired from a position if it



SF City Supervisor Harvey Milk

became known that he or she is gay. "They can't be fired for announcing they are gay," Milk said, "and this may ease more people out of the closet."

Milk added that the measure "simply gives protection to people." "It may finally change the stereotypes people attach to gays and this is monumental," said the Supervisor.

— Gay Community News

## INTERVIEWING MALE LOVERS

NEW YORK — Dr. Charles Silverstein author of THE JOY OF GAY SEX and A FAMILY MATTER: A PARENT'S GUIDE TO HOMOSEXUALITY, has announced that he has begun interviewing gay men for a new book for gay male lovers. Silverstein explained that the book "will cover the history of gay relationships, the nature of gay love, and both the satisfactions and trials of gay love."

Dr. Silverstein is planning on interviewing gay men who have had either a very satisfactory or unsatisfactory love affair and who feel they have some insight into the strengths and weaknesses of the love relationship.

Confidential interviews are planned for a number of geographical areas. For further information contact Dr. Charles Silverstein, 233 W. 83rd St., New York, NY 10024, or by phone at 212-799-8574.

— Gay Community News

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## GAY STUDENTS HOLD CONFERENCE

by Jim Brooks

WASHINGTON, DC — The Mid-Atlantic Association of Gay Student Organizations held its first annual Spring conference on the campus of the American University here from April 14-15. The conference was attended by representatives of gay student organizations in the mid-Atlantic region with some participants coming from as far away as Mississippi.

The opening address by Charlotte Bunch, a leading theorist and editor of *Quest* magazine, stressed the relationship among the various minority struggles in the United States. The same people and institutions are responsible for the oppression of women, gays, Blacks, and Chicanos, she said. Ms. Bunch pointed out that the right-wing attacks on women and gays are being used to build a power base.

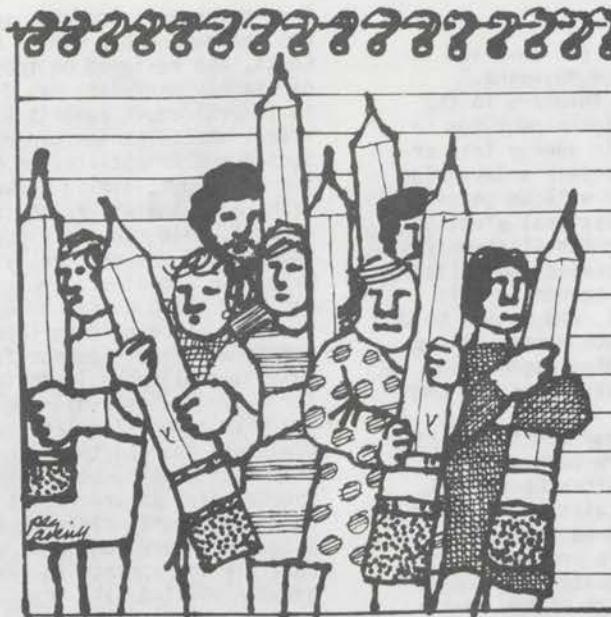
A Friday night coffeehouse featured the talents of poet Chasen Gaver and singer/songwriter Pam Layng. Gaver's poetry is rhythmic and highly theatrical, using such props as rattles and flashing lighters. Accompanying herself on guitar, Pam Layng sang on such themes as lost love and her working relationship with Gaver.

The keynote address on Saturday morning was given by Leonard Matlovich. He addressed the issues of racism and the damage done to gay people by societal conditioning. A Vietnam War veteran he stated that the fear of being exposed as gay was much more traumatic than any fear ever encountered while in the war zone. Matlovich urged gays to become involved in social change, "You are not responsible for how you enter the world, but you are responsible for how you leave it." Noting much apathy in the gay community, Matlovich quoted Malcolm Boyd, "When it comes time to send the gays to the gas chambers, they will be in the discos getting in a last dance."

Matlovich believes the answer to overcoming oppression lies in education, but in order to educate the public, "We've got to tear down the closets or history will never record that we were here...It's not our vices they (homophobes) are afraid of, it's our virtues. They are terrified that there are good and wholesome gay people."

Matlovich commented on the priorities of American society, "Every medal I have is for killing, I have no medal for loving." Matlovich said that the gay movement is a movement based on love for all, as such it finds itself at odds with current American standards.

After the keynote address, participants took part in a number of workshops. These were on such subjects as Meeting People and Women's



Men Sharing. They were conducted by members of the Washington-based Gay Men's Counseling Collective.

Cathy Valentine, Paulette Young, and Silas White conducted an informative mini-course on Gay history. The course, called the Traveling Gay History Show, was an adaptation of their ten-week course that explores the lives of gay people from the dawn of civilization to the present. Valentine emphasized that the course is intended to be a political tool to educate gay people and to make them aware that they have always been an integral part of the world order. As part of the course, excerpts from the self-professed experts were presented. One critic suggested that Sappho could not have been a lesbian because she admired "tiny wild little

flowers." (Lesbians can like roses but never "tiny wild little flowers). The audience found the guides of Drs. George Henry and Bergler on how to recognize a homosexual amusing.

One of the final workshops featured Dr. Franklin Kameny and Congressional aid Gary Aldridge in "Politics: Inside and Out." Dr. Kameny spoke on the aspects of city-wide politics, focusing on Washington, DC as one of the more successful gay rights movements. He emphasized that gays must speak to the politicians as one voice. He attributes the setback of gay rights legislation in New York City to the fact that New York gays are factionalized and spend a major part of their energy fighting among themselves. In contrast, Washington's gay factions

(Continued on page 9)

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# Opinion

The tide is turning — and scarcely in our favor.

Ever since Anita Bryant began her crusade, little over a year ago, the climate has been turning increasingly chilly for sexual politics. She and her various allies, such as Phyllis Schlafly (of the anti-E.R.A.) have been gaining ground.

Not only has Dade County's ordinance gone by the wayside, but so have several others which were called up for referendum since Anita showed the way.

Beginning in Miami and spreading outward, violence against gays is going through an alarming upswing.

With its deadline looming ever closer, the E.R.A. looks like an impossibility as some states actually rescind their ratification.

Word of Life (see story this issue) and similar rallies draw crowds of people in every city, while the recent Pennsylvania Gay Conference drew only 250 from across the state. And lest we and other organizations face the accusation once again that we are too political, let us remind one and all that in this country at this time being Gay is a political activity.

Especially if one wishes to remain alive and free.

We cannot fall into the trap of believing that as long as we have our Blueboys and our discos, we have freedom enough. A ghetto is still a ghetto, no matter how posh the decor.

We wish Elaine Noble weren't so right in her observation that when the boxcars are being loaded (as with the Jews in Nazi Germany), most Gays will be at their local discos trying to squeeze in the last dance.

Unfortunately, however, that's exactly where they'll be; drinking screwdrivers no doubt.

The Gay community cannot seem to be able to wake up to the fact that, ludicrous as her statements are, Anita Bryant is no joke. The escalating beatings and murders of our brothers and sisters at the hands of her followers is no laughing matter.

(While we're on the subject of jokes and laughing, we wonder: what happens to the money made on the various Bryant novelty items? Does any of this money go to stopping Bryant or pushing legislation in our favor? Or is it just another case of our being exploited, while our danger remains undiminished?)

This editorial has no conclusion or deep insight to offer; it merely poses a question. With the political climate growing, as observed earlier, even chillier, what will the Gay community do? Merely turn its collective collar and wait for warmer weather? Or do we turn up the heat?

— .HL



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THE WORDS WERE:

# GOD★COUNTRY★DECENCY

Observations by Dave Leas  
Photos by Marlin McConnell

LANCASTER, PA — I had never attended a "Born Again" religious rally before and when the announcements were made for the Word of Life's "God, Country and Decency" rally at Franklin & Marshall's gym in Lancaster, the opportunity arose. Besides, there wasn't an admission fee to help with their worldwide crusade. Alleluia!

My lover, Marlin, warned me that I was in for the treat of my life. I wanted to go anyhow, even if it was just to see what the enemy is up to. On Sunday, May 7, we went and bought a roll of film for the camera and new batteries for the trusty tape recorder.

The gym was decked with more Red, White and Blue than could be assembled for the 4th of July. The 100 Collegians, all students of the Word of Life Bible Institute in New York, were like walking American Flags.

The stage was set. Three huge projection screens at the top and two 15 foot blue felt boxes at either end of the stage sitting on round cylinders decorated with stars and stripes. What were they for? We didn't have the slightest idea.

"May we proudly present the 100 Collegians as they sing for God, Country and Decency. Let's give them a big hand." Applause. Out they came carrying flags singing "America, America..." The screen flashes with the words of the Devil: E.R.A., Gay Rights, Abortion, and the lack of prayer in public schools. When they were through, the flags were hung on those big blue boxes. So that's what they were for! The singers continue singing and proceed with "This Land is Your Land", "Ragged Old Flag", and end with "Red, White and Blue". Here come the Collegians with the collection buckets. Everyone forks over.

