

GAY

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Winners of the '72 Gay Book Award: Peter Fisher, author of THE GAY MYSTIQUE, and Del Martin & Phyllis Lyon, authors of LESBIAN/WOMAN. (Photo by Kay Tobin)



(Photo by Kay Tobin) Recently published gay books are displayed by liberationists in Chicago.

Gay Books Displayed at Library Convention

Chicago, Ill.—A fresh breeze of gay liberation swept through the Windy City June 25-30, leaving in its wake over 4,000 copies of a vital new bibliography of gay literature.

The occasion was the annual convention of the American Library Association, which coincided with Gay Pride Week. The gay group that treated thousands of librarians to an all-out leafleting campaign with the bibliography is a sub-sub-group of the ALA itself, the Task Force on Gay Liberation of the Social Responsibilities Round Table.

A scant two years old, the Gay Liberation Task Force was already drawing SRO crowds to its events at ALA convention time. Well-known gay activist Michael McConnell, who was denied a library job at the University of Minnesota after he and his lover Jack Baker applied for a marriage license, spoke to a packed hall on "A Gay Librarian Takes His Fight to the Supreme Court." The high court had just declined to hear McConnell's appeal for his job, he explained, letting stand a dangerous lower court ruling that could be used against anyone who demnads the

"right to pursue an activist role in implementing his unconventional ideas... [court's emphasis]." McConnell is urging the library association to censure the University for job discrimination against him. The ALA is indeed considering such action.

McConnell and Task Force coordinator Barbara Gittings took time out to join in a Chicago rally in Lincoln Park, sponsored by a coalition of Chicago gay groups and individuals to celebrate Gay Pride Week. However, most of their time was spent greeting librarians, who

streamed into the hospitality suite of the Task Force on Gay Liberation in the Palmer House, one of the two convention hotels. There, librarians from all over the country relaxed, talked, browsed through copies of new gay books, walked through a display booth featuring photos of gay love and gay liberation activities, and collected free copies of dozens of gay periodicals including GAY. Task Force members and supporters from a number of Chicago gay groups kept the hospitality suite a vital social center—the only one at

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Democratic Convention Airs Gay Lib Proposals

Miami Beach, Florida—Two homosexual McGovern delegates to the Democratic National Convention were allotted ten minutes on the convention floor here to present the gay liberationists' minority rights plank. Both speakers, a woman and a man, were given the same amount of time granted to all other groups seeking an adoption of their views for the Democratic Party's platform. Their bid was defeated, but both gay liberationists, according to those who watched them present the homosexual plank, spoke movingly and effectively of the need for such a plank.

Scheduled for early morning discussion, during a time (5:00 a.m.) when most Americans would be asleep, the gay delegates presented their case, nevertheless, on national television networks.

First on the agenda was Jim Foster, a McGovern delegate from California, and the Political Chairman for the Society for Individual Rights, one of the nation's largest gay lib organizations, with headquarters in San Francisco.

Next Madeline Davis, a New York McGovern delegate, and President of the Mattachine Society of the Niagara Frontier (Buffalo) explained to her fellow delegates that she was "someone's sister,"

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Quakers Come Out Of Closets

Ithaca, N.Y.—A Quaker Minister risked his job by declaring himself gay, the nation's first known group devoted to bisexuality was started, and a committee of gay Quakers came halfway out of the closet at the biennial conventions of the Friends General Conference here recently.

Ronald E. Mattson, a paid minister of Minneapolis Monthly Meeting, told a surprised and attentive audience of some seven hundred Friends of his life as a homosexual Quaker and of his decision to speak of it to them. In an emotional speech which drew mostly favorable reaction from the Quakers present, Mattson spoke of his fears for his job and of his determination to speak out nonetheless.

Mattson also told the Friends of the formation earlier of a Committee of Concern (on homosexuality) with over a score of active members and a mailing list of over a hundred gay Quakers. The committee met during the June 24-July 1 convention and invited gay Friends to join them, but apart from the Mattson speech, which came in the setting of a panel on Quaker attitudes towards sexuality, the committee has not addressed itself to the Quaker public yet.

Friends General Conference is the most liberal of three major groups of Quakers. Mattson's meeting, however, is affiliated with Iowa Yearly Meeting, which is part of the Friends United Meeting, a much more conservative grouping.

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Maye Verdict: Was Justice Served?

The following presents a view of the Michael Maye case which has not until now been aired in GAY. These are the conclusions of Vicki Richman, GAY's columnist-reporter who sat through each portion of the Maye trial and who felt, at the trial's conclusion, that justice had been faithfully served.

—The Editors

BY VICKI RICHMAN

New York, N.Y. There was no jury in the trial of the People vs. Michael Maye, so the press got the jurors' seats. It was my first time in the jury box.

I couldn't resist the temptation, therefore, to become in my mind one of Mr. Maye's twelve hypothetical peers summoned from more mundane cares to the task of judging their fellow man. I sat through the five days of testimony thinking, on one level, that I would report back to GAY's readers, and, on a more childlike, more godlike, level, what I myself might decide about the defendant's guilt.

I would have, like Judge Shirley Levitan, voted to acquit. The question was put aside of my respect for Morty Manfred or of the importance to gay liberation of making an example of this obvious fag-baiter. The People simply did not provide evidence conclusive enough to justify depriving a man of his liberty, even for only fifteen days.

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ACLU To Defend S.F. Teachers

BY GERALD HANSEN

San Francisco, Calif. The American Civil Liberties Union will intervene in the action of the Novato Unified School District board to reprimand two teachers who invited a Society for Individual Rights speaker to their classes.

The husband of one of the reprimanded faculty members, Owen O'Donnell, himself an attorney, said the ACLU has agreed to represent the teachers, students, parents and the S.I.R. member, Joseph "Robie" Robillard, who was barred from addressing a class at San Marin High School at Novato by principal Henry Moroski.

Sixty-three parents signed permission slips and approved the right of their offspring to hear the speaker. Only two parents were opposed. On June 20, the school district board voted 7-0 to reprimand Kristina O'Donnell and Larry Siegel for inviting Robillard, which also had the approval of the department chairman.

Present strategy is for the two teachers to use normal appeal procedures within the school district. "If that approach is not met to satisfaction a brief will be introduced in court," said Frank Fitch, S.I.R. public relations director, who met with Siegel and Joseph Remcho, assistant staff counsel and legislative representative of Sacramento for ACLU.

"Main focus will be on the First

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WHERE WILL YOU GO TONIGHT?

A DIRECTORY FOR DISCRIMINATING DISPOSITIONS

GM—Genital Males
GF—Genital Females
TV—Transvestites
INT—Integrated, gay & straight
BY JERRY FITZPATRICK

WEST VILLAGE
Bon Seir, 40 W. 81st St. (473-9859). Cha-cha palace, mostly Latin. Bunny is on the bar during the day. GM & TV
Bonnie & Clyde's, 82 W. 3rd St. (GR 3-9304). Dancing, free buffet on Sundays. Elaine is behind the bar to make you feel at home. GF w/some GM

Carr's, 204 W. 10th St. (255-9742). Neighborhood bar and crowd. Alfie is the only one left behind the stick. GM
Casa Laredo, 551 Hudson St. (989-8520). New managers are Steel and Milton. Bernard is still on the floor and Marilyn is on the bar.

Cave, Bank and Washington St. Sexy David is on days. Ken and Jeff will take care of your nights. Beautiful Kevin is manager. GM
Coven, 531 Hudson St. (255-9741). Full meals at \$2.50 until midnight when the kitchen changes for burgers and omelettes till 8 AM. upstairs bar now has a piano. GM/GF

Danny's, 139 Christopher St. (925-9321). Has picked up considerably. I'm sure that the day crowd is due to Jerry behind the bar. GM
Danny's in the Hideaway, 500 W. 14th St. Brand new. Lefty's Place has Jack Hartman and Kevin behind the bar. Dancing, and if you're in the mood, there's a motel upstairs. GM
Danny's Sheridan Square, 170 7th Ave. 50. Young heads and dancing. Buddy the Body is on days. Marvin and Peter, nights. Jody will make sure that you enjoy. GM

Delaney's, 72 Grove St. (AI 5-7905). Drinks by Joey J. and piano by Murray Grant. Fine food. Int.
Fedora's, 239 W. 4th St. (CH 2-9691). Jack and Larry on the floor to serve you. And Fedora herself making sure that you enjoy your meal. GM/some Int.

Flaxie, 48 Barrow St. (CH 3-7358). Seems despite some groovy hell they are still losing business. Say hello to Jamie and Phillip. GM/Int.
Five Oaks, 49 Grove St. (675-9669). Village favorite off Sheridan Square. Int.
Four Eleven, 411 Bleecker St. (CH 2-2117). An old-time favorite. Int.

Gesey Hale, 183 W. 10th St. Sexy Bill on the bar. Dottie on the floor. Manager doesn't seem to like his job. GM
Goldbug, 83 W. 3rd St. (677-9874). What a couple! Not only Best, but also my favorite Joey (Miccioni). Say hello.

Horn of Plenty, 353 Bleecker St. (242-0636). Great food but you'll have to bring your own wine until they get their liquor license. Int.
Inca, 309 W. 12th St. (242-9722). The food is great and they have sexy Joe. A mixture with a lot of GM.

Julius, 159 W. 10th St. Hamburgers are great. Drinks are good. Had, Joey, at all will take care of your drinks. The crowd is pretty, but don't count on making out. They still stare off GM Ketter's, 28 West St. near Christopher. The grand-daddy of leather bars, recently celebrated its 13th anniversary. GM
Keekie's, 149 W. 14th St. (242-9226). The bar is clean but they don't encourage GMS. Keekie looks like a poor man's Zazaa. GF

MAGNOLIA T'S, 105 W. 13th St. Sam is doing the cooking. June and Earl are on the bar and a sequined Devon is on the floor to take care of you. GM
Marie's Crisis, 59 Grove St. (243-9323). A lot of fun. J.L., John Michel, Mickey, Libra and Jan Thomas on the piano. GM, GF

Men's Royal Roast, 28 Cornelia St. (CH 2-9557). Cozy room with Joe and Eddy to see that you have a good time. Mostly GM
Ninth Circle, 139 W. 10th St. Hamburgers, etc. Garden dining, little dancing. Bill and Ed on the Stick. Young heads. GM
One Potato, 518 Hudson St. (691-6260). Lunch scene is mobbed. Frank, or Elizabeth the Last, holds court and you're sure of a few guest stars. Dinner is reasonable and good. See Billy for some of the best drinks you've imbibed. GM, GF, Int.

Paula's, Greenwich Ave. and 7th Ave. So. The food is very good. Chris and Elaine tend bar while Paula supervises. GF, GM
Peter Rabbit, 305 W. 10th St. (925-9279). Wild mixture of folks, cruising, sexy Jimmy and George to tend your needs.

ROADHOUSE, 370 Hudson St. (CH 3-4214). Cruising, packed every night. Sy, Ron, Tom, Keller and Ray on the bar. Go and enjoy. GM
Sammy's Flax, East 15th St. near 5th Ave. (675-8746). Nice big piano bar. Leah is your hostess and (populosity, stin) beautiful Bobby Conroy is on the bar. GM

Ter, 21 Greenwich Ave. (255-1337). Snack shop, cruising afterwards; find out what is happening all over the Village. GM/Int.
Westbeach, Christopher St. (down near the pier). I thought that this was "straight." Imagine my surprise when a bunch of brothers waved me in last Sunday. It's a wild saloon and Jason and George will make sure that you enjoy. GM/Int.

EAST VILLAGE, WASHINGTON AND UNION SQUARES

Club Baths, 24 1st Ave. (673-3283). Open 24 hours. Dynamite facilities and humpy studs all over the place. Confidential V.D. tests every Thursday 5-9pm. GM
Eighty-Two Club, 82 E. 4th St. (GR 7-1046). Home of the female impersonators. Tourists: McSweeney's Ale House, 15 E. 7th St. (477-9363). Was very cruising when we were kids; I doubt if it's changed all that much even though Women's Lib got there too. Int.
Mae's Kansas City, 213 Park Ave. So. (777-7870). A wild mixture of everything and baby, the prices are STIFF. Int.

St. Mark's Baths, 6 SE Marks Place (473-7929). Low prices because they wouldn't dare charge any higher. Run down. GM
Spoon's, 332 Park Ave. So. (475-9759). Will let you know more later on.

GRAMMERCY & MURRAY HILL

Beau Gate, 239 3rd Ave. (475-9724). You'll find yourself looking for Gypsy Cooper. Great decor. The food is quite good and the waiters are pretty. Thom and Jack tend bar. Piano upstairs. GM
Leo's Lion, 57 Lexington Ave. (688-9608). Nice, friendly atmosphere. Your host is David. Go and have a good time. GM

Uncle Charlie's South, 581 3rd Ave. Three separate rooms allow you to keep making entrances. This beautifully decorated place is always jammed. Bob and Jerry are your hosts while Frank, Ron, Ken, Kevin and Ronnie will keep your glasses filled. GM

CHELSEA

Eagle's Nest, 11th Ave. & 21st St. If you're not into leather (black) and/or western, don't bother. You won't get in and why? Because the management or yourself. This is for leather people only. GM
Nine Plus Social Club, 149 W. 21st St. Exclusive after-hours club for the leather set. You must be sponsored by a member. Nice place.
Spike, 120 11th Ave. Same numbers as at The Eagle. Sexy Roy Baker is on the bar. GM

SOHO

Gay Activists Alliance Firehouse, Saturday night dance at 99 Wooster St. Get there early and have a ball and a half. Take the 7th Ave. IRT local to Houston; 8th Ave. IND (AA/E) to Spring; 6th Ave. IND (D/F/B) to Broadway/Lafayette; BMT (RR) to Prince, Lax. Ave. IRT to Spring. Cabaret every other Friday with bar of beer, soda and live entertainment. Movies on Sunday evenings. GM, GF

MIDTOWN & MIDDLE EAST SIDE

Beacon Baths, 227 E. 45th St. (687-0322). Take the elevator to the 11th floor and groove. Some incredible humpers. Great for a matinee with all those married execs trying to find happiness before going home to the P's woman. Free V.D. test Wednesdays from 4pm to 8pm. GM
Jandy Store, 44 W. 56th St. (581-4664). Wax museum gone. New disco dancing. New image for a heretofore tired place. Ricky Klein keeps things jumping. GM

Continental Sauna, 113 W. 56th St. Not as grand nor as expensive as the "Mother Church" on W. 74th St. Good for a businessman's health? GM.
Lib, 305 E. 45th St. (L3 2-0290). The ensemble players, Jerry, Ellis, Lois and Jim, along with Gretchen and Ken, will assure you of a good time. GM, GF

Mayfair, 964 1st Ave. (EL 5-9259). Kind of closely but fun. Good food at a good price. Int.
Roundtable, 151 E. 50th St. One of the biggest discs in town. I still object to no call liquor. At \$1.50 a throw, yet. Mario, Joey and Bobby will keep you entertained.
Sauna Baths, 300 W. 58th St. (PL 5-6880). A small place that closes at midnight. Busy during the late afternoons, tho. GM

Sebastian's, 1068 1st Ave. (355-8052). Zany and wild. Sebastian holds court. Bill is in the kitchen, Bobby Blake is on the stick, and you'll probably want to get on the floor with John Weston. GM
Singles, 951 1st Ave. (486-9832). Johnny Vincent will make sure that you enjoy yourself and Bobby Lazetta will tend to your libations. GM

Sunowner, 309 E. 60th St. (832-9094). Brand new and a sure winner with Miss Murphy at the helm. Cathy's here for cocktails and Billy is in during the night. The outdoor garden is a delight and scene for complementary Bar-B-Q during the weekends. GM.
Treubador, 1078 1st Ave. (755-1955). Friendly neighborhood bar. Dennis and Tom are on the bar. GM

Victor's Quarter, 974 2nd Ave. (355-9453). Neighborhood bar with some Midnight Cowboy.
Yukon, 140 E. 53rd St. (421-8122). Roy has started a new policy. No ties and jackets and, unless you believe, dancing. A lot of fun people still hang in here. GM

DANCE BELT & HELL'S KITCHEN

Better Days, W. 48th St. Fun on weekends. I don't know who they're replacing Mel with, or why. GM
Big Spender, 315 W. 48th St. (586-9882). Lots of gypsies from the nearby shows. Some beautiful. Good time. Eric tends to the libations. Brothers & Sisters, 355 W. 48th St. (474-8840). One of the better bars in N.Y. with guys and gals sitting it all together. GF, GM
Dirty Edna's Scoreboard, 264 W. 46th St. (265-9077). Advertised as "The home of the Midnight Cowboy's." Some of them look as if they missed the last round-up. GM
Haymarket Pub, 772 8th Ave. (586-9360). They asked J.F.H. not to list them in "The Gay Insider U.S.A." But they are. Int.
Jimmy Ray's, 729 8th Ave. (582-9507). They won't admit to it either. But you might find what you're looking for here. Int.