Jack Wyrzten starts his old-fashioned sermon. My tape breaks as he starts in on the "homosexuals." Just as well, since you can probably imagine the fire and brimstone falling from the ceiling.

I look around the audience and suddenly feel out of place. We're not wearing coats and ties, there is only one other person with a beard, and my God, my hair is the longest out of 700. I just had it cut last week. We sat through the personal testimonies, which were followed by more attacks on E.R.A., Gay Rights and Mad-

aline Murray O'Hair.

Wyrzten is still the circus ring leader and explains his observation about homosexuality. "I don't know why we even bother to call them homosexuals. The Bible doesn't call them homosexuals. The Bible calls them adulterers, sinners, reprobates..." What was he saying? "When you leave here today, you will be either part of the problem or part of the solution."

## ONWARD CHRISTIAN SOLDIERS

It's time for Anita Bryant on the screen. Her face is projected on the center with religious pictures on the left and right. The music strikes up her version of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" and the Collegians join in on the chorus. At one point, as the projectionist is changing slides, Christ on the Cross is transposed over Anita's face. Almost Enough!

Those big blue boxes start to revolve. Two 12 foot green plastic Statues of Liberty turn to face us. There are lights in the crowns and the torches are flickering with the aid of police car beacons under the red plastic flames. I catch myself



Jack Wyrzten

as I almost fall off the bleacher as Marlin starts snapping the camera. Enough, Enough!

It's time to be saved as the Collegians disperse through the crowd. Little children are plucked from the audience and marched to the front. It must be the new fad to be saved at the age of eight. I hum to myself, "Plastic Jesus on the Dashboard of My Car". Time to get out.

The whole event was frightening to say the least. Here there were approximately 700 people attending a rally in Lancaster. In April, 250 gay people show their faces at a conference for the state of Pennsylvania. I was angry that we can still sit around and call them a bunch of crazies hoping that will make them go away. Though they are in fact crazy, especially when you see them falling for this nonsense and handing their money over asking for more, we are viewed as sinners who are doomed to everlasting Hell.

# Youth'Quest '77

**Anita Bryant  
to headline  
youth rally at  
Word of Life...  
10,000 Expected**





the other. How can a non-Christian be Patriotic? After all, our currency is printed with the words "In God We Trust" and "One Nation Under God" is in the Pledge of Allegiance. We know how and when that happened. It happened in my lifetime.

They cannot be ignored. I don't know the answer of how to combat their propaganda of lies. I do know that we aren't going to get anywhere by brushing them off as people who are misguided. They vocalize about "God, Country and Decency" and we are automatically "Irreverent, Traitors and Degenerates". When will we finally have had enough and bang those closet doors to the beat of "America, The Land of the Brave".

They are shrewd indeed. They have managed to take three areas (religion, nationalism and morality) and lump them together. In their view, Christianity & Patriotism are one in the same. These subjects are treated as supermarket specials where you get three gods for the price of one. You cannot have one without



## CONFERENCE

are able to sublimate most differences. Dr. Kameny defined the currency of politics as votes, therefore if gays expect to make political gains, they must be prepared to provide supporters with votes. Furthermore, rights movements tend to follow the same evolutionary patterns leading to more conventional political activity.

Gary Aldridge, legislative assistant to California Senator Alan Cranston, dealt with Federal gay rights legislation. He reported that there is a general feeling in Congress that a "civil rights overload" exists. He quoted the Rev. Jesse Jackson as saying, "The civil rights movement we have known is dead." Working through Congress presents some major problems, as most representatives believe that they have no gay constituency. The Miami defeat has

made many elected officials cautious when approaching the gay rights issue. This will be even more critical depending on the results of the referendum elections (to abolish equal rights for homosexuals) in Wichita, St. Paul, and Eugene, Oregon. Most mail that comes to representatives comes from parents who are genuinely concerned that their children will catch or learn homosexuality. Aldridge said that a massive education project must be used to neutralize these fears. One way to start this education project, Aldridge suggested, is for every gay person to introduce her/himself to a next door neighbor. More gays need to come out, especially those in responsible and respected positions.

Following the conference, Carolyn

Flynn of the University of Maryland, and Jeff Meyer of Johns Hopkins University, and Jim Brooks, of The American University were named to guide the association through the Summer until elections could be held in the Fall.

The Mid-Atlantic Association of Gay Student Organizations was formed in the Fall of 1977 as a central coordinating body for all gay student organizations in the mid-Atlantic region. The dual purpose of the organization is to coordinate effective use of available resources to serve the largest possible number of people and to assist in the formation of gay student organizations on campuses where there are none. For more information write to: MAAGSO, Box 193, Eagle Station, The American University, Washington, DC 20016.



# letters

Editor, GAY ERA,

I am writing in reference to the May '78 issue, in particular the outrageous and offensive cover coupled with the negative piece of journalism entitled "Pride '78" by Harry Long.

The cover of the Gay Era, "Homos at Hojo's - The Pride '78 Conference," was in my opinion totally out of place on a gay publication; it could be expected in the local newspapers - but, in a gay publication serving "rural" Pennsylvania? I think it was totally out of place. "Homos at Hojo's" may bring laughter in a bar, but it struck me as extremely self-oppressive on the cover of our publication.

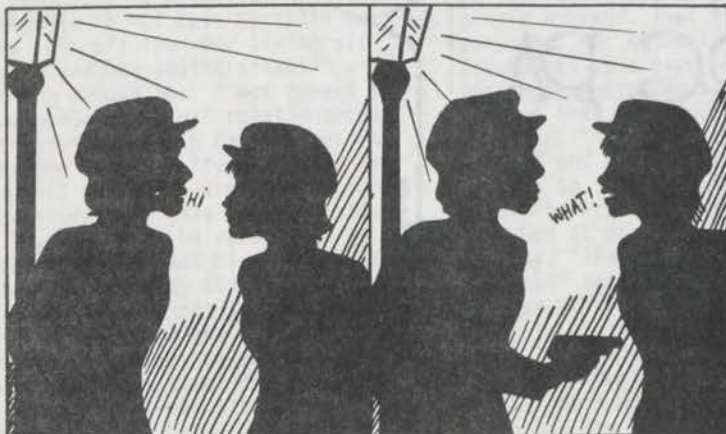
After having read *With Downcast Gays* by Andrew Hodges and David Hutter (Pink Triangle Press, 1977), I suggest it for the staff of the Gay Era.

"The ultimate success of all forms of oppression is our self-oppression. Self-oppression is achieved when the gay person has adopted and internalized straight people's definition of what is good and bad." So begins the book. It continues, "In as much as we are agents of our own oppression, so we have the power to overcome it." Being a confirmed book freak, Harry Long, please read it and try again.

Your overview of the conference was extremely negative and it appears there were not redeeming factors to the conference with perhaps the exception of the "plethora of new young faces." Hopefully your self-oppressed state will not "rub off" on these new young "RECRUITS."

Well, there was more to the Pride '78 conference than reported by the Gay Era staff, but since Mr. Long states that gay conferences are being held "left and right" perhaps we will see a more accurate view in upcoming issues of the Gay Era.

Sam Wilson  
Lancaster, PA



STRANGERS IN THE NIGHT...  
EXCHANGING GLANCES  
WONDERING WHAT WERE THE CHANCES

O.K. FAGGOT YOU'RE UNDER ARREST  
Wellington '78

Genlemen:

(And I assume your are!)

Amidst the polemics of the current Anita Bryant controversy, I suggest that there are three options open to us: a) do nothing lest we fail, b) encourage someone else to do our fighting for us, or finally c) bestir ourselves to action of some kind. I intend to do the last but if I fight, I like to do so in my own way; however, I am willing to involve others of the first two categories who might wish to get involved, even if from the sidelines.

Now, there are two things that any tyrant fears: freedom of thought for others, and ridicule for him or herself. Freedom of thought might lead to someone actually doubting the wisdom of the whims of the great leader; ridicule may strike at the leader's own glorious self-concept, and might eventually develop into a preference for another to assume the mantle. By her devotion to half truths, use of innuendo, and actual refusal to face facts, our opponent has shown her contempt not only for us but also for others - something that will disgust people once they realize they have been taken in. Since Bryant and her ilk refuse even to seek the light, I suggest we turn the heat of public opinion back upon them directly.

How to do this, I suggest, may be easy - and even fun! Who hasn't doubled up in glee from time to time over the apt humor of some cartoon or other portrayal that seemingly captures the essence of some of life's inconsistencies or idiosyncrasies? But where are they when you want to show them to a friend? If your readers will help, I propose to collect their favorite cartoons into an anthology of gay humor which would summarize our views for future reference. By combining the visual impact of the cartoon with the in-a-nut-shell ap-

proach, we can show others our viewpoints in a way that will honey coat the pill so even those who are not of our persuasion will still see the point and laugh. If we give people the right information, we can make them laugh with us at the expense of Bryant and others who use their freedom of speech to sow hatred. People don't like to be duped; when they realize what happened, they will share with their friends whom we might never otherwise be able to reach, the latest joke about.....

But I need the help of many. If any of your readers see a cartoon anywhere on the state of gay life in general or on Bryant and her cohorts in particular, please send me a copy - either the original or a photocopy with (please, sob please) the name and address of the source, clearly indicated. If others will help in the collecting, this will free my time for contacting sources to arrange for the rights to reprint; your readers need not directly involve themselves except for a few seconds of their time and the cost of a stamped envelope. Is that too much, especially when they might enjoy themselves also?

So friends, clip this letter and keep the address. Better still, pass the info along to everyone else you know who might be willing to help. Thanks, and thank yourself too.

Royall Windsong  
Box 35, Boalsburg  
PA 16827



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ARIES

# COMING OUT

cont. from back cover

few occasions where I have gotten past that addiction and turned towards my age-mates, I have found them ogling the young and avoiding me. I can only say that struggling against this tendency in ourselves is the first task for us older people in raising this issue with young people or the society as a whole. In fact, it was only because I personally had finally gotten very close to the point of saying that I would rather have no sex at all than have it as a fix for my youth addiction that I was able to take the steps I took at the conference.

Another concrete reason why I don't have much success with people my own age is that there are so damn few of us in leftist/alternative lifestyle circles. For example, there were only five or six older men at the conference which had been billed as preparation for building a new society. Whatever the reasons for this, the situation at the conference was the usual one in movement activities... a few older people embedded in a sea of youth. The conference was highly successful in bringing together gay men to discuss leftist class politics, but it clearly reflected the exceptional level of ageism that is present in both the new left and the gay men's movement.

But even if there were a lot of older people in the movement, one of the ideals that we all speak of in relationship to socialism and communism is to not have to split our work life off from our living situation and our loving situation. Yet the demand that I not expect to form personal/sexual relationships with younger people has the result that the people I live with and the people I work with are not the people who are available to love with.

Thus age must be recognized as another factor that blocks us from becoming the unity that we seek. This demand that the young relate to the young, and the old to the old, seems to be simply an extension of the competitive stratification of our capitalist, masculine society that starts out by telling first graders that they ought not to play

with second graders and that later develops into the crippling distinctions between race, sex, nations, etc.

This could be seen as a plea or demand on my part that some young people 'gotta' start getting it on with me to satisfy my personal and sexual needs. I am very aware that love cannot be demanded and am aware that working through the issues involved in this problem will take far longer than my particular heart and desires will last. So due to my particular circumstances I am rejecting the solution of getting into a study group, collective, or affinity group and then demanding that we struggle over how they might satisfy me.

Rather, I am working to gain a modest level of personal contentment while having a full and productive life involving my work and my children, but without a steady, personal, intimate relationship that combines work, living, and loving without the easy fluid series of sensual encounters that are available to those who are privileged to have bodies that are young. (In other words, I'm finally understanding what Freud meant by sublimation.) Further, I am moving toward the Puritan/Marxist goal of study and organizing around this issue so that things will be better in the future for others.

This leads to the second, or organizing aspect of the age-oppression that I experience. This aspect centers around the fact that whenever I am in conferences, rap groups, working relationships, political formations, etc., struggling over issues around both theory and practice, I become aware that I have worked at some of these issues for 20 years longer than the rest of the people present. That is, I have experience. Not answers. Not final judgements. But experience. And experience counts for something. It is true that sometimes experience will say, "The wheel cannot be invented" and thus block progress in seeking to find that thing that will allow the wagons to roll forward. But then at other times experience can say, "The wheel has already been invented" and thus make unnecessary further efforts at re-invention. There is no formula to tell for sure at the time whether experience is helping or hurting progress, but surely the American society as a whole and the new left in particular has gone way overboard in rejecting

the experience of age on the grounds that it is not progressive, or is an authoritarian trip, or is a parents trip, etc.

The new left has many of its roots in the youth movement of the 1960's and has never put any kind of priority on attracting older people to the ranks. Those of us who joined anyway for our own reasons were accepted largely to the extent that we did not act like people in our 30's, 40's and 50's. The most common reaction I have had over the past ten years is along the line of, "You don't look like you're 40," or "You don't act like you're 40." I have always accepted this with the same "pride" that I imagine black people felt in the late 1940's and 50's who were trying to "pass" as whites and were told by white friends that "I never think about you as being black." The necessity to live out this kind of denial of self has obviously severely limited the number of oldies in the new left.

There are, of course, many older people who have long careers in left activities dating back to the 1920's and 30's. I can recall my own "youth-oriented" reaction to these people when I first began to meet them in the 1960's at different meetings, conferences, and rallies. I viewed them as being either burnt out old war-horses or the last remnants of a failed movement. I felt I had nothing much to learn from them since they had obviously failed to bring about the revolution and it was now time for bright new faces with our "whole new" approach to take over and achieve victory. Later I can recall feeling a lot of positive feelings of empathy and respect for some old Wobblies as I heard them tell their stories of the struggles around the time of World War I. But I was seeing these people as walking history books, rather than co-participants in a struggle.

But now I am beginning to experience my own feeling of being burnt out and having failed to realize my dreams of victory. I see my young colleagues madly consulting the "old masters" like Marx, Lenin, etc., and vigorously competing among themselves for intellectual correctness — partly, I am sure, as a valid search for solid direction, but partly, also, as a grasping at straws to cover up their own emerging feelings of frustrated failure. How nice it would be if all of us with different age and experience levels could talk openly to each other about such experiences as failing hopes, setting long term goals, fear of being put off on the sidelines, living through peaks and valleys of political cycles, use and misuse of theory, rewards and punishments of factional fights, etc. Such discussions might lead to collaboration among us rather than setting us off into camps of the active, the semi-re-

tired, the old-liners, the burnt out, etc.

To put all this another way, at least I get feeling very wise. Like having dealt for 25 years with numerous theories, organizations and eager aggressive leaders (me among them) who promised to do away with human pain or suffering gives me a somewhat calmer approach to the newest fad that is billed as being just what we have been looking for to lead us to the promised land. Or like when I realize what a young person promises to do today is not usually what he or she will be committed to do tomorrow. Or like what I know that a certain organizational form will result in greater centralization rather than the greater mass participation its proponents claim for it.

For many years now I have either completely suppressed such insights or have offered them in very indirect and disguised forms for fear that they would be seen as power tripping, playing guru, blocking struggle, etc. Then I would simply wait around for people to go through the experience for themselves and learn what I already know. Recently I have been feeling that a lot of this is fine and necessary for the young people but it is a waste of time for me. Rather than pretending that I am learning what they are learning, it will be more productive to quietly recognize that I don't need to do that struggle again and slip off into struggles that are truly new ones for me.

The issue here, of course, is how and under what conditions can an experienced person pass on knowledge to an inexperienced person and thus save that other person from having to learn it "the hard way." It is clear, for example, that only a few of us need to observe first hand the splitting of the atom. Those who do it can report the results to the rest of us. We do not all have to see it for ourselves. Likewise, we can save a lot of time by learning algebra from a master rather than doing it ourselves on a trial and error basis. On the other hand, in my years spent as a child and family therapist, I learned that only the experience of struggling through relationships between spouses and parents and children can give the in-depth knowledge necessary to deal with problems in these fields. Teachers and texts can do very little to speed up the acquisition of this kind of knowledge.

A relevant example of this for all of us is the current argument over whether good leftists should be involved in "liberal" or "establishment" organizational activities as a way of bringing other people to a socialist perspective. Most all of us went through liberal and/or hippy stages on the road to radicalism. We would like to short cut and cap-

Actually, MR. Carson  
My first significant  
act in the movement  
was in 1969 when I

detonated a  
small nuclear family  
somewhere in Nevada.

sulize this process for others so that they can make use of our experience and come directly to socialism. This is a noble wish and is closely akin to how I could teach my children all that I know so that life will not be as painful and perilous for them as it was for me. Yet in the area of both political and personal growth and development, it seems to me that the role of the experienced person is more limited than she or he would like. Such developmental growth is most like a trip that each person must take for themselves in their own way.

There are, of course, several things that those who have taken a trip before can do to help those who come later. By making clear statements about what they experienced and where they eventually progressed to, they can demonstrate that such trips are both possible and productive. They then can make the trip for others a little less risky by drawing maps that show options and dangers. And lastly, at times they can go along to offer support and companionship. But they cannot short cut or casualize the trip for another person without it turning into an attempt to substitute authority for growth.

This "trip" analogy is not perfect. But it does point to where I feel my present struggle must lie. I want to join with others in looking carefully at the way that present cultural, social and organizational systems have dealt with the issue of passing experience in different matters from one generation to the other and see how these promote such factors as stability, change, skill building, authority, creativity, etc. But most of all, I intend to come out of the closet and start putting experience on the line with those with whom I am working so that it becomes an open, tangible ingredient in the situation we happen to be struggling with.