Joe Allen, 326 W. 46th St. (581-6464). Gypsy "come performer", etc. Gay is the word for the bar while the tables will be mixed. Int.
Loading Zone, 586 9th Ave. (563-8212). Some cowboys and lots of TV's. Would you believe GM(?)
Tijuana Cat, 350 W. 46th St. The incredible Dawn Hampton is doing the vocals while Edward Morris tickles the ivories. GM/GF

UPPER EAST SIDE

Allibi, 1546 2nd Ave. (249-7026). Gwen has turned Monday nights into nostalgia night. It's also Show Night with herself playing Nelson Eddy to Gene King's Jeanette MacDonald. Quite a treat. GF, GM
Country Cousin, 1313 3rd Ave. (879-6614). One in a rustic atmosphere. Bar-B-Que in their open hearth Mon. & Wed. Groovy people. Mother Rice resigning during the day while Ralph and Lou take over at night. Billy, Harry and Eddy on the bar.
Fiddle Stix, 1487 1st Ave. (77th & 78th). Opens at 9pm. Dancing. Beautiful Joey is on the bar.
Harry's Back East, 1422 3rd Ave. (249-6991). Always one of the cruisiest bars in town. "Grandma" Lee will take care of you during the day and Judy, Jerry, Gold and George will do the honors at night. GM, some GF.

New Jimmy's, 1576 3rd Ave. (860-4509). Two of the best hosts in town, Joe and Tom. Food prepared by Carlotta, served by the best waiters in town; drinks by Kelly and Ed; topped by the sensational entertainment of Johnny Savoy, Judy Sexton and George Sardi.
Painted Pony, 1485 3rd Ave. (744-9580). Piano bar under the direction of the incredible "Gypsy." Good drinks dispensed by Ralph. Cruisy and nice. GM

Piper's Lounge, 1201 Lexington Ave. (734-9305). Tony Black's back is back. Can you believe he has Pussy with him? Dancing. GM
Three, 314 E. 72nd St. (734-9303). Good food, excellent drinks with boys and girls mixing together. Ask for Patti, GF, GM

Uncle Charlie's North, 1049 Lexington Ave. Boasts one of the "humpiest" bartenders in town, Wally. Another good reason is Roger. Ricky is on the door. Cruisy as ever. GM

UPPER WEST SIDE

Chipp's, Columbus Ave. bet. 66th & 67th St. Popular with Lincoln Center audience. Int.
Continental Baths, 230 W. 74th St., west of B'way. (799-2648). More than a bath-house, it's a totally gay environment even down to a weekend cabaret. Expensive, but worth it. Students librate with I.D. cards. GM
Nadradamus, 321 W. 79th St. (EN 2-7100). Newest entry into the disco derby. A lot of work will have to go into it but it's big and brassy. Michael is behind the bar with Nefly running the show. Int.
Picadilly Pub, 324 Amsterdam Ave. (bet. 74th & 75th, 874-8632). Good cruising and friendly people. Nathan and David, along with Jim, will see that you have a good time. GM
Wasteland, 211 W. Broadway, at 76th St. (874-8033). Popular but very cliché. Drag show in the back room. Brian and Frank dispensing the spirits. GM.

UPTOWN

Charade, 1800 2nd Ave. at 93rd. Where Black is Beautiful, the age is young, the food and music are soul and the dancing terrific. GMS
Gold Rail, 2850 Broadway (MO 3-4706). Restaurant and bar popular with uptown gays and Columbia students. Int.
Mt. Morris Baths, 1944 Madison Ave. (534-9004). This has a black majority. GM
Pastime's Interlude, 2267 7th Ave. at 125th St. A Harlem landmark since before most of us were born. Int.

BROOKLYN

Danny's Brooklyn Heights, 108 Montague St. (625-8844). Two floors of fun and frolic presided over by Paul. Set is your daytime host behind the bar with "Hazy" Duke and Bruce taking over at night. GM
Man's Country, 33 Pierrepont St., Brooklyn Heights. Brand new and picking up rapidly. Monday night is leather night w/ movies. It is

just across-the East River and easily accessible. Did I say that it's a bath? It is.
Piano Bar, 103 Montague St. Just found this one. Kitty Kelly is M.C. during the day and Mike takes over at night. GM

QUEENS
Betsy Ross Room, 73-13 37th Road, Jackson Heights (429-8605). Pleasant, friendly people. Sean Sullivan, along with Ed and Jim, will see that you have sufficient liquid, nourishment. GM/some GF.
Trysting Place, 120-31 83rd Ave., Kew Gardens (846-8922). Cruisy dancebar with a balcony from which to play Romeo if you're so inclined. Say hello to Fran and Danny. GF, GM
What A Dump, 76-67 Roosevelt Ave. Cruisy people in a crummy setting. Gay owned which is a big plus. Say hello to Don, Vinnie, Chet and Toody. GM.

WASHINGTONVILLE, N.Y.
Master G's, Round Hill Resort, Rt. 208 Washingtonville, (914-496-9845). Billed as an all-gay resort with 25 acres to frolic and swimming pool that gets its share of "rainy dipping." It sounds too good to be true. ("I'll let you know more. GM)

GAY CINEMA
David, 234 W. 55th St.
55th St. Playhouse, 55th St. between 51st & 7th Ave.
Jewel Theatre, 12th St. & 3rd Ave.
Park-Miller, 43rd St. betw. 6th Ave. & B'way (BR 9-3970)
Tomcat Theatre, 424 W. 42nd St.

Jerry's Sphere

BY JERRY FITZPATRICK

DEATH OF A BAR: I'm sorry to report that the COVEN has closed its doors for good. I don't know what goes into a bar to make it a success. Is it a warm atmosphere? The COVEN had it. Good bartenders? It had them too. Fair prices? They couldn't be beaten. I went into Queens last year to a bar that, if it was lucky, has one or two customers a night. Opening day we were packed and it stayed that way until the straight owner decided he could do it by himself. He barred me from the bar (without paying me the back salary he owed me) and, in a short time, the gay clientele that had saved him from going bankrupt. Teddy, the owner of the COVEN, tried everything to make the gay community know that he cared. The community didn't. Ted became not only my boss but a good friend. In all the years I've worked bars, he was the first one that came across with a Christmas bonus. He was the first person in my entire life who gave me a surprise party. The COVEN was his pet. It was the first bar that I had anything to do with that flopped. Perhaps it was because I was more interested in writing than in the bar. I don't know. I'm sorry that it is closed. And I apologize to Teddy if I let him down in any way.

DIFFERENT PLACES, DIFFERENT FACES: Flew down to Atlanta, Ga. with Mark Ribey of DAVID Magazine for the Mr. David Contest. (The last time that I'd been in Atlanta was 13 years ago, courtesy of Uncle Sam. I loved it then and I loved it this time. If blue-eyed blonds are your cup of tea, I suggest that you get on the next flight out. I've never seen so many blonds in my life. And, I must add, not one was unattractive.) The contest was held at SWEET GUM HEAD (do you believe that name?). It is one of the most attractive show bars that I've seen in my travels. There were 18 contestants from all over the eastern part of the country, including New York, Cleveland, Toledo, Dallas, Miami, and, of course, Atlanta. I

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GEORGE MCGOVERN

There's been too much unnecessary wailing and gnashing of teeth over the fact that the Democratic National Convention failed to adopt a gay rights plank.

One activist bragged to us that he'd gone into McGovern headquarters and poured a "shitload" of McGovern buttons onto a desk. "These are from gay people whose votes you've lost because of the platform swindle," he told the McGovern workers.

Of course he was lying. He'd collected the buttons himself. And yet he was waxing moral.

The fact that the Democratic delegates failed to pass on the gay rights plank should be no surprise to anyone with even a modicum of political sensitivity. We may be surprised that Cathy Wilch (delegate from Ohio) was passed on by the McGovern people to argue the case against adoption of the gay plank. Her appeal to fear—her use of such words as "prostitutes," "pimps," "child molesters" and "panderers"—evoked images of the worst right-wing fanatics.

On the other hand, the fact that a plank for homosexual rights made it, for the first time in history, to the floor of a major national political party is astounding and is a great PLUS for both the gay liberation movement and for the Democratic Party.

The Editors of GAY are satisfied that Senator George McGovern's intentions are honorable; that he will, in fact, work to redeem the rights of all citizens, homosexuals included.

And even were this not so, we are sure that the general atmosphere which would abound after his election would be such that homosexual rights would develop and flourish as never before. Readers of this paper have already seen McGovern's seven proposals, aimed, before his nomination, at the nation's homosexual community. Eleanor Clark French, addressing the New York City Council, said: "Senator McGovern pledges the full moral and legal authority of his presidency towards restoring and guaranteeing first-class citizen rights for homosexually-oriented individuals."

If Richard Nixon is re-elected, America's gay community can look forward to an increasingly fearful erosion of civil liberties and human rights.

WHICH BRINGS US TO THE SUPREME COURT . . .

. . . which has recently ruled that newspaper reporters can no longer protect their sources, and that if the U.S. Government demands the name of a secret source, a reporter is obligated to provide it. Chief Justice Burger, a Nixon appointee, and other Supreme Court justices appointed since Nixon took office, are homophobes. One anti-homosexual decision (that opposing the hiring of librarian Mike McConnell) has already been handed down. Burger himself was once the only opposing voice on the U.S. Court of Appeals when it ruled that the Civil Service Commission could not fire homosexually-inclined petitioner Bruce Scott. "Homosexuality is patently immoral," said Burger. So much for Nixon appointees. This newspaper will stand squarely behind the candidacy of George McGovern.

JILL JOHNSTON IN THE VOICE

This unfortunate woman has succumbed, in her mismanaged effort to become a well-known writer, to yellow journalism. "Gay liberation," she writes in the *Village Voice*, "is a sexist plot between gay and straight men to keep women and faggots in their places." She complains that stag films (showing the rape of a woman) are being shown at the GAA Firehouse. Referring to GAY's editors, she says, "The gay male leaders of gay liberation have written for SCREW and GAY and two of them are also, in fact, part owners with the main-man straight sadomasculinist AI Goldstein who allowed SCREW to carry advertisements for films showing the rape by their fathers of girls not 10 years old."

Jill Johnston knows that the ridiculous charges against Goldstein and Buckley were dropped. She stoops low. It is our belief that Jill Johnston is NOT a lesbian, but, in fact, merely a confused person who hates men. She has adopted a lesbian pose in order to bolster her sagging career as a writer. She is neither a credit to herself, in our opinion, nor to the lesbian community.

Minneapolis Activists Ask New Conference Site

Minneapolis, Minn. — Nine Minneapolis gay activists have asked that the National Coalition of Gay Organizations conference not be held in the Twin Cities on Labor Day, as planned.

"Such a conference would dangerously interfere with our political organizing by diverting people power away from the critical areas of concern to Minnesotans," said the nine in a statement issued July 7th.

The message was carried to coalition leaders in Miami Beach, Fla., by Lowell Williams, an alternate to the Democratic national convention from Minneapolis. The signers are Williams, Jack Baker, Mike McConnell, Cindy Hanson, David Norton, J.L. Newman, Sherrie Buffington, Steve Edean and Dennis Hilger. The only prominent Twin Cities activist missing from the list, John Preston, was out of town when the statement was drafted.

The Labor Day weekend convention was scheduled for Minneapolis at the initial coalition gathering in Chicago in March.

Behind the July 7 statement lay a simple nose-counting, and the realization that the few Twin Cities activists in a position to make arrangements for the September conference are already deeply committed, either to political campaigns in the Sept. 12 primary, or to preparing for a full-scale presentation of gay issues to the 1973 Legislature.

"We have reservations about the potential value of a national conference at this time," the statement concluded. "But we will support and cooperate with any national Gay conference in another central location."

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Maye Verdict

(continued from page 1)

The reluctance of the government to prosecute and the insignificance of the charge were indeed insults to homosexuals and concrete examples of injustice. But it is equally unjust to conclude that Mr. Maye must necessarily be guilty because the prosecution seemed to join him in his contempt for homosexuals. The innocence or guilt of a defendant is independent of the actions of the government. Justice demanded that Mr. Maye be prosecuted; justice demands that we acquit him if the evidence is insufficient. Justice was served, finally, in both instances.

This is not to say there was no injustice in the case. There was plenty, at I tried to describe in my lengthy article two issues back. But the injustice was not in the acquittal, which may in fact have been the only shred of true justice in the matter. I respect Judge Levitan for it. The line of least resistance for her would have been to find the defendant guilty and to suspend sentence, thus compromising between two highly antagonistic parties. She would have come out relatively unscathed. If the evidence still objected, it would all have been left to higher courts to decide.

Personally I am fairly certain, both from the evidence and from my emotional ties to the principals, that Mr. Maye did wantonly attack some gay people, with thankfully mild consequences. But being fairly certain is not enough under our legal system. A man is guaranteed his liber-

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Is There Life After Marriage?

BY THANE HAMPTEN

We've been together almost ten years now. And I want to go on record saying that it's been hell—and a hell of a lot of fun. Some of the good things and good times are gone, forever; others remain. We're no longer married; we no longer consider ourselves lovers. Certain couples (who still pretend exclusive devotion to one another) shake their heads sadly and say, "Same old story... it's New York, you know... this city does that to people... the temptations..." Tongues click.

Poor old New York gets blamed for everything. And it's misplaced blame, at least in this case. Of course the temptations are greater here! But if you're going to cheat, there's a will and a way in Watertown as well as Manhattan. Cheating is a symptom, not the disorder itself. Philandering gives the good ol' *coup de grace* to a marriage that was already dead at the roots.

Paul and I still live together and see no reason to not continue doing so. (Until?) The dissolution of our formal marriage was not a sad or angry one. (Nor was it one-sided, with great emotional damage being caused one party.) And we see little reason for the declaration of independence to alter or end the great enjoyment we still find in each other's company. Quite simply, we are both entirely too honorable to continue acting a farce. Deceit would have dictated an ugly end to our relationship; honesty saved it.

And what relationship is it now? Are we roommates? Brothers? Sisters? Close companions? Maybe none of these; maybe all. Do we still have affection for each other? Of course. What a silly question. We love each other entirely too much to lie about love.

You've all heard the weary dialogue: "Are they lovers?" "Yes!... But they like threesomes." Charades. Is it so hard for us to relinquish these binding definitions? *Lovers... marriage...* in what neat little hermetically sealed coffins these terms place us. The blunder is that we conform far more to language than language conforms to us. Motto: "In labels we trust." Ergo, my distress at the silly posturing of the adopted/adapted gay marriages and ceremonies. But more about that later.

Why did I decide to Settle Down in the first place? Oh, for the same reasons most of us do, I suppose. Spent several years cruising aimlessly; unproductive one-night stands. The only thing I would have to show for my efforts was a little less vodka in the bottle, cum stains on the sheets, and a phone number I knew I'd never call. I was lonely: not lonely for flesh but for continuity.

Also, I had never had a real lover before and thought it was about time I did. A lot of my friends were fashionably involved. I didn't want to be the only one to end up... the old maid. And I didn't want people to think me too selfish/cowardly/promiscuous/neurotic to try the mating game. I wanted to conform. And, needless to say, I wanted to prove to the arrogant straight community that a queer could celebrate a Silver Wedding Anniversary just as inevitably as they.

A friend who is something of a compulsive yenta introduced us. Paul is Latin and hadn't been in this country long. I felt he was vulnerable and needed someone. I enjoyed instructing him in manners, morals and mores Americano. And teaching him English. In giving of my knowledge, in being his instructor, I often felt that he was my personal property. Gee, it's nice to own a human being. Con-

fidence!

I needed Paul, too. My father was dying of cancer. I needed someone I could depend upon; someone to grip when the panic and fear hit in the middle of the night. And this security, this strength convinced me even more that I needed a mate.

I haven't mentioned sexual attraction, have I? Yes, it was there. Neither of us was insanely driven toward the bed, but I was convinced that abstract values would make a much more lasting marriage than the length of a cock or the tilt of a nose. We functioned easily together, and that was that.

So after a few months (a sensible engagement as certified by the yenta) the roommate moved out and Paul moved in. He dropped many of his friends and I abandoned mine. For a long while we wrapped ourselves in a very private and intimate cocoon. There was so much to learn about each other! What a challenge—with a Spanish/English dictionary as our intermediary.

And how delicious the testing of emotions! How far could each of us go? I would have too lengthy a bull session with a friend, ignoring Paul (on purpose). He would lock himself in the bathroom, refusing to come out. Or Paul would anger me in a department store. I would call him an insensitive bastard and rush out, leaving him—hopefully—to face great embarrassment and shame. ("If I killed myself, he'd cry and miss me, by God. I'd like to do it just so I could see him fall on my body and say he's sorry! Spic bastard!")

Fight, separate, come together, fight, separate, come together. The pain was so sweet when it stopped. And with time, we tired of these games. Too much effort. We learned when, where and how to tread. We drifted into the simple comfort of being near each other and sharing ordinary pleasures. Ordinary.

We realized of course that we didn't have any great common interests. But this didn't worry us. We assumed the differences would add zest to the marriage. How dull to be with someone exactly like yourself. And yet... we really *did* feel that we should do absolutely everything together. Outside interests were *conflicts*. Jealousy and anger—and guilt—were the proper responses. "You don't give a damn about my...?" "Well, you've never even bothered to ask if I got my... finished!"