I would like to get together with others who want to do this same kind of study/practice. This could include people of any age, sex, or sexual preference. If a large and diverse group comes together, we might decide that part of the work is best done through caucuses or study groups formed along lines of special interest. But initially I would like to hear from just anybody who is interested in a serious approach to the issues raised in this article.

— Dan, RFD



Body Politic

## A GAY STUDENT'S EXPERIENCE AT HARVARD

(The following article appeared in The Harvard Crimson, December 6, '77. The author is a former resident of Lancaster, PA.)

"Thou, Nature, art my goddess, to thy law my services are bound. Wherefore should I stand in the plague of custom, and permit the curiosity of nations to deprive me..."

King Lear

BY CHUCK FRASER

I am a gay man.

The fact that I can make that simple statement of facts reflects how much I have grown during my four years at Harvard. It was not always that easy.

I have been homosexual as long as I have been sexual, that is, since I was 11 years old. The stereotype of the confused youth — in doubt of his sexual identity, trying girls, being dissatisfied, trying boys, feeling guilty, struggling — does not apply. I knew from my first adolescent fantasy that I liked boys' bodies, not girls'. I accepted it as inevitable. I did not feel anything that can really be called guilt. My mother, especially, had successfully indoctrinated me with a healthy belief that sex is natural and good.

Although I never felt guilty about my sexual orientation, I hardly accepted it. I thought it was a flaw in my character, a dreadfully grotesque abnormality. I felt that it was a terrible thing to happen to me — especially me, because, by the standards I had been taught, it was my only flaw: I was the smartest in my

class, reasonably popular, good in sports, mature.

Yet within this feeling of having been wronged was a huge blessing: because I realized that I had been homosexual, that it had happened to me, I realized also that I had not chosen to be homosexual. And if I had not chosen to be homosexual, I could not choose to change. I did not like being gay, but I knew there was nothing I could do about it. In this realization lay the seeds of self-acceptance and gay pride. Fortunately, the seeds were well enough planted that I grew strong enough to reject the belief society wanted me to hold: that I was shit.

I knew I had done nothing wrong. In fact, I had done nothing at all. Without consulting me, the Great Cosmos had made me gay. And with my pre-teenage intuition, I apparently realized what I know explicitly now: that no theory of accountability, no morality, could judge me for something that was beyond my control. I was not shit.

At the same time, I was aware that my homosexuality had to remain secret. Although I can not remember what I expected to happen, I can remember feeling certain that the most terrible of all possibilities would be for someone to find out I was gay. Thus eight years would pass before anyone else would know I was homosexual.

I came to Harvard mortally afraid of being discovered. I worked very hard at adopting masculine mannerisms, eliminating anything I thought effeminate. I was exploiting a nearly universal prejudice: the belief that only effeminate men are gay. I figured that no one would ever know, as long as I didn't "look gay." As far as I know, I was right. No one — straight or gay — ever knew I was gay before I told them.

I also came to Harvard with a fledgling sense of injustice, an awareness that my need to hide was brought on by a defect in society, not in me. It was society that was at fault and to blame for my unhappiness.

I hoped I was leaving anti-gay paranoia behind me when I moved from my intensely conservative and moralistic home town to liberal, enlightened Harvard. But with a cynicism about Harvard one would be more likely to expect from a jaded senior, I asked my journal just before freshman week, "Did I graduate inot a more mature world, or just a smarter one?"

Although I was smarter than my high school, Harvard, as regards homosexuality, was in fact no more mature. The only difference was that the viciousness of homophobic Harvard was disguised by the niceties of academe, the legitimacy of Intellectual Argument. Only at Harvard, for instance, could a man (who was otherwise almost totally non-religious) present in all seriousness — over

pizza at Harvard Pizza — an argument for "Why Homosexuals Should Go To Hell."

Many of my friends freshman year, including a roommate, submitted me, in their unjustified assumption that I was straight (it never occurs to straights that their friends might be gay), to endless pretentious justifications for beliefs in the inferiority of homosexuality. And, of course, there were the hundreds of fag jokes. (All the evidence necessary to demonstrate the astonishing and brutally insensitive ignorance of straight Harvard is that, although most people at Harvard would become hysterical upon hearing a "kike" joke or a "nigger" joke, a "fag" joke rarely elicits a single protest.)

I became aware of the Harvard-Radcliffe Gay Students Association (HRGSA) during the Fall of freshman year. Signs appeared one week announcing that the following Wednesday would be Gay Wednesday. Gay people should wear jeans, and straight people should wear "something else," the signs said. The ostensible purpose was to make gay people visible or detectable to each other. In fact, Gay Wednesday was a neat ploy to parody the notion that "you can tell" who's gay. The event tried to get straights to think about their prejudices for a day by making them sweat about whether people would think they were gay, and wonder why that should make them sweat.

But rationality was not on the agenda; the straights' reaction was horrifying. Such witty slogans as "Necrophiliac Thursday" and "Child Molesters' Friday" were scrawled on the signs. I cannot quite express the depth of resentment I felt and feel at being lumped together with people who screw dead bodies or seven-year-olds. My love is mature and adult, and requires mature adult reciprocation.

My homophobic roommate announced with disgust, but with authority, that the purpose of Gay Wednesday was to help the "queers" identify sexual prospects. It never occurred to him that gay people did anything but perpetually screw. He was insensitive to the idea that maybe gay people wanted to have sympathetic friends and live normal lives. I certainly wished I had a roommate who didn't heap on anti-gay abuse.

Shortly after Gay Wednesday, the president of HRGSA, Joe for now, wrote to The Crimson to respond to the anti-gay mania, and to try to explain the purposes of Gay Wednesday. He signed the letter. I was positively astounded. I could not believe that there was a human being alive with the courage to sign that letter. As it turned out, I knew him — he was in a class of mine — and because of that letter, I came to admire and respect him as I respected few people in the world.

The straight reaction to his letter was sadly predictable. My roommate sagely intoned that the writer had signed his letter only to use The Crimson to invite other queers to his bed. He denied that the signature required courage.

For the rest of the year, I heard references to that letter. Freshmen at the Union no longer told "fag" jokes, but Joe jokes. I became aware of just how more respectable — how much more of a man — was a guy who would put himself on the line for the sake of other gay people than were the chickenshits who ridiculed him from the safety of their little groups of gutless friends.

It was that Fall, during my freshman year, that I first realized that I would eventually "come out" — openly acknowledge my homosexuality — and live as a gay man, not as an ostensible straight one. I knew it would take time before I was strong enough — it took me two more years.

I cannot really say why I wanted to come out. There was no Big Reason. I can only say that I did not want to live a lifetime without love — nor, of course, without sex — and the only way to avoid that deprivation was to tell other gay men I was gay. But I could not stand the idea of living a double life — being gay among gay people, appearing straight among straights. That kind of double life seemed worse to me than what I was already doing — passing as straight to both gays and straights. So I knew that when I finally came out, I would come out to everybody, not just to gay people.

The problem was, I was not afraid of straight bigots, but also of gay people, though for different reasons. I knew that gay people, unlike straights, would not judge me, ridicule me, fear me, and hate me. But I was afraid of appearing confused, less than totally together. I was afraid of seeming weak and troubled. And I was deathly afraid of seeming unsophisticated and inexperienced.

I had decided, more or less subconsciously, that I would come out by going to a meeting of HRGSA. But I had preconceptions about the group that very closely matched what most straight people think about it. I pictured a small, tightly-knit group of worldly, experienced gay men who had conquered all the difficulties of being gay in a straight world.

Because of these preconceptions, I felt that I couldn't go to just any HRGSA meeting. I thought that my appearance at a meeting would be so conspicuous as to emphasize the fact that I had never been there before — which, I figured, would make obvious to all that I was unsure of myself, that I was troubled. But if I waited until the first meeting of the next year, people there would just figure I was a freshman, and would not then conclude that I was just coming out, just getting it



together. As unfounded as my fear was, it was genuine, and I am convinced that many, perhaps hundreds of gay people at Harvard who have not come out share the same fear.

The group itself fed this fear. It appeared as impersonal, imposing, almost secretive. Its posters announced date, time, place — period. No mention was ever made of what was done, who should come; no encouragement was extended through the keyhole of my closet door. When a poster appeared — "HRGSA meeting, 8 p.m. Wednesday, Phillip Brooks House" — I assumed that all the other gay people knew precisely what went on at meetings, and responded, en masse, as if to a secret signal in the posters.

Another fear had nothing to do with gay people, but with men, generally, at Harvard. Harvard men are the most threatened, most insecure men in the world. Harvard men are incredibly afraid to be less than totally masculine, cool, heroic, with it, sophisticated, charming. They try hard, too hard, to compensate for their insecurity by posing as confident and self-assured. And because Harvard men are highly skilled socially, they largely succeed. But in the process, they scare the hell out of each other — each one is convinced that everyone else's calm front is real, and that only he is in fact unsure of himself. So, for reasons irrelevant to my sexuality, I was afraid to appear to other people — even other gay people — as unsophisticated and inexperienced.

So I waited through sophomore year and went to the first meeting junior year. Apparently, many, many gays at Harvard shared my fears. If Kinsey's estimate that almost 10% of Americans are predominately homosexual is applied to Harvard, there are roughly 600 undergraduate homosexuals. (There are 180 people in Matthews, 18 gay Matthew residents; 140 marching band members, 14 gay bandies. Gay people are not "them," somewhere "out there." If you live in a quint next to a quint, one of you is probably gay, whether you know it or not, whether you like it or not.)

But there were fewer than 25 people at the meeting. When four or five people I had already known walked in, I thought in amazement, "He's gay?"; "She's gay?" Gays, just like straights, are unable to tell at a glance who is gay — we have no secret radar.

The meeting was largely organizational. We elected officers, and voted to change meeting times so that Radcliffe feminist group's meeting time wouldn't conflict with ours — so gay women on campus could attend both groups. We listened to a short presentation by a representative of the Cambridge Gay Political Caucus, who talked about Sandra Graham's campaign for state rep from Cambridge. We broke up for cider and cookies,

and I was intimidated by the fact that everyone but me seemed to know everyone else, so I left.

My initial coming-out, my declaration, was accomplished. The new meeting time conflicted with a section meeting, which I did not reschedule, so did not go back the rest of the year. I had signed the HRGSA mailing list, and I received regular announcements of speakers, parties, dances, and meetings. But as far as I knew, my absence went totally unnoticed. Certainly no one ever made any effort to reach me. I suppose no one knew that I wanted to be reached.

This has been a big year for me. I have continued to grow, to work out my thoughts, and to come to know and accept myself. I have begun to like myself.

Anita Bryant finished for me last June — and I suspect for many other gay people — what I had been building for nine years. Ms. Bryant brought gay rights out of the closet — she focused the issue very well: the issue was whether or not our society would treat homosexuals as inferior and as dangerous. She made many straights realize how stupid they sounded, and by sounding amazingly like Wallace in 1961 or Goldwater in 1964, she made many straights realize that they had not thought out their positions on gay rights very well.

Best of all, Anita gave me gay pride, and gay rage — pride in myself, for who I am, and rage at the society that refuses to recognize the value of one of its own.

I lived in the Boston area last summer, and I marched in the huge Boston Gay Pride March, June 18, 1977. More than 7000 gay women and men marched from Copley Square to Boston Common, where we held a rally, largely aimed at showing support for the Massachusetts anti-discrimination bill which would have allowed gays to hold civil service jobs. The bill passed the Senate last week, only to be amended into oblivion and then soundly defeated by the House four months later.

The day of the rally was one of the most beautiful days of my life. There were seven thousand of us — men and women, black and white, old and young, and so on. We heard speakers and chanted slogans as at all good political rallies. Then we asked to hold hands with those beside us — I held the hand of the black woman to my left and the white man to my right — to raise them to the sky, and sing in unison "We Shall Overcome." And as we sang the verses, 7000 strong, swaying to the tune, a black singer poured his soft, improvised, falsetto blues accompaniment over us, soothing, reassuring, strengthening. "We Shall Overcome" we sang, and we believed. How could we not believe? We were too strong, too good, too beautiful to be turned under again.

.....

My parents were in the Boston area for a weekend three weeks later. The first evening, I told my mother I was gay; when my father joined us the next day, I told him. I loved my parents, and I felt that I should tell them first of all straight people — if for no other reason, because I did not want them to hear it from someone else. I had not expected it to be easy, and I was right.

My mother is an educated woman, and a very good public school psychologist. I had expected better from her. My father's reaction was only somewhat better. Although he said that he was unconcerned, because he did not believe that homosexuals were "inferior," he has been unable to speak to me about my homosexuality in the four months since I told him. Of my siblings, only my 15-year-old sister, apparently too young to be burdened with society's foolish conceptions of masculinity and prejudices about sexuality, was able to speak to me without great awkwardness. Only she shared any gut feeling of injustice concerning society's treatment of gay people. The rest of my family treated my homosexuality as an imposition upon them and their phony peace. I am acceptable only as long as I keep my sexuality at a distance from them, "play straight," and speak not thereon. Out of sight, out of mind.

Eventually they will come around. They are my family. I am one of theirs, and their caring will eventually defeat their hangups in their battles to reconcile their feelings for me with their feelings about homosexuality. I only have to give them time — and an occasional nudge to keep them thinking.

Some people need less time. Before coming back to Harvard for my senior year, I had decided that I was not going to hide my sexuality anymore — from anybody. So by now, most of my friends — all of my really close ones — know that I am gay. Their reactions have been comparatively good. They are non-hostile and, even if cautious, somewhat approving.

Surprisingly to me, women have dealt with my homosexuality no better than men. I would have expected that a woman would have been relieved not to have to fear a man, his strength, his physical dominance, and the usual male-rapist sexual mentality. But I have found among my female friends an element of contempt for a man they regard as incapable of being threatening. One woman I know quite well reluctantly agreed that, although for opposite reasons, neither women nor men know how to deal with the opposite sex when on equal grounds.

A straight friend of mine asked toward the beginning of the semester where I went Wednesday nights. So heavy is the presumption that any

given person is heterosexual that when I told him I went to Gay Students Association meetings, he asked why. Any gay person would have thought it obvious. This friend had known me only casually for more than three years, and I was afraid that he would become cool toward me. In fact, he has become my closest friend.

He seemed to grasp a certain continuity: I was a nice guy when he thought I was straight; the fact that he knows now that I am gay does not change that. I did not rape or molest him before, I would not now.

If fact, he wanted to know about homosexuality and what role it has played in my life. We have talked, not just about my sexuality, but also about his, at some length. He is sympathetic and interested, open and unworried. To some extent he is even protective — he would take personal offense, I think, if someone were to attack homosexuality in general, or my homosexuality in particular. My experience with him convinces me that while ignorance of homosexuality is almost universal among straights, even at Harvard, and while ignorance often appears as unwitting viciousness, behind the ignorance can be compassion, or a capacity for it.

.....

In the process of coming out, I have learned a great deal about how people work. I used to have an innocent belief that one grows up by progressing toward a point of maturity. Beyond that point, I thought, though one might continue to change, the surprises are over. I thought



of growing up as Preparation For Life — once the real game begins, the rules stop changing.

But the surprises keep coming.

Time magazine, in its schizophrenic — half scientific, half manic paranoid — cover story on gay life in America (September 8, 1975), referred to coming out as a "rite of passage." So it seemed to me — until I began to come out.

I now realize that coming out is a continuing process. Even though I am fairly openly gay, almost every person who meets me, perhaps for the rest of my life, will assume until told otherwise that I am straight — and will impose his or her straight expectations upon me. For the rest of my life, I will be surprising people — shocking some people, dismaying some people — for the simple fact of who I am.

I also realize that coming out is a state of mind — a toughness and a wariness: a readiness to risk certain social discomforts in order to alleviate straight ignorance, in order to fight straight bigotry; a readiness to constantly attack the obnoxious "presumption of heterosexuality."

Finally, I realize that coming out is a way of life — a new honesty, a source of strength with which to face coming surprises.

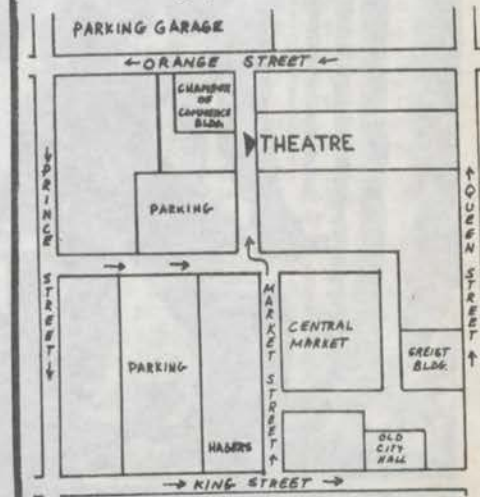
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# Bits 'n' Pieces

## SOCIOLOGISTS DEFEND GAYS AGAINST 'ONSLAUGHT'

WASHINGTON, DC — The American Sociological Association, an 8,000 member organization in the United States and Canada, has announced a policy commitment to "erasing anti-homosexual sentiments." Dr. Russell Dynes, Executive Officer of the Association, announced the result of a ballot of the members of the Association's Executive Council which put the organization on record "condemning all attempts to prevent" gays from gaining equal rights. The Council declared that the sociology of homosexuality is a "legitimate and important field of study" which should now receive "special encouragement because of the social stigma placed upon homosexuality"

The action of the sociologist's organization followed a number of recently passed resolutions which denounced campaigns against gay right ordinances. The Executive Council took issue with the use of sociological concepts and research used in those campaigns — concepts and research which it found were "distorted" and part of an "ugly onslaught" against gay rights.