The longer we lived together, the more we wanted to make a go of it. Others did; why not us? (Pride goeth before a fall.) Compromises. You cut that out and I'll cut this out. You drop Sergio. All he does is use our place to make phone calls and take a crap. And I'll drop Ted—but he doesn't mean a thing when he grabs me that way. Oh, sure.

The simple pleasures: waking in the middle of the night, finding him always there and throwing your leg across his body. Snuggle. Anniversaries, birthdays, Christmas. How faithfully observed! Little gifts for no reason. Brunches, dinners, parties. Favorite female singer, collecting all her records. Happy Valentine's Day 1965. Taking sincere interest in each other's family. Shit, I think my mother likes you more than she does me! Private jokes. Pet names. Secrets shared. Coming home from work and recounting the day's activities. And gossiping. Guess who broke up? Knew it wouldn't last. (Feeling smug.)

Friends? After a while, all old marrieds, just like ourselves. Singles found us a drag. We didn't really think of them as a threat; nevertheless, they were a bit unsettling. Parties were dinner parties. Al-

ways for eight; never for nine. Jimmy and Hal want to show off the linen they got in Brussels last month... I like Garth and Steve... they wear well, know what I mean? Bill's losing his hair. Tee-hee.

Carlos and Ray split. Tremors of fear would run through the family circle. It could happen to us! (Don't think about it.) The divorced pair was immediately expelled. They had disgraced us. Divorce is always contagious. Monkey see, monkey do.

The years pass. We are inexorably joined. So many memories. Ten diaries of shared events. 3,650 days of togetherness. Memories. Trips to Europe and Puerto Rico. Comfort. Security. Happiness shared. I got the raise! I just walked right in and said, look, Mr. Struthers, I think you know how hard I work around here and...

Buying things. Possessing. Sharing possessions. Building. Sharing tragedy. The

Oh? (Three months pass.) Maybe we better sit down and... talk about it. Is it (go on—say it) someone? No! It's not that. It's just that...

I'm bored.

Who's to blame? Neither. Both. Did we try too hard? Not enough? Sigh. Who knows? Should we have tried to save it? Save what? Where do we go from here? I don't know. We didn't build it in a day. Why end it in a day?

I might meet somebody and. So? But do you really want to go through this again? Well, it wouldn't be "again." I'd profit from our mistakes. Oh, thanks a lot. I was a guinea pig, huh? You know I didn't mean it like that, bitch. Laugh. Hug. Boy, did I ever get laid last night! Anybody I know? Uh-uh, but you'd like to. It's this big! You're awful... want to go to a movie? Yeah, let's go.



night the telegram came. Oh my god. We'll work it out somehow. You'll see. Comfort. Security. Gentle routine. Like being lulled to sleep in a hammock. The contentment of routine. The neatness.

Routine? I never wanted routine. I never like getting in a rut! That's your bag. Oh, come on, Paul... you fell for it as much as I did. It's what... happens. Routine. It's not so bad. Routine is reality. Really? Have you looked at the reality of the mirror lately? You're getting fat. You are fat! Oh? Well, you might take a peek at yourself, now that you mention it.

I'm going to a gym. Fine, I've been thinking of taking Spanish lessons. Very interesting! Why didn't you do that six years ago? I was bored to tears at Frank and Jerry's last night. All those same old tired faces. Same old tired faces. Same old talk. Where did you go for vacation? Same place, as usual. London. It's cheap this time of year. How's your mother? About the same, thanks. Senile. Same old shit. Death.

Honey, would you mind very much if I went out tonight... alone?

You mean you still sleep together? Sure, we're used to it.

I shouldn't be writing this yet. Can't look objectively on it. But I've been doing a lot of thinking over the last year. Any conclusions? Oh, I don't know. Some, I guess. I've also been doing a great deal of reading. And observing. One conclusion: I'm convinced that man (and I rush to add woman) is not a monogamous animal. Monogamy is an unnatural social superimposition. If and when it really works (for some) it works because of social pressure and control, single-minded determination, and luck. None of the above necessarily has a thing to do with love, affection, pleasure, passion, or enjoyment. Unless you enjoy triumphing over continual and artificially imposed barriers. Monogamy stunts.

Sexual passion dissipates with frightening speed. That isn't to say we can't have satisfaction in the sweet familiarity of our partner's body after months or years. And some couples may be blessed with

Gays remain together for many of the same reasons. (Parting is almost always a miserable feeling. Those fucking memories get in the way.) Show me a gay couple who has been together for a number of years and I'll show you a pair of loving roommates, not lovers. Am I exhibiting sour grapes? No, not at all. I have great admiration for loving roommates. (In fact, I think this type of arrangement might be the solution for all of us.) But I loathe the hypocrisy of couples who are "Lovers," in name only.

Friend no. 1: He and lover know about each other's cheating. Neither cares as long as it's not brought out into the open. No talk. They have their own clearly defined "cruising turf." Tricks are never taken to the apartment. That nasty stuff is done elsewhere. Friend no. 2 when questioned: "Oh, yes—we have an Understanding..." (Note: said "understanding" was made after joint wills had been legally filed...)

Friend no. 3: "I know he cheats. But

taxes one lotta. Heterosexuals in thousands are abandoning it—and gays jump in to fill the void, eager to embrace and utilize a dying social custom. All so the poodle won't be born out of wedlock. Frankly, I feel there must be a better way to compete. And for exhibitionism, you can always expose yourself in the subway. The only thing this highly publicized gay marriage ceremony does is make it just that much more embarrassing when you separate.

What should "marriage" be—for gays and straights? Certainly not what it is. Certainly not what it has ever been. SEX is always at the beginning and the end of marriage. Okay then, what do we do about it? A recent article in *New York* magazine indicates that adultery has held together more marriages than it has torn asunder. (*Playboy* smiles enigmatically and remains neutral.) Is enforced mate-swapping the answer? How about compulsory one-year sabbaticals for every six



he's still good to me. He takes care of the rent, you know. Anyway, I still love him. Maybe I like to suffer. Just call me Lana Turner." (Embarrassed giggle.) Friend no. 4—all claws. Jangled Red: "Listen, I've worked hard on this marriage. We've been together since 1957, you know. We spent almost ten thousand on that frigging barn in the country. Every time we breed the dogs, I'm the one who has to be the all-night midwife. Harry's a good soul but he wants everybody to love him. I'm not that romantic. I certainly don't need five blowjobs a day. He started bringing boys in long before I did. I don't really give a damn. But the minute I see him bring the same dewy-eyed little mother in here twice, and getting serious, I manage to wheedle my way into that bed. I get the kid's prick in my mouth and I hang on for dear life! Nobody, but nobody is going to ruin my marriage!"

Marriage? I really feel quite sorry for the young gays who are rushing headlong into wholly unholly marriage. That insipidly insidious ceremony. What is the point? The Straight Almighty doesn't recognize it. The government thinks of it as low camp, and it doesn't decrease your

years of marriage? Should we eliminate the nuclear family and live in hedonistic communes? Should we isolate ourselves from all metropolitan temptations and live in rural isolation, far from the madding cocks? Should we begin to think of marriage just as a casual shacking up of friends—no strings attached—on a more or less permanent basis? What about each partner possessing a legal minimum of eighteen concubines?

Nena and George O'Neill have written an interesting book, *Open Marriage: A New Life Style for Couples*. I don't agree with all their theories and think them a bit too tentative and conservative with today's rapid social upheavals. But for those, straight or gay, who are freshly joined in this allegedly blissful state, the authors have some good advice about avoiding traditional pitfalls in marriage. total, protracted absorption. How rare; how rare. But for most of us, it's really asking a lot—to find continually fresh thrills each night of the year. Wanderlust.

When the passion dies, married straights (as we all know) stay together at best out of great affection, pride, com-

mon interest. Some because of contracts alone, or property or children. At worst they stay glued out of laziness, fear of stigma, neurotic interdependence—and many times simply because they can't relinquish their lascivious hatred of each other.

Old-fashioned marriages are labeled "closed marriages." They are restrictive, confining, oppressive, and—worst of all—*incredibly dull*.

However, to quote the O'Neills: "The basic premise of open marriage is the idea of writing your own contract so as to take into consideration the individual differences between marital partners, and the uniqueness of each mate, instead of submitting to the old, closed contract that requires every couple to be the same."

They contend that "... it is entirely possible to love your marital partner with an intensely rewarding and continually growing love and at the same time to love another or others with a deep and abiding affection. And this extra dimension of love feeds back into the love between the partners." Also: "The more of a whole person each one becomes, the more self-actualized, the more he has to offer his mate."

I can't really say if the authors are urging the partners to have actual physical contact with others but I do know they encourage the couple to have separate interests (and that includes intimate friendships) which are explored to the fullest. It is of prime importance to preserve one's own very personal identity, to be independent.

One of the gravest errors made by my lover and I was in slavishly imitating all of the worst in closed marriages. The desperation to conform. We felt it necessary to share exactly the same interests, the same friends, same hours, same trips. Slamese twins to the death. As I said, Paul is Latin. He is very possessive—and domineering. As I am much less so, I allowed a great deal of my personality to be absorbed into his. This may less friction but it doesn't engender respect.

As the years passed and the monotony began to settle like crippling rheumatism, we escaped by resuming interest in a lot of our original solitary pursuits, which we should never have relinquished. By this time they were of no aid in giving variety and stimulation to the marriage; they were shields and barriers. You go your way; I'll go mine. And so we did. Excitement returned. New experiences revived us. Sluggish blood began to flow. Ironically, as Paul has mentioned several times lately, "You know, we've got a much better relationship now that we're not married. We're closer, we level with each other, and we enjoy each other more." Is it any wonder?

It might be said that Paul and I matured—in totally different directions. If this is destined to happen, there is very little to be done about it. However, here is some ten years worth of advice I'd like to pass on to those thinking of marriage.

Many gays drift casually into a union with someone. This isn't really a bad idea. Except for one drawback. You are already living together before any thought is given to certain specific ground rules. (No, I don't mean those cold and calculating "50-50" deals.) It is at the beginning of a relationship that the protection of personal identities should be clearly defined. Alas, after that torrid combat known as courtship, we are interested only in relief from tension, and in absolute unification. We would gladly sacrifice our very souls.

It doesn't seem to matter if you marry

someone entirely different from yourself or exactly the same. Both have advantages and drawbacks. However, you must have at least one or two profoundly common interests, even if it's only the same sexual fetishes. Otherwise, never the twain shall meet. (Don't hope to discover these interests during marriage. They never come. So you end up buying and managing a delicatessen together. Whoopee.)

Guard against any form of possessiveness. Neither of you is property. A possessive lover is a challenge to the other partner. ("I've never done anything to betray his trust, but if he feels that way let's just see how much I can get away with.")

Do anything and everything possible to avoid sinking into a mindlessly routine existence. At the beginning of a marriage it may seem fun to imitate the old folks next door. But it is the road to disaster. Especially in gay life.

Do not ever take each other for granted! This is the hardest of the pitfalls to avoid. It is almost impossible to keep a relationship fresh, but try. We always think of marriage as a "natural state" that can be ignored and it will rattle along of its own momentum. Preposterous, of course. There is nothing that requires more labor, inventiveness and diabolical ingenuity.

Paul and I have friends who have been lovers for quite a number of years. Due to widowed mothers, they can only see each other on weekends. Their Saturday-Sunday *pied-a-terre* is their oasis and they have never had the luxury of taking each other for granted. They will probably remain lovers for a century, or until the mamas blaze off to glory and the duo find themselves in entirely too convenient proximity.

Let me give a painfully good and impossibly vulgar illustration: An accurate indication of failure to sustain the essential charm and savoir of a marriage occurs when you commence openly farting and belching in each other's presence. Something once lovely as a fragile blossom is in a frightening state of decomposition.

Be honest with each other. Too obvious a statement? Think about it. We are rarely honest even with ourselves. Prospective lovers always try to impress each other. This can make for a lot of sticky going later. Have enough confidence in yourself to be ruthlessly truthful—before, during (and after) the marriage. Paul and I have found out more about each other, especially sexually, in the one year of living as roommates than in all the other nine years together. Incredible. All the wild fun we might have had if we had been honest.

And once again I cannot overstate the importance of individual freedom and preservation of individual identities in marriage. As the O'Neills put it:

Knowing and fulfilling yourself along with your partner in open marriage instead of through your partner, as in closed marriage, becomes a voyage of discovery. Not only is it challenging, but it prepares us to flow with change. It offers you the possibility of elation as opposed to mere contentment.

Maybe Montaigne was right when he said, "Marriage is like a cage; one sees the birds outside desperate to get in, and those inside equally desperate to get out." Maybe Byron was right when he wrote, "All tragedies are finish'd by a death! All comedies are ended by a marriage." But if we must indulge in tribal tomfoolery, pray let us remember to be loyal to ourselves as well as our mates, to be imaginative, to be kind and amusing, to be ridiculously casual about the whole damn thing, and—*be honest!*

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Alecto Goes to Jail

An Interview Part II

BY SOREL DAVID
PART II

The following is a continuation of a discussion with Janet Alecto Rivers about her experiences in Suffolk County prison where she recently served a fifteen-day sentence for her part in a gay liberation struggle in that county.

SOREL: How did the women in jail see themselves? Did they see themselves as sinners or bad people? Did they have a lot of guilt?

ALECTO: No, not at all. Most of them were in for dope. The black women, some of the white women were in for things like forged checks and they thought it was bad that they got caught. It was something that couldn't be helped and it wouldn't be done again. They were going straight. The black people were more aware. Maybe it was because they were in for dope. They had no guilt qualms about it, about being junkies. It was a lot like being gay, you know, it was a big thing with their families to be on dope and everything and some told how their families really accepted it—it's a lot like coming out and they had their own thing about it. And like all except Laura said they were going right back to the stuff.

SOREL: Laura was white?

ALECTO: Laura was black. She's a junkie but she says it's not part of her any more.

SOREL: How did the others feel about that?

ALECTO: They said she was going to go right back on it. They laughed and there was no sense of shame, there was no guilt. And I began to think, I learned something about like alcoholics on the Bowery. I would never take the bottle away from them because maybe they're happy being drunk all the time and not having to worry about a home and stuff. Maybe we just think it's a bad thing. And now I'm beginning to learn the same thing about junkies.

SOREL: Were there drugs in jail?

ALECTO: Well, yeah, a very funny thing happened, the last Thursday before I left a place was raided and five women came in and they were in the non-convicted which is called the Grand Jury tier. The women I was with knew most of these women. So the next day one of the women and I got to go out to clean and she knew that they had to come in with dope, that they wouldn't come in clean, they would try to smuggle something in. And she knew if they found the stuff on them she would have heard about it by now and she hadn't heard anything. So she checked out all the hiding places and she found it.

SOREL: She took their stuff?

ALECTO: Yeah, and she brought it to our tier.

SOREL: There's no honor among thieves.

ALECTO: Well with junk it's anybody's game— whoever got it gets it, that kind of thing. I mean they would do things like take the weight for people, I mean go to jail for someone else, like if someone has a really bad record and you've only been arrested once or not at all. They'll do that but if they find your dope you're out of luck.

SOREL: Nasties, a bunch of nasties.

BILLIE: I think that's fair.

ALECTO: I do too, especially when dope can mean your life almost. You know, like spending two or three years in jail is something they wouldn't mind but giving up a shot they wouldn't do.

Anyway, we got the dope and she

brought it in the tier—every night we'd go to bed at 9 o'clock, they put you in your cell and lock the door and they shut off all the lights except one night a week we got to stay up till ten. So we got the dope on Thursday and I was leaving on Friday. We decided to take our late night that night and we stayed up and got high. It was like a party, the best things began to happen just before it was lock-up time.

SOREL: Weren't you afraid the guards were going to come in and see you?

ALECTO: No—you sit with your back to the opening, we snorted it and they're dumb, you know, the matrons, not dumb, naive, they really are. And if you start right after they leave, right after the half-hour check, then you know you have another half hour. So I wasn't worried, I knew it was cool. Every night before lock-up time was when things started getting interesting, people getting friendlier, like a party just gets good at eleven, eleven-thirty, it got like that at the end of the day. You got into really heavy raps, or it got really like a party atmosphere, a close atmosphere, then it was time to go to bed. But that night we got to turn on, we got to stay up an extra hour, it was really nice, it was like a going away, a going home party.

SOREL: When you first went in, did you think you would have trouble relating to the women there—did you have any kind of middle-class snobbery is what I'm trying to say?

ALECTO: Oh, sure, when I first went in I thought they would be hard and they'd take advantage of me, and I thought I'd be a pushover for them. And then I met a woman before I went in at criminal court and I got along with her fine.

SOREL: The women were easy to approach?

ALECTO: Yeah, yeah, they were real easy, warm women, friendly and they weren't tougher than me. Some of them were and some of them weren't and I could hold my own with any of them. I had no fear of not being able to hold my own.

SOREL: Were you scared at all?

ALECTO: I was afraid I wouldn't like Curleen, she was the most popular one. I thought she would be the strongest and the toughest and the coldest, you know the usual stereotype. And I met her and she was little, she was glad I was there because I was the only person that was shorter than her, smaller than her. And she was really sexy and pretty and funny, you know, she was really a little tough kid. Oh, she was so pretty and she danced a lot.