Laud Humphreys, a leader of the Sociologists' Gay Caucus, said that groups like Save Our Children, (the Anita Bryant campaign organization in Dade County, Florida)

"have abused sociological findings. Conclusions drawn by people misusing such findings are being used to harm individual members of sexual minorities and the sociological profession cannot tolerate such distortions."

The Sociologists' Gay Caucus, which initiated the move to change the national organization's policy, has compiled data showing that research on homosexuality has been inhibited by sociology and institutions funding research. The group said it has "clear evidence" that some universities discourage dissertations on the subject of sexuality and sexual minorities.

The Caucus charged that both faculty members and students at many universities are advised to "stay away" from research into sexual minorities and sexuality because such is likely to harm their careers.

— Gay Community News

## KINSEY STUDY FINDS GAYS BETTER ADJUSTED

INDIANA — A ten-year study on homosexuality to be released shortly concludes that many gay men and women may be better adjusted and happier than their heterosexual counterparts.

The new study by the Kinsey Institute was headed by psychologists Alan Bell and Martin Weinberg and was fund-

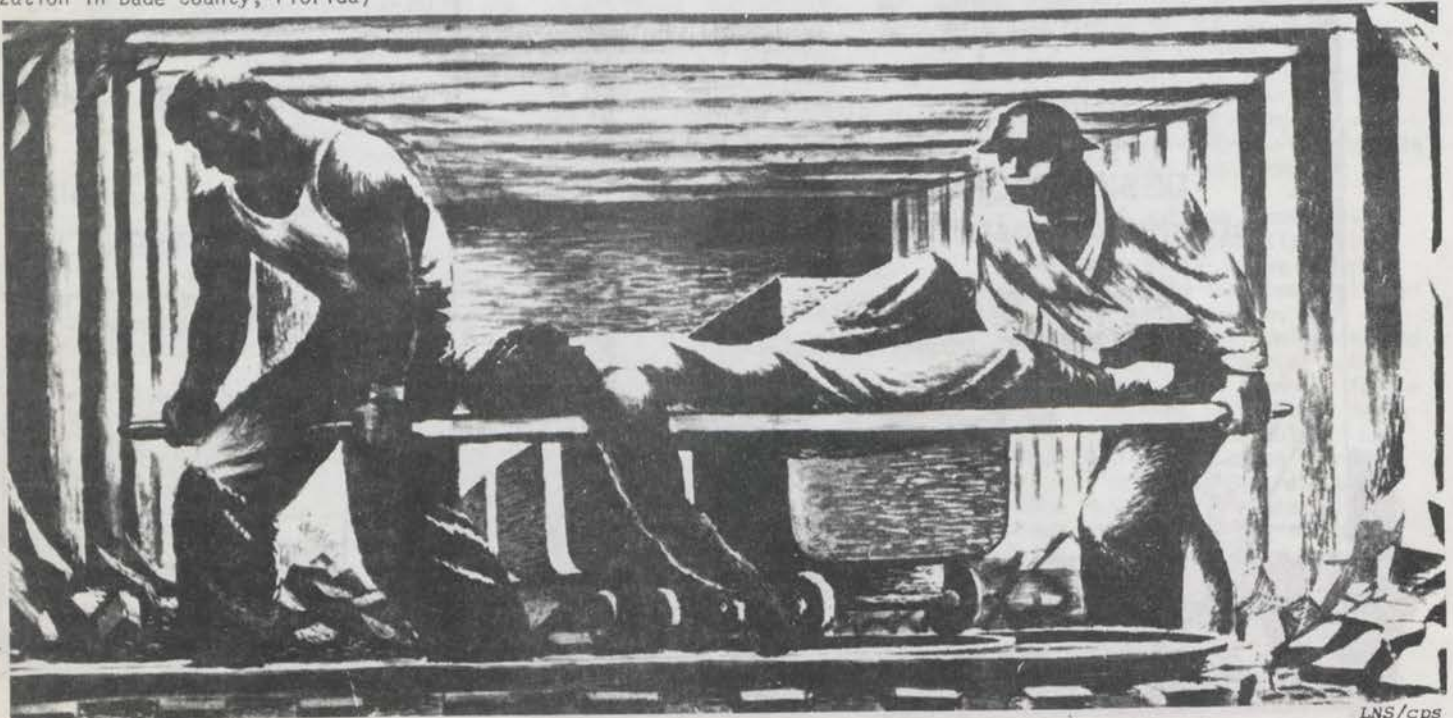
ed by the National Institute of Mental Health. It was based on extensive interviews with more than 1500 gay men and women who resided primarily in the Chicago and San Francisco areas.

The researchers conclude that gay life is not as sex-obsessed, anxiety-ridden or trouble prone as it is generally believed by the straight population. The two Indiana University researchers found, in fact, that many gay couples seem to be happier than randomly selected straight couples.

Bell and Weinberg state that their study found that, just as heterosexuals cannot be stereotyped in any manner, neither can gays. The two authors say, in the introduction of their upcoming book, *Homosexualities*, "our hope is that, at the very least, it will become increasingly clear to the reader that there is no such thing as the homosexual."

## PENTAGON ASKS END TO MEN-ONLY COMBAT DUTY

WASHINGTON, DC — The Defense Department has asked Congress to end the ban against women in combat roles. A bill already passed by the House of Representatives and now before the Senate should eliminate the Women's Army Corps (WAC) and end all differences of treatment in the military based on sex, except for certain combat duties. The New York Times reports that the Pentagon wants to accel-



erate the role of women in the military because of increasing personnel shortages due to the end of the baby-boom. A Defense Department official is quoted as telling the Times there will be a 15% drop of 18 year old males by the mid 1980's, and a 25% drop in the 1990's. The official adds "We shouldn't be depriving women of these jobs that they're qualified to do and want to do."

If Congress passes the proposed legislation, women will be able to

fly combat planes in the Air Force and to serve on destroyers and aircraft carriers in the Navy, as well as be a part of infantry units in the Army. — Gaysweek

### THE CELLULOID CLOSET

WASHINGTON, DC — The American Film Institute Theater at the Kennedy Center will present an extensive six-week retrospective entitled "The Celluloid Closet: Homosexuality in the Cinema." More than 40 films will be shown spanning the past seventy-

five years, including early silents and talkies, contemporary productions, foreign and American film

tions, foreign and American films, documentaries, underground works and television shows.

The program, which will continue through July 6, will survey the media and examine its treatment of homosexuality in films. It follows a similar program presented by the British Film Institute in London last year.

The American Film Institute Theater is located in the Hall of States at the Kennedy Center. Box office hours are from noon to 9 p.m. daily. For ticket information call (202) 785-4601.

### WOMAN NAMED MARINE GENERAL

WASHINGTON, DC — President Carter has nominated Col. Margaret Brewer to be the first woman general of the Marine Corps. The nomination of Brewer, who helped break down the sex discrimination barriers in that arm of the service, is subject to Senate approval.

The proposed promotion accompanied word that Brewer would also be named the director of information, or official spokesperson, for the Marine Corps headquarters in Washington.

The marines are the last of the armed services to elevate a woman to general's or admiral's rank.

— Gay Community News

### CANADIAN GAY REFUSED

BOSTON — After a meeting with members of the National Gay Task Force, the US Public Health Service has adopted the position of the American Psychiatric Association and will no longer define homosexual persons as either "sex deviants" or "psychopathic personalities." The Public Health Service stated on April 4 that it will inform all its officers of the policy change.

On April 6, just two days after the announced change, a gay Canadian citizen was refused entrance into this country because of his sexuality. Serve Savard of Montreal was coming into this country with an American citizen, Iolo Carew, a resident of Somerville, Mass. At the border crossing at Highgate Springs, Vermont, Savard was questioned by an Immigration officer and refused admittance because he is gay.

According to Carew, the officer, S.J. Roth, read the policy against admittance of anybody who can be described as a "sex deviate" or as having "psychopathic disorders." Despite a long discussion between Roth, Carew, and Savard, the officer would not allow the Canadian citizen to enter this country. Carew told Gay Community News that Roth merely stated "It's the law."



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## EXPLORER SCOUTS BARRED AS GAYS

MANKATO, MN — Two members of the Explorer scouts, Scott Ford, 17 and Scott Vance, 16, have been expelled from their local post after they admitted they were gay.

Ford and Vance appealed their dismissal to the director of public relations for the Boy Scouts of America in New Brunswick, NJ. Their expulsion was then upheld at the national level.

"I think the public should be informed that there is discrimination against gays," Ford said. "Most people aren't willing to talk about it. Whatever can happen here can happen anywhere."

— Gaysweek

## ANITA DISPLAY REMOVED IN MISUNDERSTANDING

PHILADELPHIA — An apparent misunderstanding over support for Anita Bryant caused a food store to revise its advertising, and dramatized the clout of a gay market.

A window display at The Fruit Lady (18th & Walnut Sts.) contained an autographed book of Bryant's surrounded by oranges. A nearby blackboard said: "Join Us In Our Salute to Anita Bryant" with a middle finger drawn underneath.