SOREL: You found the women attractive?

ALECTO: Oh, yeah, yeah, and when I liked Curleen and she was supposed to be the one I was most afraid of after hearing about her—you know, they said she was nice and everything, but I thought maybe compared to what they knew—but when I liked her I felt a lot better about everything. By the second day I wasn't scared at all, I'd met people and I liked them.

SOREL: Was there any sense in which your relationship with these women was limited by the fact that you came from such different worlds?

ALECTO: I thought that it would be, I also thought they'd be resentful of political prisoners and I thought they'd be like resentful of prisoners who were only in for fifteen days. And when I got there they asked me how long I was in for and I said fifteen days, is that long enough?

Continued on page 16



Alecto Rivers: "Every night before lock up time was when things started getting interesting."



people getting transier, use a party just gets good at eleven, eleven thirty."

Photos by Eric Stephaen Jacobs

The Last Estate

BY GREGORY BATTCOCK



Photo by Shie's Photography

DISEMBARKATION

Our voyage aboard the TSS Apollo terminated in Venice and was climaxed by a "Captain's Gala Farewell Dinner." The festive menu listed an appalling consommé, fake caviar and turkey (pintadeau). With the flaming desert there was a glass of sparkling sweet wine and the captain's speech.

Only a few passengers appeared in the dining room to participate in this gastronomic eyecore, thus ensuring an atmosphere of gloom. Our waiters, scrubbed and shaved for the occasion, somehow weren't nearly as attractive as on normal occasions when they were slovenly and impatient. Dead silence prevailed throughout the repas.

We sat there at an enormous and otherwise empty table sipping Champagne (Munns Cordon Rouge). David was in a milt because he would have to pay for half the bottle; he would have been just as happy with a small 7 drachms Greek rose.

The ship's captain appeared along with the flaming *Omelette Norvegienne*. His staff lined up at attention, as he mumbled his little speech, memorized many years ago. He kept changing languages but it didn't matter; none were comprehensible. He then began introducing various dining room personnel. After each introduction we applauded vigorously. When he had concluded this extraordinary performance in the sweltering, creaking room, he fled. Exhausted.

David, in conversation with our waiter "Smiley," mistakenly invited the lad to his cabin for "whiskey." "Smiley" appeared, to David's surprise, but did not get any whiskey. We offered him a glass

of a Cyprus red wine which he accepted but didn't drink, thus demonstrating more discrimination than one would have expected.

It was yet another example of the confusion that inevitably accompanied David's conversational impulses. He would start with something like "Is there a bus from Piraeus to Sunion?" Of course the waiter, or bathroom attendant, hadn't the slightest idea what he was talking about; nor would a Cypriot servant be conversant with bus schedules in the Peloponnesian peninsula. No matter.

IN TRANSIT

Art Lovers the world over will flock to Europe this Summer of '72 for the Venice bi-annual exhibition of contemporary art, and for the important *Documents 5* exhibition in Kassel, Germany, staged once every four years. In Venice I bought some lamps, clothes and an Italian orange juice squeezer that got left behind someplace. As usual, one's time was occupied in pursuit of the "three C's," Culture, Cuisine and Cex.

The departure for Kassel was by air. At Venice airport, our Alitalia check-in lady queried "Kassel? Where is it?" "I don't know. I think it's near Frankfurt," I replied. "I mean what country?" she persisted.

The Alitalia people may not know where to find Kassel, but the pilot had no trouble locating the spanking new Frankfurt airport—surely one of the world's most depressing; it replaced an old terminal that had an outdoor beer garden.

At Frankfurt change to "General Air" for the trip to Kassel. Unfortunately, the people at the Lufthansa transit counter couldn't find "General Air" in the directory. "Ask information," they suggested. Check-in at "General Air" was informal; they gave out reusable plastic boarding passes and passengers were rounded up by a stewardess who shouted through a megaphone. The handful of passengers bundled into a bus for the ride to the plane. Occasionally our driver slowed down and peered into the rain, unable to find our "General Air" DHC-6 Twin Otter.

Oh, we looked everywhere; we passed Lufthansa 737's, South African 707's, Swissair DC 9's, Pan Am 747's, an Air Mali 727, Air Canada DC-8's, a Ceskoslovenske Aerolinie TU-104, and tons of Sabena and Air France Caravelles, but no "General Air" DHC-6 Twin Otter.

After three days of hanging around, I stumbled upon the magazines in a basement storeroom. Then I had to unpack and try to get rid of them, single-handed-

ly. Each parcel, containing sixty copies of the magazine, weighed over 70 pounds. And, of course, I had to drag the fucking parcels to inconveniently located "information" desks, nail up signs that were full of misspellings (consistent with *Arts* copy policy) and try to persuade the spaced-out German students manning the counters to let people take the magazine for free. "I see they're giving you the works," quipped Ileana Sonnabend, not even offering to help carry the bundles.

Naturally, this stunt didn't sit well with the editors and representatives of other magazines. In fact, they were furious. Visitors would not be eager to pay 10 DM for a copy of *Art News* or *Art International* when they could get a big fat issue of *Arts* for free. "What a clever idea," mumbled somebody from *Art News*. "It's a wonder you can give them away," said somebody from *Art Forum*. "You're giving them away? I'm selling mine," said the editor of *Atlanche*.

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The next day Prince Metternich threw a luncheon party at his country place for 500 of the most distinguished guests. That didn't go over too well either. "It was what you'd expect for 500 people," remarked Leo Castelli. "Only one glass of a sweet rose," complained Pierre Restany. "I don't think he's a prince. He's a count," observed *Art News* editor Elizabeth Baker. "I've just come from Valence and ate very well indeed at Chez Pic," added Edward Fry.

That evening I bumped into Metternich at a party. "Did you enjoy the lunch?" he queried. "Yes, it was delightful. Thank you for inviting me." In fact, I never got there because I had to shop for souvenirs.

I had been sent to Kassel as "Official Representative to *Documents 5*" by *Arts Magazine* in New York. "Remember, the International Reputation of the Magazine is in your hands," warned the publisher. He must have been joking.

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DEPARTURE

Getting out of Kassel was considerably more difficult than getting in, due to "General Air's" refusal to resume operations, a strike at Frankfurt airport, and the European tradition that everybody begin summer vacation on the same day. Somehow I dragged myself to Nice, where Sabena and Air France accused one another of having lost my luggage. "It may arrive later this evening," remarked the lost luggage lady at Nice airport, forgetting that there were no more flights to Nice from Brussels, and no flights to Paris either, for transfer.

The next day—no luggage. "It should have been here this morning," I said. "Oh, it was put on the first flight and will arrive with Sabena at 5:30," she said. I informed her it could have been sent to Paris on Sabena flight 631, transferred to Air France flight 405 and I would have had it at 10 a.m.

Cheers,
Gregory

Pen Points

Dear GAY,
I have just read the June 12 issue and encountered the letter from 43-year-old Dan K.

I just wanted to say that your response to Dan's letter was, unintentionally I'm sure, just another cruel example of the disregard and oppression suffered by older Gays.

I am 44, active in the Gay Community, and my attitude toward my own body and soul is at least as positive as Hunter's. But this doesn't much alter the agist attitudes of others. If I wear a wig to cover my balding grayness, I can be mistaken for a much younger man than I am. When I have done so, the attitudes of others (younger and older) change magically as long as they don't know it's a wig. With or without the wig I am the same person, and just as good in bed. Wearing a wig is a pain in the ass. Why does baldness and grayness, both very male characteristics, suddenly render me in the frustrating, lonely and sometimes desperate plight that Dan describes?

In all fairness to you, editors, I will say this to Dan. In your "Lolito phase." Why can't you relate to men your own age? If I, attractive, balding, gray, slim-attractively-muscle-bodied-44-year-old turned

on to you, would you reject me in your search for an 18-year-old blond athletic young demigod? Or don't you believe in the sensuality and attractiveness of men our age?

Sincerely,
Ralph S. Schaffer
Los Angeles

Dear GAY,

There is one aspect of life wherewith gay lib has done nothing: encyclopedias and almanacs. 'Tis high time some of the people who know how to tighten screws use them to get the *Encyclopedia Britannica* to stop printing excremental garbage about the homosuckal "problem" and how to "cure" it, for anything labeled as such requires, of course, a Final Solution.

And why can't we start our own gay cyclopedia? Something like *Encyclopaedia Homophila*.

And there's the *World Almanac* (230 Park Avenue, NY 10017), with a very long list of "Associations and Societies" not including the Gay People's Alliance or Mattachine, and a list of churches that omits the Metropolitan Community Church. I suggest you brothers write to protest these regrettable oversights. I have already done so, but the more the merrier.

Remember Joe Hill's last words: "Don't mourn—organize!"

Thank you very much,
Sincerely yours,
Frederick Heller

Dear GAY,

I don't know where to begin. It took me about a month to get up enough courage to go into the Oscar Wilde Book Store to get some literature on being gay. I'd go down to the Village and walk past the store a dozen times, only to return home without going in after spending a fortune on the subway. I finally got up the guts to go in. When I left, I felt something I'd never felt before. Call it fulfillment, relief, happiness, I don't know. Just being there and knowing that there were other people like me and knowing that I wasn't alone made me feel fantastic.

Now I'd really like to get involved in the movement, and meet people and everything, but I run into one colossal problem; I'm fifteen and my parents don't know I'm gay, so that rules out meetings and social activities which are usually at night. If I told my father about myself, I'd probably get thrown out of the house or else never trusted again. I've never had any experience and I'm getting frustrated before I even start. Help! What can I do?

Love ya,
Robbi

[Ed. Note: Dear Robbi, Why not join

Gay Youth—which meets at the GAA Firehouse, 99 Wooster Street. Call 226-8572 for information.]

Dear GAY,

Speaking about the Christopher Street Parade, I was enthused by how well it turned out and how beautiful the chanting sounded.

I cannot help but wondering if the gays that were standing on the sidewalks, and sitting on the steps, instead of marching, were crippled. I don't mean to sound morbid, but I believe that these people who want the same rights as everyone else should be willing to participate. "United we stand, divided we fall." Everyone that did turn out for the parade deserves a round of applause, and I hope that next time there will be a number that will far surpass this year's.

You are all beautiful people, and to all the sisters and brothers that are still in the closets: "Out of the closets and into the streets."

Love you all,
Jimmy Ribando
Mt. Vernon, N.Y.

PLEASE SEND ALL CORRESPONDENCE, INQUIRIES, SUGGESTIONS, COMPLAINTS, AND PROPOSITIONS TO: LETTERS TO THE EDITOR, GAY, P.O. Box 431, 68 Chelsea St., NYC, N.Y. 10011.

Clay's Clearing House

BY ALAN CLAY

COME TO THE CABARET

I want to state emphatically, here and now, that I have never been even slightly disappointed by any of the various entertainments put on by GAA at the Firehouse (99 Wooster Street). I finally got around to one of the (alternate) Friday night cabaret shows. Two bucks gets you a constant parade of talent, and they literally force the free beer down your throat. I caught the first show on July 7th and it was a delight from beginning to end. Not all acts are of the same caliber, but I wasn't bored a moment. In particular, I'd like to publicly applaud Ms. Meryl Sheppard for her passionate singing and fine, funky piano. And Ms. Nancy Parker, a comedienne so good she frightens me. Please remember her name and catch her whenever and wherever you can. She has apparently memorized the entire soundtrack of *The Wizard of Oz* and her frantic Emerald City impersonations will leave you totally immobilized with laughter.

Also want to state again that the weekly dances are the very best place you can be on a Saturday night. Another river of beer and soda, the sound system is perfect and there's plenty of space. Ain't nuthin' oppressive about this scene! Also note the Lesbian Sunday Afternoons at 2:00 p.m. Many diverse special events. Such as a midnight cruise, September 9th, up and down the mighty Hudson! Gee, why can't we men have something that nice?

SIT DOWN, YOU'RE ROCKING THE BOAT!

Gay Sunshine news release reports that the San Francisco Christopher Street West parade was seriously marred by incidents of violent conflict between parade organizers and marching factions. Here we go again. A tawdry and tacky turn of events, luv. Patrid publicity. Is this what we are working for? I don't even want to give the parties responsible the benefit of further publicity, so I'll omit the dumb details.

Suffice it to say this sort of crap always reminds me of the great George Price cartoon that appeared years ago in the *New Yorker*. Two religious "prophets" in flowing white robes and beards, holding up signs reading "Love Thy Neighbor" and "Remember the Golden Rule."

Locked in furious combat, both are screaming: "GET THE HELL OFF MY CORNER, GODDAMNIT!" Ah, human frailty...

KOCH REPORTS

A month ago, I received one of my regular bulletins from Congressman Edward Koch. In it was a questionnaire asking for our opinions on various current issues. Question no. 11—"Do you believe the Civil Rights Act's protections (in employment, housing, etc.) should be extended to homosexuals?"

I was happy to see in this month's bulletin that a whopping 83% gave it a resounding YES, and only a diehard homophobic 17% shook their reactionary little pinheads. Yes, I know that quite a few who answered the questionnaire are gay, but I doubt if we could have pulled off an 83%. We obviously have some enlightened souls on our side. Many thanks to them, and to our favorite congressman. (I wonder how many gays are really aware of the support this gentleman is giving us?) I hope the cruddy City Council is informed of the results of this questionnaire. Of



A scene from Marco de Riso. Photo by Pat Rocco

course, dey would say, "So wot?"

AND THAT GOES FOR COKE BOTTLES, TOO...

I've heard of things like this but I swear I didn't know they actually happened. Young friend couldn't keep our date last Saturday. Came over two days later to explain. He had purchased a battery-operated vibrator (the 10-inch family size) from one of our finer 42nd Street smut emporiums. Took it home and eagerly tried it out. Too eager. What goes up doesn't necessarily come down. (Analytically-oriented Newtons please take note.)

He tried everything but it would not budge. Wasn't painful. The problem, you see... he couldn't... turn it off... and it was still vibrating up there... and these were the batteries with nine lives, you know, and... oh, shit! Took a taxi to Roosevelt Hospital, sitting gingerly and apprehensively on the edge of the seat. Had to have a doctor and nurse remove it. (Does Blue Cross cover such operations?) I asked friend if he had been embarrassed. Silly question. What happened to the recalcitrant vibrator? Doc gave it to the middle-aged nurse. Said, "Here. You need this more than he does."

Was the hospital astonished? Not at all. They get hundreds of cases like that each week. Men, women, straight and gay. (!) Okay, so now we're all warned. Better stick to live cocks (and fists if you can capitate them). And steer particularly clear of glass objects. Ever hear of suction, vacuums, and implosion? Nasty.

LADY OF SPAIN, I IGNORE YOU

Have several friends who dig Spain, taking all vacations there. (One main consideration: these friends become most tearful at the thought of parting with money. Spain is still an economic bargain for the miserly tourist.) Glad they like it, for whatever reason. It's one country I've missed and I've been intending to go there as soon as possible. Now I'm not so sure. Afraid I'll have to put it on my taboo list, along with Greece and Haiti.

Reason? I've been hearing a great deal about the homophobic government of Franco (Hitler's shower buddy). That fascist stronghold has always been against queers, for obvious reasons, but it appears they have accelerated with the ugly tactics, according to *Gay International News*. (Very nice and wonderfully informative little newspaper! Only international digest of its type that I know of. In English; three printings so far and I wish

them well. 12 issues for \$3; 5 Caledonian Road, London, N.1.)

G.I.N. reports that a gay bar opened last year in Madrid and did a lot of popular, unrestricted business. Was open 24 hours a day (something should have told the customers that was fishy...) and became a center of gay life. Whoops. One night recently, the waiters and staff (including the cigarette saleswoman!) put on their badges and began a mass arrest. Surprise, girls! The gays were driven away, 20 and 30 at a time, in paddy wagons. (And knowing Franco's style, they probably haven't been heard of since...)

Didn't mean to take so much space on this miserable item, but it does occur to me that as much as I knock our own government, I'm aware this sort of vicious entrapment would never be effected here. (For one thing, our police department is entirely too lazy for such an elaborate charade.) Open invitation to Spanish gays: get the fuck out and come to New York. We've got over 80 decent bars right here in Manhattan—all waiting eagerly to give you love and free Sunday brunches. And the bartenders are... just bartenders.

H.S.G.U.

Got a cute, touching and earnest letter the other day from a member of the High School Gays United of Boston, Mass. Begs us to make some mention of the formation of this group in these pages. Says he doubts if many high school gays are able to regularly read GAY, "but for the few who might, it could be an inspiration and they might even start their own groups." Well, we certainly hope so, and the pleasure is all mine, Joseph. It looks like you've got a good program.

In part, their Beginning Statement reads, "...although there are several



Congressman Edward Koch

people in the gay community who can be contacted by phone or mail, many of these do not want to become involved in any way with people under 18 for fear of being charged with 'contributing to the delinquency of a minor.' Sadly, that's quite true. So the kids have gotten their heads together and have formed the self-help group. They want it to be a place where they can "meet, rap, and get to know others their own age." They'll also have phone counselling, a mail drop (for those who can't receive mail at home) and other services. Open to local teens from ages 14 through 18.

They made another point (which shows mature thinking): They are not proselytizing. Aware that adolescence is a period of some sexual confusion, they welcome anyone to discuss their problems. Some are only going through a minor and passing homosexual stage. "Perhaps some will discover that the heterosexual life suits them better. That is fine."

Frankly, I don't know how much (if any) support organizations such as these are given by teachers and parents. I'd be interested to know. I hope H.S.G.U. keeps me informed and I really wish other similar groups would use us to publicize their efforts. I certainly wish the Boston area gay teens a ton of luck and a great future. (For further information, write c/o P.O. Box 217, Dorchester Center Sta., Boston, Mass., 02124. But please! No ardent letters of solicitation. And it irritates me to feel that I must give that warning to some possibly interperate adult readers...)

MAD MISCELLANY

G.L.O.W. (Gay Liberation on the West Side) has begun meetings every Tuesday evening at 8 p.m. (2091 Broadway, near 72nd Street. Women's Caucus 6:30 p.m., same place.) At the time of this writing I haven't been yet but intend to visit and will make report to my upper West Side brethren. But there's no reason why you can't try it on your own.

Have any of you read Robert Heinlein's *I Will Fear No Evil*? I didn't grok it quite as much as *Stranger in a Strange Land* but any Heinlein is Grade-A sci-fi entertainment. I wouldn't dream of giving the fun away to you. Pick up a copy and learn of a very unusual predicament indeed...

I'm borrowing SCREW's *ShitList* toilet bowl for a moment. In it I place the mummified head of the Park-Miller theatre manager. This is the only porn house in town that won't honor any gay press passes. "Well, smell them!" as my sainted Aunt Ramona always used to say. Very arrogant and insolent refusal, to boot. I don't know why. I made it quite clear I certainly wouldn't be bothering to review (and expose) their horrid little films. Like everybody else, I just wanted a fast lay in their moldering balcony.

Went to the first of this season's Goldman Band concerts in Damrosch Park at Lincoln Center. (Pleasant, old-fashioned way to pass a summer evening, by the way.) Richard Goldman, conductor and son of famous founder, the late Edwin Franco Goldman, premiered three of daddy's marches recently unearthed. Untitled, so Mr. Goldman asked the audience to suggest names for the marches—and win \$100 for the most original idea. I liked one of them enough to honor it as *The Gay Liberation Day March*. Put my entry in the space provided on the program and passed it in. A month has gone by and I haven't been contacted. Where's my money, Richard?! Goddam discrimination again...

Gay Books

(continued from page 1)

The convention open 12 hours each day. The climax of Task Force activity came mid-week when the group bestowed its second annual Gay Book Award. This year's award honors Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon, authors of *Lesbian/Woman*, and Peter Fisher, author of *The Gay Mystique*.

Lesbian/Woman, a Glide Publications book released in June 1972, is the first authentic account of the lesbian in America today—her social, economic, and legal situation. Phyllis Lyon and Del Martin were founders in 1955 of the Daughters of Bilitis, the first national lesbian organization in the U.S.

The Gay Mystique, published by Stein

& Day in spring 1972, deals systematically with the myths and reality of male homosexuality in our society. Peter Fisher is a member of Gay Activists Alliance of New York City.

In her presentation speech, Ms. Gittings said, "Straight society condemns us because of our love. But the power of gay love is strong enough to fly in the face of conventional morality and institutional sanctions. We WILL be ourselves. And we are proud of the truth about ourselves that is finally being told in books like these."

Both books are included in the new, short bibliography of "materials that support a positive view of homosexuals and homosexuality." The bibliography is available to anyone who sends a stamped reply envelope to Barbara Gittings, Coordinator, ALA/SRR Task Force on Gay liberation, P.O. Box 2383, Philadelphia, Pa. 19103.



Barbara Gittings tries on Mike McConnell's hat at the Chicago Gay Pride celebration.

Democratic Convention

(continued from page 1)

someone's daughter." "I am a woman, I am a lesbian," said the 32-year-old communications worker. She called homosexuals "the untouchables of American society" and asked for a proposal affirming "the right of all persons to define and express their own sensibility, emotionality, and sexuality."

After the gay liberationists had presented their case to the Convention, a 21-year-old McGovern delegate, Mrs. Cathy Wilch (Ohio) argued negatively for ten minutes, contending that the acceptance of such a plank would open the Democratic Party to child molesters, prostitutes, pimps, and panderers. The Party, she said, would go down to a great defeat.

Although the gay liberation plank (as well as all of the minority planks) was defeated, there was considerable audible support for it from delegates in the convention hall. Those opposing the plank shouted louder, however.

Quakers Come

(continued from page 1)

Conference-goers here who were familiar with the situation were unanimous in predicting a harsh reaction to his public declaration from his Yearly Meeting.

The minister himself was not available for an interview.

Speaking briefly on the same platform as Mattson, and representing female members of the Committee of Concern, was Marilyn Thompson-Jensen. She indicated her agreement with the concerns raised by Mattson.

Meanwhile, what may be the first effort in American history by bisexuals to organize themselves was taking place at the same convention.

Meeting at an officially sponsored discussion group on sexuality, several bisexuals decided that bisexuality was not getting adequate treatment from that group, and that the Committee of Concern was neither addressing itself to bisexuality nor was it out of the closet enough to deal with the 1,428 Friends in attendance at the convention. These bisexuals, headed by Bob Martin, a former homophile movement activist who had just been discharged from the Navy, announced a meeting of an impromptu discussion group on bisexuality in the convention's daily bulletin.

Much to their surprise, some 130 Friends showed up for the meeting and were divided into four discussion groups. These met also on a second day and then reconvened in order to adopt a statement.

In Quaker gatherings, all statements represent the unanimous agreement of all Friends present. These are frequently put in the form of queries, or questions, which Friends are to ask themselves both individually and as corporate bodies, and answer as honestly as possible.

The bisexuality group agreed on a preamble and four Queries, had them mimeographed, and distributed them to the rest of the convention-goers. It was agreed to raise these Queries at monthly and yearly Meetings during the two years between now and the next Friends General Conference. These meetings may adopt queries of their own or agree upon statements on the issues raised and touched upon.

As most bisexuals are discriminated against on the basis of their homosexual tendencies or acts, the Queries in the area of discrimination apply to exclusive homosexuals as well. The bisexual Friends felt that discussion of bisexual life styles and community identity, which they felt was neglected by the homosexual community and the gay liberation movement, should be first discussed among themselves, and therefore these concerns were not included in the group's statement. The group also made no attempt to define bisexuality at this year's gathering.

Several Friends, however, expressed discontent with the lack of bisexual organizations, publications, social centers, etc. and most were agreed that they were suffering oppression from the gay community as well as from the straight. While the meeting here concentrated on the Quaker context, the fact that a large group of bisexuals got together and expressed themselves in this fashion may be a significant indication of things to come.

The "Statement and Queries on Bisexuality" adopted by the group is as follows:

Feeling moved by the Grace of God to discuss the topic of bisexuality, a group of approximately a hundred and thirty Friends at the 1972 Friends General Conference met on two days to share our concerns. Our seeking was marked by a spirit of sometimes painful openness and by love towards Friends who feel troubled by this topic and towards those who have been most directly involved.

Feeling that the concerns raised should be further explored by our Monthly and Yearly Meetings, this group agreed to present these queries to Friends everywhere.

Are Friends open to examining in our Meetings facets of sexuality, including bisexuality, with openness and loving understanding?

Are Friends aware that Friends are suffering in our Meetings because they are not exclusively heterosexual? That Friends have felt oppressed and excluded, often without conscious intent, have felt inhibited from speaking Truth as they experience it? That Quaker institutions have threatened their employees with loss of jobs should their orientations become known?

Are Friends, with their long tradition of concern for social justice, aware of the massive and inescapable bigotry in this area directed and perpetuated by virtually all United States institutions, to wit: all branches of government; churches; schools; employers; landlords; medical, bar, and other professional associations; insurance companies; news media; and countless others?

Are Friends aware of their own tendency to falsely assume that any interest in the same sex necessarily indicates an exclusively homosexual orientation; and to further falsely assume that interest in the opposite sex necessarily indicates an exclusively heterosexual orientation?

ACLU S.F. Teachers

(continued from page 1)

Amendment of the U.S. Constitution," added Fitch. "The ACLU sees us as satellites to the above rights." The students and parents will be listed as co-plaintiffs.

Meanwhile, Gay Counseling Service and teachers at Roosevelt Junior High in San Francisco have decided not to take legal action after a public uproar started by *San Francisco Examiner* columnist Guy Wright. The state Board of Education is investigating an incident at the school where several G.C.S. speakers were subject to verbal abuse from black males and the session became sexually explicit.

"The teachers there feel they have the situation under control and that G.C.S. representatives will be able to speak again during the next school year," said Cliff Crouse of the organization.

Despite the sensational reports of Wright and inflammatory news stories across the nation which led to the state investigation, not one member of the Establishment press has contacted Fred Baumeister, chairman of the Social Studies Department. The only reporter to do so was from the gay press.

Was Justice Served?

(continued from page 3)

ty unless his guilt is established without a reasonable doubt.

The prosecution witnesses were inconsistent about what they saw. About the only thing proved was that there was a ruckus and that gay activists were being

trashed. This is indeed dreadful, but in itself insufficient to lock someone away. There were too many gaps to say that it was in fact Michael Maye who "stomped" Morty Manford on that infamous escalator. We know that Mr. Manford was badly hurt. We know that Mr. Maye was part of a hostile throng. But beyond that we know nothing definite enough to convict the defendant. Dislike of a bully is not enough; in the United States you must pinpoint a specific action at a specific time to make a charge stick, and no one was able to do that to my satisfaction as a juror.

The question that sticks in my mind, however, is why these noble traditions were so scrupulously observed for Michael Maye and are so arrogantly ignored for the countless impoverished defendants who are daily locked away by the courts.

As Judge Levittan said, it was "far from clear as to who did what and to whom." Whether this was the fault of Roger Hayes, the assistant district attorney, or simply a result of impossible confusion, I cannot say. She went on to imply that some witnesses had been holding back but the judge is more extreme than I; I think that those who testified did their best about a situation that no one was really able to come to grips with.

The defense rebutted every point in the prosecution. I must say I have doubts about the truthfulness of several of the defense witnesses, especially of Mr. Maye himself, who claimed that he was groped in the balls by someone who managed to rip his trousers (a pretty neat trick!). It's inconceivable that any activist in the midst of a zap could have done anything so ridiculous; if he was that horny, he would have been at the baths, not putting himself through the tension and drama of an idealistic, principled action. I rather suspect the overzealous Mr. Maye split his seam as he raised his leg to stomp a gay activist.

The defense was hoping to show that Mr. Maye's admitted anger and hostility were justified. I question the testimony, but enough doubts were raised in my mind to refrain from finding the defendant guilty, much as I wanted to see him punished.

It will be interesting to see how the prosecution and court handle the case of Allen Roskoff on August 10. He is charged with trespassing for his part in the same demonstration that found Mr. Maye accused of beating Mr. Manford. Will the same legal principles that have protected the prizefighter and union boss protect the gay activist, or will we end up with that old cop-out: guilty, but you can go home if you promise never to do it again. Judge Levittan, to her credit, refrained from imposing anything so humiliating and irrelevant on the politically powerful Mr. Maye.

The injustice, then, is not in the acquittal, but in all those black, Latin and gay ghetto defendants who, year after year, are found guilty and sent to prison on far less convincing evidence. Most are too poor to contest the accusations against them, and are forced to plead guilty to charges which the prestige, pull and wallet of Michael Maye enabled him to brush aside almost without concern. It was only fair that Mr. Maye was prosecuted (except that it should have occurred two months earlier, and for a more serious charge); it was only fair that he was acquitted. Why can't other defendants find justice as unequivocally?

After he finally got around to plunging in, Roger Hayes did everything he could to keep the prosecution alive. He may have been reluctant at first, but not after the trial began. His case was simply not strong. There was justice in what I could see of the way Michael Maye was handled. The injustice lay in the thousands of prisoners we could not see, with whom this very justice for Michael Maye would never concern itself.

The Fag Hag Rag

Is The New Bette Midler Old Hat?



Bette Midler: Pre-Continental

BY JOHN FRANCIS HUNTER/
JOHN PAUL HUDSON*

**[Since it's gotten to be a popular pastime when dropping my name to add parenthetically "whatever he's calling himself this week," I wanted to be sure everybody knew who I was. Because if I'm writing a slam, I want to bear the brunt of the counter-criticism. And, friends, this is a slam!]*

Bette Midler's album is out (Aug. 1)! If you care. As for me, if I were a record freak and had a new needle on the old set Gerard rigged so we could play our friend Lily Tomlin's discs, I would buy *The Divine Miss M* to hear her sing about old folks and their loneliness. That is, if the cover copy assured me she wouldn't talk, be cutesy-poo or tell fag-hag jokes. You heard me.

I was rather stunned myself, considering the woman's credentials: the Continental Baths, a gay bathhouse, thank you, gave her her start, and gays have been turning cartwheels over her on the sidewalks of New York, the boardwalks of Fire Island and in print (except for Leo Skir) for longer than I can remember. I had just about decided I was the only homosexual in New York who had not caught Miss M in action, completing the ruin of my reputation as a connoisseur. (Well, *Michael's Thing* once called me "the Lucius Beebe of the Underground!") My fall from the Old Order gay chic began when I admitted publicly that I had never been a Judy Garland fan, didn't understand the attraction though I comprehended the cult, that I had walked out on *A Star is Born* twice (and it was showing at the New Yorker), and that when I met them at a small party the Christmas before she died I found Mickey Dean more intriguing than her. Did you get all that? Well, Bob Kohler invites comparison between Rona Barrett and me, I might as well write like her. (And, incidentally, Mickey Dean is about as stimulating as a catatonic Supreme Court Justice, so that shows you how fascinated I was with Garland...)

MARVEL AT TALENT

Now, Midler has an enormous amount of

talent, there is no doubt about it. She has an impressive range for a pop singer (though the incomparable Joanne Baretta puts her to shame in that department). She moves like Dame Margot Fonteyn on speed, with Charlie Chaplin choreographing. Mincing, spinning, all pigeon-toed, arms akimbo, skating and skittering back and forth across the stage on stiletto heels that make her splendid gams look like something carefully molded by a master cabinet maker to support a fine bannister at Schonbrunn. When she sings that oldie "Moon of ———," her chest voice is so rich and robust you feel the vibes in your own lungs and marvel at what great pipes she's got. You overlook the occasional flapping when she is having at some e capella flourish and the now-and-then squeaks and unsustained tones that she is obviously attempting to sustain. Without her gimmicks she's very vulnerable, and, of course, it's a pity she's so committed to phoyness she can't really let it all hang out and be comfortable with vulnerability.

Yeah, she's phony. The whole do-the-decades bit was to attract attention, not because she dug being outrageous the way Tomlin used to as far back as '67, at the Madrasa Club matinees. In those chiffon '30's gowns and the silver anklestraps, Midler was safe when she took up the fad—and yet at her concert she put down her having done all those decades medleys. By her belittling that, telling us they were not the *real* Bette, just a commercial phase, she showed us the stretch marks of integrity versus expediency. Expediency has won with her. She tips her hand again and again, if you aren't too captivated by her pyrotechnics and stage-magic to notice that what she's just pulled out of your ear she first shoved up your ass.

A GPW EVENT

What concert? Well, it was the Friday night before Christopher Street Liberation Day, and I hadn't decided what to do. The incredible \$1200 full-page ad which the CSLD Committee took out in the hetero-establishment *Village Voice* told me I had a choice of marching on the Bergen, N.J. courthouse, attending the all-night film festival at the Firehouse,



Bette Midler: At the Downstairs at the Upstairs

augmenting the stag line at the MCC dance, entraining for Brooklyn Heights and the GAB dance there, or getting thrown out of a woman's theatre production in the Village. Lige Clarke saved me the anguish of making a decision by offering me Jack's ticket to catch Midler at Carnegie Hall. A block from home, important consideration. While it wasn't my idea of a bona fide Gay Pride Week event, I figured that, with her credentials, it would be close enough. I had submitted to a Garland clip at Vito Russo's on Thursday (from that '63 TV spec which even I had enjoyed), so why not Midler?

It turned out to be a Gay Pride bumper, but fun. Until I was offended...

Frankly, I was taken at once with her showmanship, as I dig theatrical artifice as much as the next person, as long as it isn't passed off for real gut folks-at-home. But when she started in with the appreciation bit, thinking she was kidding it, she was ersatz saccharine, which is pretty far removed from the real thing, and I don't think she knew how far. She does keep things moving, though, she's a veritable hummingbird in a hurricane, and there was that heavenly celestial choir, the MGMs, that extraordinarily gifted composer/conductor, Barry Manilow, who has got to be one of the best music men of the '70's, the good lighting, excellent sound, festive audience, all big pluses. I agreed with Lige, who observed as she was taking her bows and stealing away then rather humbly (she was too bushed to be "on") from her wild ovation, "I think we're seeing a star being born." No doubt about it, but too bad the birth had to be breached. A star she may become, but that doesn't mean she's real or that she'll ever be a first magnitude person—or that I have to swallow her homophobic afterbirth.