"The problem was that people just saw our oranges and the slogan, and not the finger put-down," explained co-owner Phyllis Brodsky. "I love gays, they keep me alive, and I don't want to offend anyone."

However, several customers and passersby complained, and after only two days the display was removed.

Chef Richard Hackett, whose copy of Anita Bryant's Family Cookbook spurned the controversy, said: "Obviously, any shop on Walnut Street would only do this in jest. If you'd laugh her out of existence, the whole world would be a lot better off."

— Gay News

SAN DIEGO — This must rate as one of the most unusual souvenirs left behind by the late king of rock and roll... A publication called The Reader has published a small "for sale" ad stating "Rectal thermometer used by Elvis Presley. \$40 or best offer."

## GAY MOTHERS RAISE OK KIDS

NEW YORK — Psychiatrist Richard Green and a team of researchers at the State University of New York studying children being raised by lesbian mothers say that, so far, the children are developing along identical paths to children raised by heterosexual parents.

The samples include 21 children ranging in age from 5 to 14. Dr. Green

says there is not the slightest indication that being raised by a lesbian mother influences the child toward becoming gay. According to the doctor, the children are choosing toys and behaving in ways consistent with their biological sex.

## HONGISTO DISPUTE

CLEVELAND — Richard Hongisto, a longtime gay rights supporter, was suspended indefinitely as police chief of this city by Mayor Dennis Kucinich. Hongisto, the former Sheriff of San Francisco County (CA), and accused the Mayor of trying to stall police investigations into municipal corruption.

The Mayor suspended the Chief because Hongisto "failed to produce corroboration of the charges." Hongisto has been pushing his dispute with the Mayor since his dismissal. He accused Kucinich of being "Nixonian," and is planning to remain in Cleveland to press his demands for "an honest and respected" chief to take his place.

— Gay Community News

## FURNITURE AS A SEXUAL PERSONALITY PROFILE

Many people believe you are what you eat. Now a psychologist is suggesting you are how you decorate... Doctor M.H. Harmen, in her book Psycho-Decorating, has studied the decorating patterns of 100 women, and has found a direct connection between a woman's taste in furniture and her personality, including her sex interests.

Harmen says, for example, that women with large dining room tables have a need to accomplish something; those with an average-sized table just want to be friendly. An oval table is said to be a tip-off that its owner needs to help others.

The sexually-oriented person reportedly avoids glass-top tables of all kinds, loves heavy-textured sofas such as velvet, prefers different kinds of wallpaper on each wall in the living room, fills that room with plants and really dislikes fireplaces.

## GAY ATHEISTS FORM NEW ORGANIZATION

SAN FRANCISCO — Gay Atheists, a new organization founded to counter recent attempts to infringe church/state separation, held its first formal meeting in February, and elected a board of directors. GA is a non-profit and non-political educational organization of gay women and men brought together to expose the attempts of organized religion to victimize gays.

The platform statement, adopted in February, states that separation of church and state is lost when "tax exempt churches circulate initiative and referendum petitions... hardcore evangelists are placed upon police vice-squads... evangelicals use the airwaves to attack gays and other minorities... and religious fanatics attempt to alter the Constitution to fit their brand of religion."

While GA reportedly does not op-



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pose the rights of gays who seek personal religious experience, the platform statement notes that religion is based mainly on fear and cruelty to others.

An informational pamphlet, which also contains the platform statement, is available on request. Gay Atheists can be contacted at Box 14142, San Francisco, CA 94114.

— Gaysweek

### STUDENT SURVEY BANNED

WASHINGTON, DC — The US Supreme Court has let stand a lower court decision upholding a ban against a survey of student sexual attitudes by a New York City high school newspaper.

The survey was banned in 1976 by school officials at Stuyvesant High. They maintained that the question-

naire, even though answered anonymously or not at all, might harm some students psychologically. The newspaper, with the help of the New York Civil Liberties Union, sued but was ruled against in the US Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit. The Supreme Court upheld the lower court decision without comment.

The survey asked students 25 questions on homosexuality, masturbation, premarital sex, contraception and other matters.

— Gay Community News

### NUDE ROBBERS CAUGHT WITH THE GOODS

ROSELAWN, IL — Two nude men were arrested on armed robbery charges after they allegedly drew guns and demanded refunds at a local nudist colony.

Police report that the two men

paid \$5 each as an entry fee to the Naked City Nudist Camp and spent about 10 minutes inside. They reportedly then returned to the front desk and demanded refunds. When their refund demands were rejected, they both pulled guns, the police say. It was not clear where they had stashed their weapons.

### LONDON GAY NEWS LOSES APPEAL

LONDON — Gay News has lost its appeal against conviction under the centuries old Blasphemous Libel law in Britain. The court of Criminal Appeal turned down the appeals by the paper and editor Denis Lemon on all grounds.

Lord Justice Roskill delivered the decision of the three justices, upholding the fines against the paper and editor Lemon. The justices also granted court costs to anti-gay crusader Mary Whitehouse, the person who brought the suit against the paper. A prison sentence hanging over Lemon's head was dismissed.

Gay News may now appeal the decision against it to the House of Lords. The paper has decided to leave that decision up to its readers and the general public. "The case must be certified as of public interest," the editors said, "before leave to appeal to the Lords can be obtained. We can now only fight on with your renewed support and we would urge you to let us have your views."

— Gay Community News

### STUDY: SPEECH SHOWS SEX BIAS

SANTA BARBARA, CA — A study of male-female conversations recorded in coffee shops, drugstores and private homes in Santa Barbara, California, conducted by Professors Candice West and Don Zimmerman, found that in conversations studied "46 out of 48 interruptions were made by males to females."

Zimmerman and West say, "In every conversation, the male interrupted the female more frequently than vice versa." The professors added that females showed a greater tendency toward silence, "especially... after the men had interrupted them."

The two researchers say that much of the male-to-female talk they recorded resembled the high-handed conversation style adults often use with children, with the male playing the adult.

### NOBLE FAILS TO GAIN ENDORSEMENT

BROOKLINE, MA — The Citizens for Participation in Political Action (CPPAX) has failed to endorse any candidate for governor or U.S. Senator in this year's election. The liberal group was expected to give its endorsement to State Rep. Elaine

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Noble in her bid to gain the Democratic nomination to run against incumbent Senator Edward Brooke. The decision of the group not to endorse Noble is seen by political observers as a setback in her campaign.

— Gay Community News

## GAY RIGHT ADVOCATES

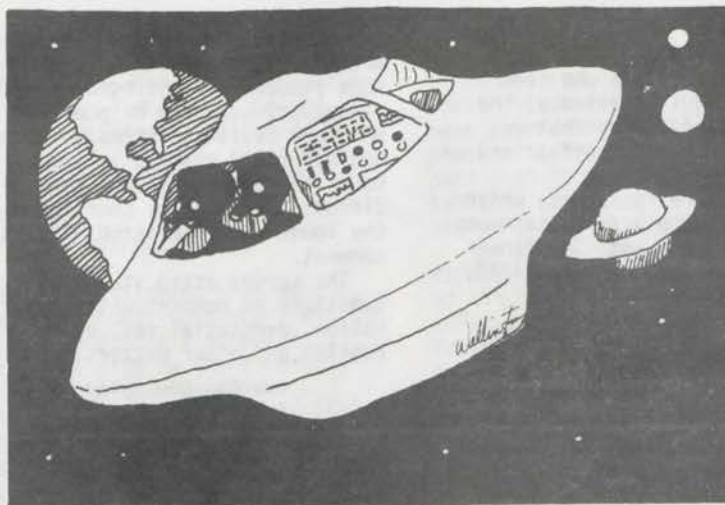
SAN FRANCISCO — The Playboy Foundation has recently announced that a grant will be going to Gay Rights Advocates, a San Francisco-based public interest law firm that serves the gay community. According to the Advocates, the grant will permit GRA to continue several important litigation and educational projects. A major effort will be the creation of a national recourse center for briefs, pleadings, and other legal documents relevant to homosexuality and the law.

Gay Rights Advocates, a nonprofit California corporation, is the first public interest law firm in the West working exclusively with the gay community. Offices are located at 540 Castro St., San Francisco, CA 94114, (415)863-3622.

— Gay Community News

## CHANGES IN DC

WASHINGTON, DC — A new crime code, which includes legalizing homosexual acts between consenting adults has been approved by the Dis-



YES GARAK, THAT IS EARTH. BETTER KNOWN AS HOMOPHOBIA I THROUGHOUT THE GALAXY.

—GCN

trict of Columbia Law Review Commission. The changes in the code have been forwarded to Congress for action. Passage of the bill, without modifications, could come by September. Congressional staffers reportedly have warned that the code could run into some legislative trouble.

The proposed code went before the Senate and the House District Committees where hearings began in April. The code can be revised by Congress at any point along the legislative process.

The code would repeal the existing sodomy law and set the age of consent at 16, except where one partner is between 11 and 15 years of

age and the other partner is no more than five years older.