Unmask a fag-hag, and you'll find a fag-hater every time. The oftener they are rejected by the gay males to whom they are attracted, the more shrilly and earnestly they put fags down.

SHE HATES US

I base my contention that Bette Midler is a first-class leaother (and exploiter) of gays on three points, then I rest my case, not wishing to go into the drag queen take-off thing at all, at all!

First, it was Gay Pride Week, remember, and she didn't have the grace to mention it, there, with maybe three-fourths of her audience gay male. It would have been consciousness-raising for the Closet Captives, it would have helped swell our march, it would have placed Midler on the side of the angels instead of the nuns. (Well, there are Jewish nuns, and they are the *worst* about "unnatural sex acts.") I'll wager Gregory Battcock's last Casque of Amontillado that if she had gotten her start in a black milieu she'd have honored "my black sisters and brothers who en-

couraged me when Miss M was but a wail, an unknown." She didn't identify with our minority, you can bet your subscription to *After Dark*, though she made some crack about Maestro Manilow's getting more names and phone numbers on programs than she does. How do you think that grabs her, really!

She didn't refer to the Continental Baths like so: "where beautiful gay men in towels took time out from making love to hear little me sing." Had she done so, she'd probably have added, "me, a diversion from perversion." To her, male-male loving is "the pits," it's obvious. She tries so hard to be alluring to gay males, you see. Wagging her tits for naught at the Continental, flashing crotch in other-crotch country, pathetically attempting to excite males who are there to dig each other primarily, to dig her talent secondarily, and finally only tolerate her sexism. Have I begun to sound like woman-hating Craig Schoonmaker, who appealed to the mayor to have the Zoo closed because he found a female in the orgy room? That's all right in this case, because, dig-

THE BIG PUT-DOWN

The Divine Miss M (get the Miss, that's where she's at) spoke of being on the Mike Douglas Show with Lawrence Welk (the mention of his name gets a big yolk), who wouldn't touch her to do the polka because "he was afraid of getting crabs." Since she is a stand-up comedienne of consummate skill, with something of Joan Rivers, Jerry Lewis, etc., she carries you

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Bette Midler: Early Continental

Up Front With Morty Manford

BY DR. GEORGE WEINBERG
AUTHOR OF *SOCIETY & THE
HEALTHY HOMOSEXUAL*

Morty Manford, who joined the New York GAA in March 1970, is now only twenty-one. More than hard work, it took being the victim of an act of violence to make people aware of him. The beating he suffered at the hands of Michael Maye earned him dozens of interviews on radio and television, and even if Maye escapes, the public has been alerted by the incident, and Morty has become much better known, which is greatly to the advantage of the gay movement.

Handsome, with brown curly hair, Morty is one of the most courageous and persuasive people in the gay rights movement at this time. He combines the willingness to act in bold strokes with the patience and planfulness of a true revolutionary. Of all the people in the movement, Morty is, to my mind, the one almost certain to convince me of whatever he says publicly. He has the power to rise to moments of supreme articulateness, and unlike perhaps the majority of successful movement people, he is able to spend long hours of social time without conveying a chronic sense of emergency.

"I was sitting in a gay cafeteria in the village in February of 1970, when hundreds of homosexual marchers walked by. They were protesting the Snake Pit raids. When I saw them out there, I felt a tremendous uplift of spirit."

Morty rose from the table and told his friends, "I've got to go out and join that march." So saying, he left and joined it. "At that time I did not know what it was that drew me so powerfully, what it was that the march had to offer me."

Ten days later he joined the New York Gay Activists Alliance. Immersion in the group left him uncertain at first. He sensed mainly that there were "very special people" who were to become his comrades.

"In retrospect, I know what drew me—a sense of justice, a sense of self, and my own personal pride. I knew that my days in the closet could be rationally understood and explained and corrected. Bit by bit, I clarified my thinking in all-night talk sessions."

"Then came my first arrest. I had been sitting on Christopher Street talking with a friend when a squad car rolled up. The police told us to shove on. My friend and I started to move. Then we looked at each other and decided simultaneously, 'This is pure harassment; we are not going to do it.' We refused to move, and the police arrested us and carted us off. Our crime was sitting on the stoop."

"Afterwards, I realized I had done the right thing. If we had simply moved, we would have been like two pieces of shit floating along."

The activity of resistance solidified all the opinions that had been forming. One is not sure in the beginning. One is never sure. Once the road is taken, it seems like the only one that was open. We all experience the illusion that the course we took was inevitable for us. In retrospect, after the zaps, the marches, the speeches, the arrests, the painstaking nights of preparations for all of these, the answer is clear. One was an activist because of the out-



Witnesses saw the handsome 21-year-old activist pummeled by ex-prizefighter, Michael Maye.

rage. Now follow the lives of some of the others at the table, who looked at Morty in surprise when he waved goodbye and went off with the marchers. To those who remained demoralized and who continued in hiding, it must seem by now that their behavior too was absolutely necessary. To them it comes to seem increasingly obvious that only a fool would declare his or her homosexuality publicly. One cannot go on taking precautions and then suddenly feel that all of them were unwarranted and unnecessary. To become free, one must surrender caution somewhere along the way. The price of freedom is surrender of caution. Hiding begets the sense of need to hide, just as



Morty salutes as he's arrested at the N.Y. Board of Education zap.

person might now condemn his or her homosexuality. If asked, the person would surely say, "Well, of course Morty lived a different life from mine. His situation is different. He can afford to do what he is doing." A study of how the two people came to choose their ever-widening divergent courses would smudge the facts most critical, namely that they used their pure, unfettered free will differently, and as a result, they fashioned themselves differently. The point is not that one must be a militant to be happy; it is rather that we are fashioning ourselves and that militancy arranges the psyche and the life of the militant.

Morty describes learning "the need to face my oppressors."

"It was in the early days. A group of us had stormed the office of Fidelefacts; a private organization selling information about peoples' private lives. When we were inside, one of the investigators grabbed hold of Arthur Evans and shoved him. Spontaneously, I turned to the man, my nose against his and looking straight up into his eyes, and I shouted, 'Take your hands off him,' as loud as I could. And he got scared. He let go of Arthur. It didn't become a fight, but I felt a surge of force within me."

Morty will always remember the moment, the shout. The man's reaction. To see that Morty's action was the main source of his subsequent courage, one must reflect that even if the man had disregarded him, or punched him, Morty's view would not have altered. Sure, one needs courage to start. But don't imagine that heroes, even people like Morty who seem like the so-called natural, are resolved when they start. One seizes the moment and builds courage.

The study of a life like Morty's is, properly speaking, less a study of cause than a study of effect. The effect of his choices has been to clarify his thinking and to purify his soul. And this fact is more important than an intricate speculation about his motives could ever be.

One can imagine that someone else, on the brink of joining the march with Morty, who decided against it, has continued to play it safe. Suppose in fact that the person elaborated a course of hypocrisy. Each act would reinflect that person with greater guilt and fear. That

By now he has been taken in tow by uniformed police, plainclothesmen, and by the campus security at Columbia, where he is studying political science. At Columbia Morty has spearheaded the Gay People at Columbia, and has become well known. His forceful demands for the rights of gay students there have resulted in his conferring with President McGill and with the trustees of the University.

Morty has persuaded both of his parents that he is healthy and is a member of an oppressed group. They are now persuading themselves even more fully of this by appearing publicly and arguing for it. They have been on radio and television, here and in Boston. In a letter to the *New York Post*, his mother congratulated the newspaper for its coverage of the assault on her son. She marched in the Christopher Street Liberation Day Parade.

Morty's parents differ on the role of aggressive politics. His father sees zaps as ineffective; his mother envisions them as necessary. They are constantly reading, trying to keep pace with Morty's expanding political awareness. Quite a wonderful family! Not the sort to be separated by a psychologist's telling the parent they've done a botch job and that their son is sick.

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Jerry's Sphere

Continued from page 2

tried to find an average age and/or astrological sign. The ages ranged from 20 to 37, and every one that I talked with had a different sign. My brother, John Francis Hunter, and I, as two of the judges, were asked to make up some questions for the candidates for the personality section of the contest. (First they paraded in jeans; second, in their own thing plus personality; and third, in bathing suits.) Some of the answers disappointed me greatly and some were a very pleasant surprise. Jack from BAYOU LANDING, Dallas, was second runner-up. Al from the CLUB BATHS, Atlanta, was first runner-up, and MR. DAVID was one of those aforementioned blue-eyed blonds from Atlanta, Eric from SEKY APTS. The crowd seemed to agree with the judges' decision and went wild. (The judges also included Bob Anthony, N.Y.; producer Bill Shisley, N.Y.; L.A.; Rheims, Miami; T.C. Palmer, Dallas; and Hank Godly, DAVID Magazine, Jacksonville.) Besides the contest, there was a fine show M.C.'d by Billie Boots, one of the most original drag I've seen, and Jim Cassidy of movie fame. (Another GORGEOUS blue-eyed blond, who had the room adjoining mine. Unfortunately I didn't discover this until the last night in Atlanta. Damn it!) All in all a very exciting evening was enjoyed by all.

SOME NOTES ON ATLANTA: Because of the contest and leaving for Miami and the convention, I was unable to get to many of the bars. As a matter of fact, I only got to one other besides SWEET GUM and that was THE COVE. They are both operated by Frank Powell, a very congenial host.

From the ridiculous to the sublime, an old friend from California, Ken, and his lover Doug, took me over to Piedmont Park. It made "Vaseline Alley" look like Death Valley. Cars kept going 'round and 'round while about 100 GM's made the journey on foot. I was told, however, that the P.D. keeps the park under heavy surveillance. So, if you ever get to Atlanta and feel adventuresome, go forewarned.

I felt that if I didn't get out of Atlanta fast, I wouldn't get out. (It's a GAS!) And so, with heavy heart, I asked Ken and Doug to take me to the airport. We got there just in time for my flight to...

MIAMI, THE CONVENTION, AND WOW: Jack, an ex-roomie from New York, is my host here. The first day he got me up with him in order to take me to 21st St. beach before heading for work. After all of that rain that we've had in New York, it felt glorious to lie in the sun. The water is so warm, it feels as if one is taking a bath. Being afraid to date the afternoon sun, I went up under the protection of the refreshment stand and sipped on a beer. (Sorry, Gregory, I didn't find out the brand or the year.) A group of people piled out of a car. They were wearing the lambda buttons of GAA. I brightened and asked them if they were from New York. They answered, "no," and went on their way. I couldn't help noticing one of the GF's in the group. She was beautiful and had a body that would make the most screaming GM wonder if there weren't something to this bisexual trip we've been hearing so much about. A couple of minutes later, a lambda shirt appeared trotting toward the beach. This time I just asked if he were with GAA. He smiled and said, "yes." Then, he bowled me over and asked if I weren't Jerry Fitzpatrick from GAY. That only happened at the bar in New York and here I was in a strange city and being recognized. To say that I was flattered would be an understatement. The gentleman's name was Don Barrington. He explained that they had been at the city council meeting which had just taken a lunch break. They would all be returning when their spokesperson would be asking for the 21st St. Beach for a camping ground for the gay non-delegates. He said that the spokesperson was a Karen M. (last initial only will be explained). At this point I spotted my young Venus again. I said that it was too bad she wasn't the girl that was speaking, as she was so beautiful that they'd probably give her anything that she wanted. Don smiled and called, "KAREN, COME ON OVER." Yes, dear readers, you guessed it, Venus and Karen M. were one in the same person. As she came closer, she smiled and I immediately stood up to be introduced. She took my hand and pressed it warmly and smiled enough to outline the sun. I was overwhelmed. We rapped for a few minutes about nothing in particular. Then she turned to Don with a worried look and asked if he knew that the whole proceedings were being televised and broadcast. He replied yes, Karen said, "Oh, my god, my mother will die." Don asked her if she wanted out. Karen looked into her heart for

a moment and quietly responded, "NO." At this point, I asked how she had been chosen. She told me that she had won many debates as an extemporaneous speaker, it was her forte (she was dazzling). I took a columnist's foot, jumped in, and asked her age, guessing it at about 23. Karen tilted her head, smiled and said, "Thank you, I'll be 18 in October." (?????) As I picked myself up off the floor, I shook my head in disbelief. Even Don had thought her to be older. My only remark was "God bless youth." Karen laughed (a very sexy laugh) and asked if I'd join them at the council meeting. Nothing could have kept me away. And so, off the three of us marched toward Convention Hall, holding hands.

As we approached the Hall, so many thoughts were racing through my brain (what there is of it) I kept silent and listened to Don and Karen rap. In front of us, there seemed to be a small parade. It was. Rev. Ralph Abernathy and his "Poor People." They marched right into the Hall and took over the rostrum. He gave a small speech which had the TV cameramen racing down the aisles to catch it. He demanded a camp site for his people and 750 seats on the floor. Karen tugged on our hands and suggested that we go into the chambers where the council was meeting. (I must digress and report that every man we passed in the hall had to put his eyes back into his head.) As we entered the chamber my heart was flying as if I'd had two poppers. I couldn't believe that here, in Miami Beach, a group of gays led by a beautiful female, barely out of puberty, was about to clash with a city council and demand the same rights afforded any other group. Had this been an old M-G-M movie as we entered a heavenly light would have entered with us bathing Karen while a halleluia chorus came in thunderously. It was quite a moment in my life. Karen quickly caught the eye of every cameraman there. I couldn't help wonder what they were thinking about this beautiful girl/woman. We walked straight-up to the front row. There I was introduced to Bob Barry, president of GAA/Miami, who took the month's vacation that he'd planned on spending in Europe to prepare the Miami gay community for the convention. Also present was Chuck Lamoont of the National Coalition of Gay Organizations all the way from Chicago. (A personal note to my brothers and sisters in N.Y., the women and the men were in this TOGETHER. Gay Pride Week was CELEBRATED by both GF's and GM's TOGETHER! Got the message?) Cameras from CBS, NBC and ABC were having a field day recording the whole thing for posterity. Karen asked not to be photographed and the cameramen, much against their will I'm sure, recognized her wishes. Just then, Rev. Abernathy entered to the sound of much applause and chants of "Right On," and GAY POWER from the gays in the chambers. The council began with Rev. Abernathy's request for Flamingo Park as a camp site for Resurrection City II. The gays were getting edgy waiting for their turn at bat. Karen jumped up more than once with cries of despair, keeping me informed as to why she could understand Abernathy's turning down some of the alternate proposals. As for myself, I agreed with Abernathy (that the poor people (being one of them, myself) should be heard, but got very annoyed with some of his answers, as I'm sure that some of the council members must have been doubly annoyed. Because of the hour and not having the vaguest idea of where I was from Jack's I had to leave. As it happened, Flamingo Park was given as a campsite to all of the groups in question. My Venus/Joan of Arc/Karen didn't have to go in front of the council. I'm a little sorry about it as she is one of the most intelligent persons I've met, on top of her outstanding beauty. I'm sure not only the council would have been impressed but also any of the straight community lucky enough to have caught her in action. God bless you, Karen, and keep you safe from any harm, always.

GAA DANCE BEFORE THE CONVENTION: Saturday night GAA (Miami) sponsored a "Pre-Convention Ball." It was held at UNIFIED HALL, and a better name couldn't have been made up for the occasion. There was a live group (?) would you believe a twosome? I don't know how they made all of the sounds they made, but they were dynamite! They called themselves HUCK & FINN. Very good sounds. To say that the Miami GAA has gotten it together would be an understatement. You had to be there to see all of the work that went into the dance on top of all of the other work that they'd been into getting ready for this convention. Again, I must stress that the men and the women worked TOGETHER, hand in glove. It is amazing to see what can be undertaken when there is unity in the ranks! Not one "star" in the group. Just FANTASTIC individuals, realiz-

ing a need for change and working for that change with great zeal and determination. All gay organizations all over the country should learn a lesson from Miami GAA.

JESUS, A CUBAN REFUGEE, put up the tents in Flamingo Park. He is quite a colorful lad. There was a Yippie who decided to go skinny dipping late at night. In a matter of seconds he was joined by Jesus and many more for a lot of good, clean fun. VERRRY INTERESTING. AND EVEN THE SENIOR CITIZENS were getting it on. One elderly man came by the "Pot People's" tree applauding. One of the "people" offered the gentleman part of the pipe. The gentleman took about 8 tokes and, in about 10 minutes, was stripped down to his boxer shorts trying to learn the bugaloo. RIGHT ON!

In a surprise move today, Senators Humphrey and Muskie removed their names from contention as the nominee for president. Senator Muskie pledged his support to Senator George McGovern, "the obvious choice of this convention." He also admonished the old line politicians to get into line with the "new blood" in the party. Wow, what a trip. Right on, Senator Muskie.

Rev. Troy Perry and Rev. Howard Wells arrived here last night. They will be taking part in the parade up Collins Ave. scheduled for tonight. It promises to be some parade. Followed by a KISS-IN.

WHOEVER BELIEVED A FEW short years ago that because of a few queers in a sewer of a bar in New York City a national political party would be listening to GAY ACTIVISTS in making up its platform for a national election??? INCREDIBLE!!! I've talked with a lot of gays in the past few years. Most of them have been anti-activist. "They don't show the right part of gay life." "They don't represent the majority." I've heard these and many other lines, in these many years. And then, you listen as Walter Cronkite starts talking on national tele about the gay activists without blinking an eye and your mind is totally blown. Although in the past and, I suppose, in the future, I have had my differences with many of the activists, and their means, I wanted to kiss every man and woman who has given so much of themselves to bring this dream of equality and dignity so close to a realization. And, I would hope that all of our sisters and brothers who are still in the closet will make their voices heard when they step into the election booths in November. This way you can say thanks to the Mansfords, the Owles, Wandels, Gittings, Kamenys, Clarkes, Nichols, Hunters, etc., etc.

A WORD OF CAUTION: Several of our sisters and brothers have been hitting the straight community with angry shouts of "Gay is better than straight." For you and I, perhaps, I can understand your hostility. But we have been

fighting for Human Rights, straight and gay together. Again I cringe at the thought of the oppressed becoming the oppressor.

SWEET FLOWERS OF YOUTH: (To paraphrase) Over and over again we have heard about the young delegates and how they have differed from their elders in many ways. I have witnessed the change all over the country. It's a miracle! It's the hope not only of this country, but of the world. Most of us will not be bearing children. This does not mean that we have no responsibility to the future generations. We do. Let it be the legacy of the gay community of the next few years to let our straight brothers and sisters' children grow in a world of love and understanding. In a world where the right to be different is a right, or better yet, taken for granted. The young people of this country, on the main, don't care if you are gay or straight but what you are as an individual. They are and will be helping us. We must return the favor.

I WASN'T GOING TO DO ANY TRIVIA in this column, but for my brothers and sisters in New York, guess who I saw last night, my dears... George Perry and his lover are alive and well in Miami Beach. George showed me his new Caddy and told me about his new condominium. He's planning to open a bar (get ready) and call it DIRTY EDNA'S. He asked me to ask Lon for a couple more thousand as he and Walter are planning another trip (they just returned from a cruise), this time to London. It must be nice to have dough.

I GUESS THAT I'D BETTER CLOSE for now. Before I do I must say thank you to GAA Miami, Bob, Don, Karen; Ambassador's III for proving that I've been right about the help that the bars can be; to WAREHOUSE VIII for letting me use that place as sort of my headquarters since it was so close to Jack's; to Torchy, Rheims, Joe, Chuck, Michael and, my heart, Vincent; to Mel who helped in any way he could; to my ex-lover Ron who taught me how to love; to my host and friend Jack and his Eric, may they always be as happy as they are now; to the delegates, gay and straight, for showing the country that there is hope for the future; and to anybody who has ever been in love I salute you all!

And remember, Middle America, the queer you put down today may be your son and/or daughter tomorrow.

LOVE & PEACE,
Je

P.S. PERSONAL TO SENATOR GEORGE MCGOVERN: Sir, you could prove to be the hope not only of this country but of the world. Or, you could wind up being the cruelest hoax ever perpetrated on an unsuspecting populace. May God go with you and keep you safe from harm and "political expediency." Je

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"Fooling Around" With The La Fleurs



John Monroe, Jr.

BY VICKI RICHMAN

I wasn't definite—but I was pretty sure," John Monroe, Jr. recalls about his senior year at high school. He was going steady with a girl and working as a chorus boy in *Eye Eye Birdie*, which his best friend, Tom Russell, was preparing for college. "Some other guys in the cast brought me down to the Stonewall—my first gay bar. It was interesting, but I didn't go back because I was still going out with the girl." He ended up "fooling around" with her brother. He can't avoid the ghetto euphemism for "having homosexual relations."

John and Tom are sure now; they're back together as the La Fleur Sisters, the long-running drag act at the Roundtable. What they're about, however, is not entirely clear. They get dressed up three nights a week, as a "disguise" for their shyness, they say, but they're not drag queens. Tom takes his job as a public school teacher seriously. And John...

"My lover Sal was straight when I met him." John is talking about the sinister mustachioed figure stalking guerrilla-like through the shadows of the apartment. Making it with straight guys is a familiar drag fantasy. "Do you think he's gay," I once asked my favorite drag queen after she had expressed interest in some guy, not realizing my innocence had almost destroyed her. "No," she came back bravely, "but he will be."

John is not supposed to be a drag queen, yet he loves to tell you how he tamed the wild stud. "Get the fuck out of here, you faggot!" Sal swore when John bumped into him (innocently, he says) at a department-store cafeteria almost four years ago. "I just started working in displays," John says, "and I couldn't believe it. I reported him to personnel, and they made him apologize. He was very uptight about gay people, but the next day—I was new there, so I didn't have many friends

—I was eating by myself, and he comes up and says, 'I want to say I'm sorry for the way I acted.' So I say okay. So he says, 'Can I have lunch with you?' So, like for about three months we just sat together at lunch time..."

It took that long for Sal to get enough courage to accept an invitation to John's home, and then only with his cousin acting as chaperon. They didn't start living together until John gave him a choice: "Either move in or I don't want to see you any more." It may not be the way that Dear Abby recommends loving couples get it together, but John explains his dirty politics: "I really fell in love with him, you know."

There's another problem now. Sal is not allowed to make it to the Roundtable to catch the La Fleurs. Seeing his lover toasted by all those handsome men shakes the jealous darling up too much. It's better for both their heads if Sal stays home. "Whenever I talk to people, he thinks I'm making dates. It's really ridiculous," sighs the poor, innocent John, who can't help it if he's the sexy half of the act.

The couple shares domestic bliss with hundreds of others on a shady, tensely quiet street off Queens Boulevard, featuring an endless array of four- and five-story red-brick houses, in which the developer hoped to unite the fantasies of the East Sixties with the economy of a Tenth Avenue slumlord. Their duplex apartment begins with a private entrance below street level and ends a half-story above the sidewalk. It consists of four or five box-like rooms deftly assembled in the unshakable architecture of a lonely child with a set of blocks, and is memorable for its backyard, its Baby Grand, and its circular bed conceived in the opulence of Victorian gilt and covered with lace that borders on extreme taste.

The apartment, the street, and John's running description of how they got it together, are the only evidence that a lady lives somewhere with this pair of husky roommates out to set the world on fire.

"The kleenex—where the fuck is the kleenex I put over here?" the lady at her dressing table wonders through clenched teeth, as she finds good reason to interrupt her toilette. Her venomous sincerity makes me glad I just came in and have no idea what she's talking about.

"I threw it out, I guess, when I cleaned the table for you," a wispy boy stammers, stressing the last two words as if they might somehow assuage her fury.

"You WHAT!" The lady's genuine disbelief is overshadowed by her need for vengeance. "You stupid motherfucker!" She is even-voiced now, as if the fact of her wrath is greater than any expression her words can give it. "You goddam stupid bastard! I had my new lashes in that kleenex. Eight fucking dollars they cost. And how the hell do you expect me to do the show tonight?"

By process of exclusion, I deduce—following Sherlock Holmes's rule that when you eliminate the impossible, whatever

remains, however improbable, must be the truth—that this misused young thing must be John. The only other lady is too obviously Tom, and unless the billing of the La Fleur Sisters had been a complete fraud, no one else could account for the violated presence before me.

Still it's difficult to believe. I don't even see the teenager any more. Both the La Fleurs seem to be well into their thirties. It's not a makeup problem, however. They cultivate this neutral age even in their extreme youth just as Marilyn and Lana and all the glamour girls did, who were afraid of creating a girl in her early twenties lurking in the past for the eventual woman in her fifties to have to compete with. Appearing the same age throughout one's career is the ideal. Only Jane Fonda and Brigitte Bardot made the mistake of looking like the girls they were, and are now suffering the consequences.

John smiles when he finally sees me. It must be he. He remains where he is, though; he has problems to attend to. But Tom gushes over, crosses his legs, and caresses my biceps with lazy fingers floating at an angle to his vertical forearm. "Let's see," he says, forcing a feminine drawl, "what can I tell you about myself as we wait...?" He doesn't fool me—or himself. As he said, he's comfortable doing an act. Later on stage he will delight the audience with this same sense of unfulfilled femininity, neither completely comic nor irrevocably pathetic, as he cavorts in the midst of unsettled chiffon.

John, though—I hate to make anything of him, as I try to find the person I interviewed earlier, the shy boy who struggled to hold the cab door open for me, who was at a fluttered loss before some wicked brute in a cafeteria. Someone has been dispatched for a new pair of lashes, and he's at ease again. He's putting at members of the unavoidable backstage entourage, one hand on the table, a hip thrust out at the rest of us, an ineradicable smile on his lips, as he leans back to avoid an ardent admirer's kiss, like a cat eluding your caress, refusing to exert himself a fraction of an inch more than necessary to remain unviolated by the worthless attention. "Not now, darling," he actually condescends to explain. "My face is done. Wait until after the show."

There are no easy answers to what the La Fleurs are doing with themselves when they cover their hairy arms with long sleeves and their legs with several pairs of pantyhose. Just as "camp" is a cheerful explanation that hides inexplicable sadness, you explain nothing when you say this drag act is a disguise for shyness or a put-down of women.

"Sal doesn't like me working," John told me. "At the show a lot of the guys, they like you and buy you drinks. He doesn't understand it's just being polite, nothing else." Now that I'm backstage I see the difference between misunderstanding and understanding too much. A lady has to protect herself, after all, in this world where the favors of men mean everything.

"If you were good looking, I'd throw you out," Tom says to a gorgeous muscle-boy, who has just contributed his own



Tom Russell

memorable quote on the state of the entertainer's lingerie. Tom has a pair of pantyhose over his jockey briefs. "Not those!" two or three shout in unison as Tom pulls on a second pair full of runs. He shrugs, "Big deal," and rummages for better ones. John, who is silently and dedicatedly attending to himself at the mirror, refuses to notice. He has already sent his dresser out with precise instructions on the quality of hosiery he will require.

Tom is not comfortable with repar-tees, but as his drag piles on veneer after thin veneer, they come out. He will need them later as he trades quips with the audience. He has just put on a dust-grey housecoat, whose print flowers have been eradicated by time, cigarette burns, and a fabric that made it an irresistible bargain the day it was purchased, but never after. He's parading around like a model on a runway, and the dressing-room crew, as much in need of these nightly escapes into the illusion of glamour as is John (most like to wear drag themselves), are outraged. "You look like my mother," one sneers. They finally succeed in tearing—literally—the garment from Tom's back, while he searches hard for angry wit.

Turning to the boys finally, John dabs a fingertip of perfume here, there, and in the cleavage laid bare by his unladylike décolletage. ("I have a 39-inch chest and wear a 36-inch bra.") His smile teases them even more as they're laid low by this mystery of being a woman; why this frivolity if the audience won't be near enough to be tempted by the scent? Ladies, after all, even for a night, have certain privileges. I notice that "she" is the pronoun John is used to now. At home he didn't like it.

After paying your admission and being
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La Fleurs

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stamped on the wrist by young men who have been assured of a place with the Department of Correction should the Roundtable ever fail, you enter a small bar, which attracts only the cruising and desperate dandies. The kids pass immediately, as through the mouth of a cave, into a large room decorated with darkness and flashing slides, featuring the kind of sound system that doctors say will turn urban America into a subspecies lacking the power of hearing. The Roundtable doesn't attract the pill-popping, fruit-juice crowd, blasé toward sex, and remains strictly gay, with obvious lesbians and men looking for men reeling around the dance floor. The club's most interesting feature is the ladies' room. Because of its lavish dressing table and uniformed maid, it's favored by most of the boys.

When John was in London, he visited Danny LaRue, one of the leading female impersonators, and reports that men in drag are barred from the show, and that obvious gays are treated rudely. "He tries to hide that he's gay, which I think is sad. How dare he dress up in women's clothes, being gay as he is, and try to put on this big act that he's straight? With his two lovers waiting for him backstage!"

For all their indecisiveness about their own lives, the La Fleurs can never be similarly indicted. Not when the ladies' room in their club is the favorite hang-out of the boys.

"Presenting the fabulous La Fleurs..." the emcee shrieks as if he's just had an orgasm, but Tom, the French teacher, doesn't even have enough snob in him to object. "Even I say it that way now. People expect it."

I first saw their act eighteen months ago on New Year's Eve. It was a dismal night for me, all dressed up and nowhere to go after one of the least star-studded performances the Met had to offer that season. (I mean, why else do you pay \$17.50, if not for Nilsson and Corelli?) We stumbled into the Roundtable without warning, and only after paying the admission did we realize we were going to be entertained by drags. I wanted to run. I hated drag acts. They embarrassed me if they were commonplace—it's like peeping into someone's shuttered window—and pained me if well-done, suggesting that the drag had thrown a lifetime of acting skills into making his neurosis an object of public amusement. I never wanted to see a drag act, but between one and eight that morning I came to be a fan of the La Fleurs.

Unlike Lynne Carter and T.C. Jones, whose characterizations were frighteningly real, as if they had to become the very women they imitated to make up for not being women themselves, the La Fleurs don't do impressions. Unlike Holly and Jackie, who are that way all the time, the La Fleurs are most certainly not themselves on stage. You even wonder if they're very good as they move their lips to the record the jockey behind them, the only indispensable member of the cast, is spinning. Most entertainers would be disgraced by the accusation that they're miming. Their act retreats from reality, but they've stolen no one else's fantasies to legitimize their own. They're neither female impersonators nor girls with cocks.

John has the dance steps and chorus-girl gestures down pat as he moves from the jaded defile-me of Shirley Bassey to the frenzied transport of Diana Ross. Tom is not unfeminine, but he has the appeal of a skinny sixteen-year-old with glasses who never will be asked to the prom. Whether you dig her or look the other way in pity depends on how well she understands that she will never be asked.

You can dig the act as pure camp, a spoof on the absurdities our sophistication décales, and many of the audience do.

But they're putting themselves on a level either above or below the one the La Fleurs cling to. John and Tom are dead serious as the platter spins away with what they call "the overture," the room darkens, the spotlight focuses, and they flutter their lashes and undulate and shimmy their way into a world that they know, in their public burden and innermost sense of peace, as perhaps an artist might know the last picture he's painted. With some performers it's an act of self-preservation for you to remove yourself from their level; with the La Fleurs you miss something if you do. A few in the audience share the tears in John's eyes as the act fades away, like a circus spotlight, with "This Is My Life." The music and heart-rending voice, the art, are on a thin black disc, but the moment is in the Roundtable and in John.

It wasn't personal liberation, therefore, or anything near consummate skill that won me over. It was their obvious joy in being drag queens for a night. I've never seen any other professional drag so able or eager to express the feeling. Most performers can't seem to cope with being something they're not; the La Fleurs revel in it. The quality may be at odds with professionalism, and as John's skills develop, you wonder whether the act will suffer.

They come out at the end to answer the audience's questions with enough sly professionalism already to throw in Spanish phrases to a predominately Latin audience, and to praise the virility of Puerto Ricans at the expense of Italians. Their flirting ranges from Dietrich's to that of the masseur at the baths. Are they sophisticated and unassailable sluts or horny studs? Do they know themselves? One of the spectators shouts, "Are the two of you married—husband and wife?" It's a question you'd ask of no other pair of drags.

After the show the two mingle with the audience, showing off the glittering outfits they closed in. Tom is doing a goof in his baritone voice, and John doesn't want to be associated with the kid from the sticks now, as he slinks around, oblivious to their leers, purring to the favored few in a voice that has risen an octave. He is planning to sing in his own voice eventually, and you can see he has the ability. John must finally escape for a breath of the night air, and the passers-by on the swinging East Side gasp at this exotic creature in stage makeup and extravagant hair being waited on by fawning escorts. Nights like this must make days in Queens bearable, you think. Some people must need more than just Sal to keep the circular bed warm.

The end of July is preying on John's mind. "The La Fleurs in Concert" at Town Hall on July 30 may determine whether he can fall completely into this life that means more to him than his butch days in Queens let on, or whether he will go back to doing displays in department stores. Tom is not nearly as possessed by it. "I see myself as maybe not talented enough. I don't see myself as into that life. I'm willing to keep teaching. It's a little more serious." And his mother is by far more proud of his classroom than his drag. But Tom is not untouched by his partner's urgency. "John has more of that kind of personality, and he gives more of himself, and he shows more imagination and creativity. The future of our act is in live voices. All I'll do is mime the words, so I see myself dropping back and letting John handle it as his voice develops."

Another immediate goal is working for Warhol. They know there's no money in it, but they want "the exposure." Andy has seen their show and has tickets to Town Hall, but the closest they've come is an offer of a feature story in *InterView*, Warhol's film monthly. According to Tom, they'd have to buy a \$200 ad first.

The story of the La Fleurs, then, is a tale of three cities: Hell's Kitchen, Queens Boulevard and the East Fifties.

The urge to leave the first for either of the other two is not news, but John and Tom can't decide what city they really want to live in. They keep shuttling back and forth. The reason I love their act is that they confront the rest of us small-minded, worried moralists and psychiatrists. "Why the hell should we be forced to decide," they demand night after night at the Roundtable.

Or, as Tom says, "I feel pretty sometimes—but a boy."