— Gay Community News

## HAWAII GAY BILL DEFEATED, 4-2

HONOLULU — An anti-discrimination bill proposed by House Judiciary Committee Chairman Richard Garcia, was defeated yesterday in a 4-2 vote by the committee. The bill proposed to ban "discrimination in employment and housing on grounds of race, sex, sexual orientation, age, religion, color, ancestry, or political consideration." The vote was

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held with only six members of the 14 member committee present at the March 10 meeting.

A hearing on the bill had been held by the committee on February 23. The hearing lasted until 4 am, and was attended by over 200 people, including a vocal group of Mormons who opposed the bill. 63 witnesses

testified at the hearing, mostly in favor of the bill.

— Gaysweek

### CANADA'S SLOW PROCESS

Ottawa — In a letter to the National Gay Rights Coalition, Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau has stated that he expects the Canadian Human Rights Commission to make rec-

ommendations for further government action on gay rights in Canada.

In a carefully worded letter, Trudeau stated that the "Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the Dept. of External Affairs and the Dept. of National Defence have found that homosexuals are targeted for blackmail to a greater extent than heterosexuals...there is no government policy, either overt or covert, to discriminate against homosexuals."

The prime Minister added, however, that the Armed Forces ...have found that due to the special character of the Forces, individuals who are found to be homosexual are given discharges which do not cite specific reasons for release, in order to avoid harassment and for their own benefit."

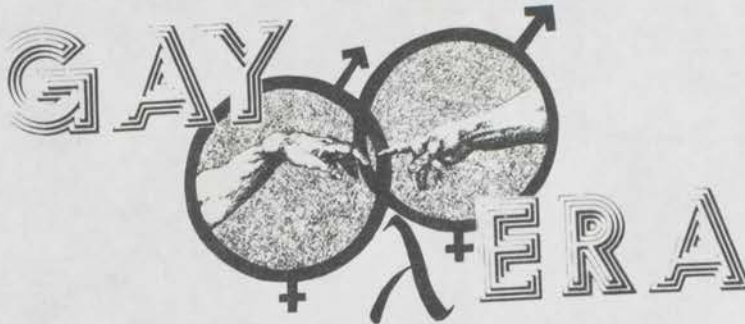
Trudeau added in his letter to the Coalition that he and his colleagues "feel strongly that the Federal Government must make every effort to eliminate prejudiced attitudes towards homosexuals, but you will appreciate that this can be a very slow process."

— Gay Community News

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# COMING OUT

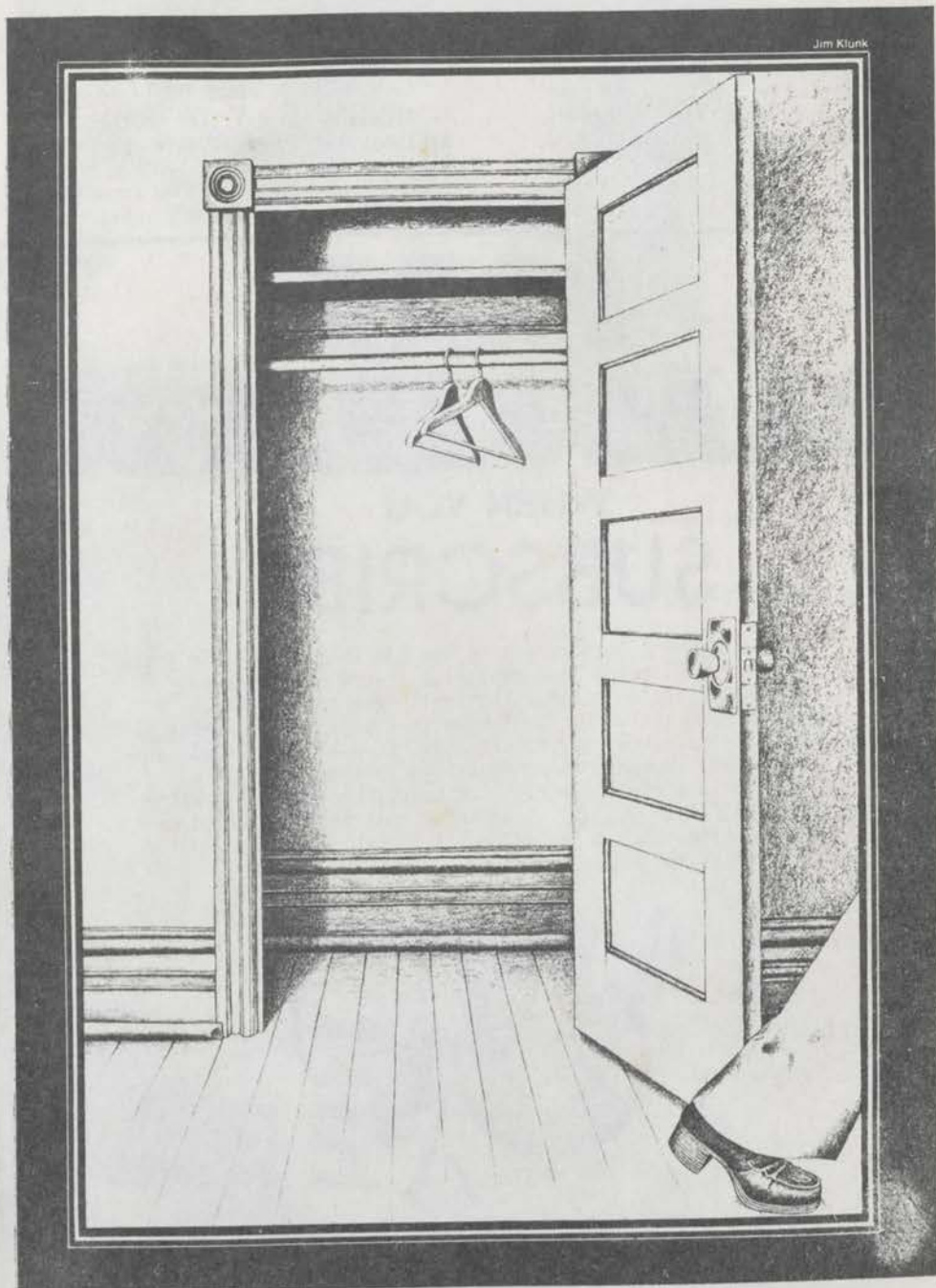
## COMING OUT AS AN OLD MAN

A funning thing happened to me towards the end of the recent Faggots and Class Struggle Conference held in Oregon last year...I came out as an old man. The act of standing up alongside of several other of my brotherold men and facing a lot of young people to proclaim both our solidarity and differences in relation to them was, for me, the end point in a rather long process. For the last year or so I had been bothered by nagging questions about my age difference in relation to the people I live with and work with and that morning I had been lying in my sleeping bag trying to figure out just where I stood in relation to the rest of the people at the conference. I finally decided to get up and go down to camp and find one of the other four or five older men among the 130 participants and say "Hey! I'm old, and you're old... Let's talk." Doing this ended a period of hiding, repression, shame, and fear not unlike that which preceded my coming out as a gay person years before.

I would like to share with others some of my experiences at this point, I would like this to lead to further study and analysis by myself and others about how age intersects with economics, sexual, sex-preference and other class variables to create the clearly oppressive gulch between the young and the old that I experienced at the conference as well as generally throughout our society. In particular, I want my newfound pride to lead to a little organizing since I see organizing as the best manifestation of consciousness and pride among the oppressed.

I want to say immediately that when I use the word "oppressed", I am not feeling sorry for myself. It was before I came out that I was feeling sorry for myself. But that was a private feeling...nurtured within me and revealed to others only in brief, distorted, indirect flashes. Now I feel quiet, content, angry and triumphant.

So far I can put my fingers on two inter-related aspects of this age oppression that I am involved in. One is personal and the other is organizational. The personal aspect is particularly ironic for me since I came out as a gay person 10 years ago at the late age of 36 so that I could finally enjoy the loving/sensual and sexual relationships with men that I had missed all



those years. Now I find myself close to being excluded from those very relationships by the community which I chose to join because my body and mind are old.

I say "close to" because the fact is that I seem to be remarkably well preserved for an old man, and I sometimes have the experience of having people attracted to me because they think I'm in my early 30's. Everything is fine with my body and love-making until they find out I'm really 46. Then the idea of relating with an old man blows them away. This is a good indication of the powerful role that illusion plays in creating and maintaining personal relationships.

Then there are those who clearly recognize that I'm older and are attracted to me for just that reason. But these relationships inevitably get hogged down in mutual expecta-

tions about father/child, teacher/student, therapist/client. These scripts get very complicated, but the bottom line is that younger people cannot believe and respond to my efforts to express my weakness and need to be nurtured, which is always as deep as theirs.

My experience tells me that this is similar for middle-class men in both the straight and gay worlds, with there being a bit more ageism among gay men. I do not know about the differences for older women and people in different economic classes.

The easiest response to all this is to ask why I don't get together with people my own age. One important reason is, of course, that I have been as infected with youth-worship as everybody else. On the

(Continued on page 13)