Alecto

Continued from page 7

And they said, too long, and some of them were there for six months. They didn't resent me at all, they felt anyone who was in there even for a couple of hours was one of their people. But then, maybe, it was because most of them had never been in jail before either and already they were in for six months. I don't know what it would be like in a city jail. The last day I was there, that Thursday, this woman came in who was older, most of the women in there were my age, in their twenties, this woman was in her thirties. She was talking about people who were in Nassau County prison and saying stuff like oh she's been going for years. This woman had been in and out of prison like for ten years, they know a whole bunch of people like that. In and out all the time, it's like a country home almost, they go that often, six months out of the year, they may spend in prison, they accept it as part of their lives. But she was cool (the older woman), but I don't know what it would be like with a whole bunch of them who'd been in jail a lot.

SOREL: Hardened criminals? ALECTO: Not hardened criminals, just hardened jail inhabitants. They're not criminals, they're not hardened from lack of morals, they're just hardened from the life they lead in jail. There was one book in the library, the library was very small, very apolitical books, mostly like books, novels I'd read in high school and there was this one very old book about three desperate criminals who came to live with this middle-class man in suburbia. Three convicted criminals, these men were portrayed as three monsters. We just laughed at this whole culture, and here we were inside.

SOREL: It was a cynical, we-know-better kind of laughter? ALECTO: Yeah, yeah, it was like—oh, look, they're all afraid of us. SOREL: So, would you say that almost in a non-political way, there's a lot of political consciousness there? ALECTO: Yes, it just comes natural to people that are oppressed. It's something, the women's movement shows it best. Most women in the movement, in movement organizations, are middle-class, white, educated women who have time and money for this sort of thing. But if you check out who are feminists of the whole sphere of women, women who believe and feel and live the feminist line, you'll find that it's more third world women and poor women who are the true feminists. Like, the woman in suburbia is still proud of her husband, her husband's job and she's still at home not doing anything, that's why she has so much time for the movement. It's a substitute for the church bazaar, it's more in, but they don't have any of the consciousness, they don't know what they're doing. The poor women live strong full lives as human beings.

SOREL: But they don't do anything about their oppression, they accept it. ALECTO: They don't like they accept the games, the macho language, they accept the macho treatment and they accept being considered second class, they accept being a sex object. But they know their men are dumber than they are, that some of them are. They know they can

work just as hard, they can keep a job and they're probably better at raising the children, supporting them and everything, but they play the game.

BILLIE AND SOREL: Why do they do that?

ALECTO: This is part of the whole socialization of women, they're always protecting the men's egos.

SOREL: So they're missing a piece of consciousness.

ALECTO: Oh, sure, sure, it's just a different kind. They've got it in one direction and we've got it in another. We have to learn what they've learned and they have to learn what we've learned. Ours is on an intellectual level, theirs is gut.

SOREL: But we have no guts. ALECTO: Yeah, we've never had to use them, you know.

Fag Hag

Continued from page 11

along, makes you yolk. I was laughing until this hot coal: "Lawrence said to Mike: 'In the early '30's, I had a band called Honolulu Fruit.'" Big yolk, including mine, it simply sounded funny, and I assumed the rest would be innocuous. I mean, considering the credentials and the exposure and the cartwheels, wasn't I safe in assuming she would be impeccable in her attitude toward gays?

Not safe. Here's the punch line: "So I said, 'Lawrence, you should have stuck with that!'"

Stuck with fruit, Lawrence you creep. Creep equals square equals enemy of us hip counter-culture youth here digging the Divine Miss M equals fruit equals homosexual. Want to poke fun at Lawrence Welk? Then call him a fruit.

If you think I'm being doctrinaire and still don't understand why I call Bette Midler a gay-exploiting fag-hag, try this: "In the early '30's, I had a band called the Chattanooga Niggers." Answer: "Lawrence, you should have stuck with that."

Or this: "In the early '30's, I had a band called the Bronx Kikes." Answer: "Lawrence, you should have stuck with that."

Only most of us don't laugh at Nigger and Kike any more.

SHOULD PICKET MIDLER

Merle Miller has tried to tell us it's one and the same thing, what kind of throw-backs are we to sit and laugh and applaud at that sort of not-so-subtle, degrading and oh-so-revealing fag humor? We who picketed Dick Cavett fall at the feet of Bette Midler. And get a stiletto heel figuratively in our jaw, if not literally in our groin. Michael Maye, Bette Midler, how different are they? As for me, I'd rather have an enemy like Max than a friend like Bette. Until she examines her homophobia and can stand up before thousands and say, "I owe a lot to my gay male fans of New York City and am proud of that fact," she's no better than Joseph Epstein or the scoundrels who enacted the offensive skit at the Inner Circle which our brave brothers protested and got mauled over.

As Lige put it in his more temperate and graceful way, "We often come through doors, but we don't have to close and lock them behind us." I respect a person who acknowledges the paths of the past, unashamed, though he may have entered onto a different plateau. In Midler's case, it is not as if she had started low and come high, either. The best and finest audience she'll ever have is a gay audience, just like Garland's and Streisand's! If she doesn't realize that, then fuck her. Whoops, I don't like using fuck in a hostile context, and, besides, that's obviously what she wants. She's suffering from the "a-fuck-can-cure-a-fag" syndrome, friends. That's her problem. And ours so long as we are taken in by this Trojan Horse in vintage saddle and poison spurs.

BY BRIAN STEVENS

In an age of fabricated genius and over-rated treasures, Bette Midler is like a breath of fresh air.

Genuine, touching, The Divine Miss M is just that. Already she has achieved near-legendary status and acquired a legion of fans so devoted and enthusiastic they could rival even Judy's most ardent followers. She's the Toast of New York, the darling of the critics and the object of just about everyone's affection.

When I first saw her, nearly two years ago at one of those infamous midnight fetes at the Continental Baths, she amazed me. Far less polished, still in the process of getting her thing together and rather plump, it was, nevertheless, immediately obvious that here was the world's next Superstar.

Even then she had it. In spades. That voice, the zany off-hand personality, the charm, the versatility, the authority. Most strikingly, however, the heart.

With each subsequent phase of her career—the continuing revelry at the Tubs, giving Johnny Carson a run for his money with her delightfully irreverent appearances on *The Tonight Show* and her eventual above-ground emergence with triumphant engagements at the Downstairs at the Upstairs, the Sahara in Las Vegas (as Carson's opening act) and the Bitter End—it became increasingly apparent. This wondrous little dynamo was on her way to the stars.

On Friday, June 23 at Carnegie Hall, she made it. And history.

From the moment she was announced (to a wildly thunderous standing ovation) until her final curtain-call (the audience still on its feet, cheering—the front rows having rushed the stage to shake her hand), it was sheer magic. She took 2,800 people on a collective trip the likes of which hasn't been experienced in years, and gave a performance that, literally, rocked the town!

In top form, she sang her tits off, sparred with the audience and frolicked like never before. She was *The Pied Piper*, *Diamond Lil* and *Little Red Riding-Hood* all rolled into one.

Miss M on a spree, the world at her feet!

Just what is it that makes her so phenomenal? In a word, everything.

A voice that can breathe out "Delta Dawn" like a lost child one minute, then rip into "Leader of the Pack" like a hot rod the next, make "Something To Remember You By" the saddest, most sweetly hopeless lover's farewell, and then get it off with "Fat Stuff" like the low-downest dirty lady you've ever heard. A superb sense of rhythm and timing that she uses like a dancer, sweeping and gyrating around the stage in a riot of oddly jolting movements that she makes, somehow, graceful. A smile and an aura of warmth and love that could melt the Sun. A face made up of the most endearing parts of a Clara Bow doll and a Jewish Raggedy Anne. An intuitive sense of humor and comic timing that any comedian would give her teeth to have. A range of versatility unmatched by any other popular singer, giving perfect satiric impressions of everything from "The Moon of Manokora" to "Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy of Company B" to "Chapel of Love."

There are several Midler classics already. Her "Superstar" is, by far, the definitive version—like a slow, burning flame; "Hello In There," an unusual and delicate song, she rendered like a stream-of-consciousness thought, and becomes

herself an old and forgotten woman. "I Shall Be Released" is like one long, half-crazed scream; probably the single most emotionally wrenching interpretation of a song I've ever heard. And, of course, her theme, "Friends," which is an explosion of love, energy and good will that's irresistible.

It is, however, her version of "Empty Bed Blues" and the medley of "Do Ya Love Me?"/"Do Ya Wanna Dance?" that I find most remarkable of all.

The former she has virtually turned into a blues ballet. Like someone possessed, she starts it slowly, lazily. Then, she begins to dance with it as it picks up momentum, stirring her coffee-grinder, suddenly dropping into a deep-knee bend, slipping the bacon in with deliciously funky gusto, and socking it home to us at the end, making sure we know all about what happens if you go and tell your best friend Lu. Both vocally and visually, this is one of the most superbly realized

pieces of performing I have ever seen. It never fails to startle me.

The latter is, perhaps, the prime example of the art of Bette Midler. A deftly arranged medley of two rock 'n' roll biggies, it is—like "Empty Bed Blues"—not just a song, but an entire vignette. Begun with a dash of her incisive humor, it blasts into a loving romp on the first song, and then, at its height, segues suddenly into the second. She makes it as heartbreakingly beautiful as the first is wildly abandoned. The medley ends as it begins, slipping back into the rascousness, wherein she employs a clever device, having everyone sing the crescendo along with her—just before she is off in a riot of magnificent frenzy, racing around the stage in a happy celebration of the spirit of sixties rock 'n' roll.

Within the course of this number, she runs the gamut of almost every conceivable human emotion, and achieves each

and every one of them perfectly without making the entire thing seem one bit incongruous. Something that no other singer would have dared attempt, let alone be able to pull off.

But then, like all unique and original artists, Bette transcends previously existing barriers and breaks into uncharted territory, exploring and creating new ground.

Her intuitive sense of what is right for her, coupled with her enormous talent and "that little something extra" that makes for Superstardom are going to carry her even further.

Look out world. She's only just begun!

The production itself was tasty and elegant. The one mistake seemed to be the three-girl back-up group called "M-G-M" (Melissa Manchester, Gail Kanter and Merle Miller). Not that they weren't good; they were excellent. They just simply got lost, because when Bette is on stage you can't take your eyes, or your ears, off her.

Otherwise, it was the usual "family affair." Barry Manilow conducting at the piano, not only her own rhythm section (Michael Federal on bass, Kevin Ellman on drums and Dick Frank on Guitar), but an 18-piece orchestra as well. As a rhythm section they can't be beat, and their solo stint after intermission, along with M-G-M, was really superb, especially Barry and Michael's version of "Sweet Life," one of Barry's own compositions. Some of the orchestrations for full orchestra, however, were not very well defined and tended to get clumsy. It seemed, too, that at times the sound of the brass section was too loud, but none of this actually detracted.

John Graham's lighting was as subtle and inventive as ever—it is his magnificent designing that help to make "Empty Bed Blues" and "Do Ya Love Me?"/"Do Ya Wanna Dance?" the visually stunning experiences they are. William Hennessy was up to his usual high-water mark with Miss M's special comedy material. If he doesn't write for anyone else, he should, for his work is always marvelously contrived and genuinely funny.

I am quite well aware that not everyone in the world is madly in love with Bette Midler. But that's their loss, as far as I'm concerned.

I do find it puzzling, though, that there are some gay people who are threatened and intimidated by her. Leo Skir, in this publication, and Arthur Bell in the *Village Voice*, have both written very strange articles about her during the last year. Each was incredibly vicious, and really had very little to do with what Miss M is—they merely reflected their own problems.

I've also found some gay people who seem to feel that she has, in a sense, "deserted" them. This baffles me completely, on the one hand, and rather infuriates me on the other.

Bette is the first one to admit that she came up from the tubs and owes her early success to her gay audience (she has said so many times on TV). But she is an artist, and as such she belongs to the world—not just to one portion of it. Any growing artist must be involved with all kinds of life styles and all kinds of people.

Far from denying the role gay people play in her career, she constantly jokes about it on stage and plays many of her comedy lines just for us. To complain because she no longer plays the Tubs or hasn't the time or inclination to appear at gay benefits is asinine!

An artist owes you nothing but his art—and that only if he chooses to give it. His life, like yours, is his own, to do with as he pleases.



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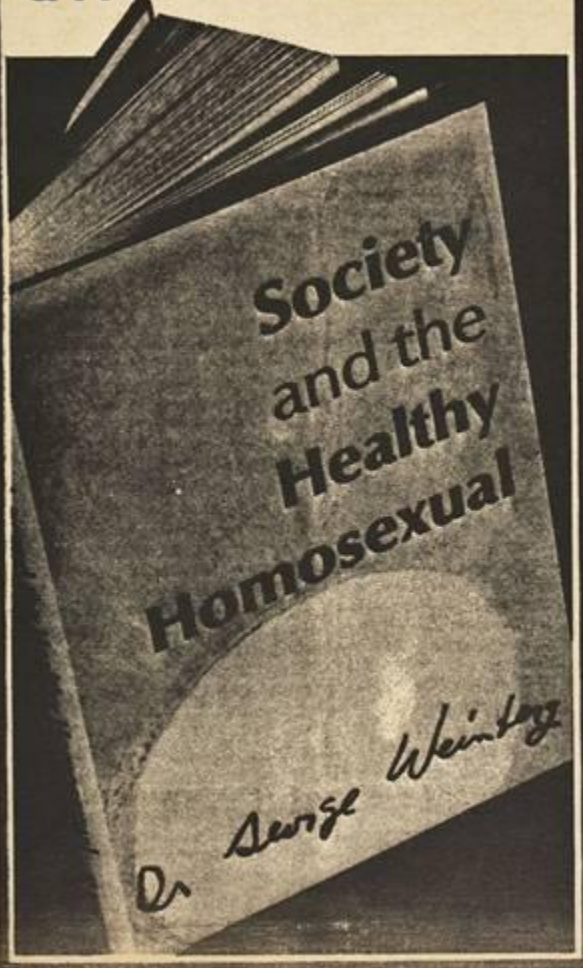
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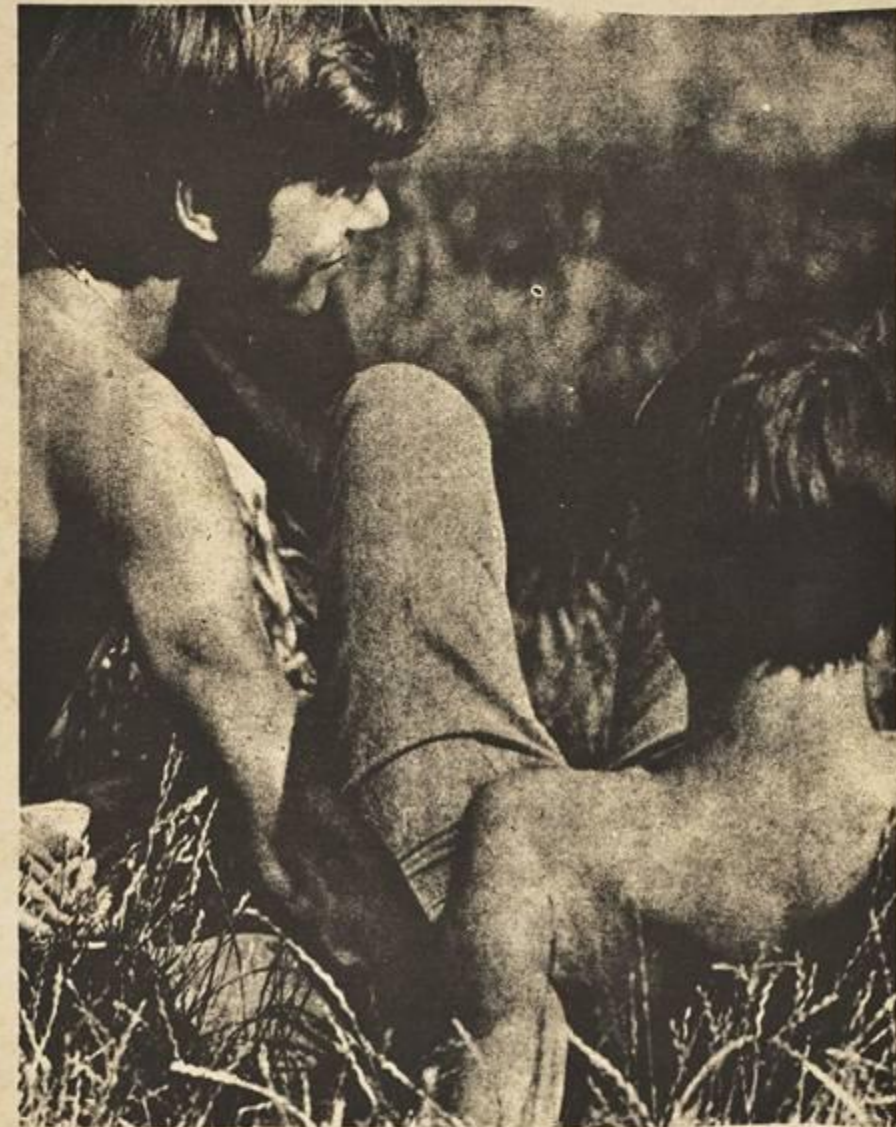
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