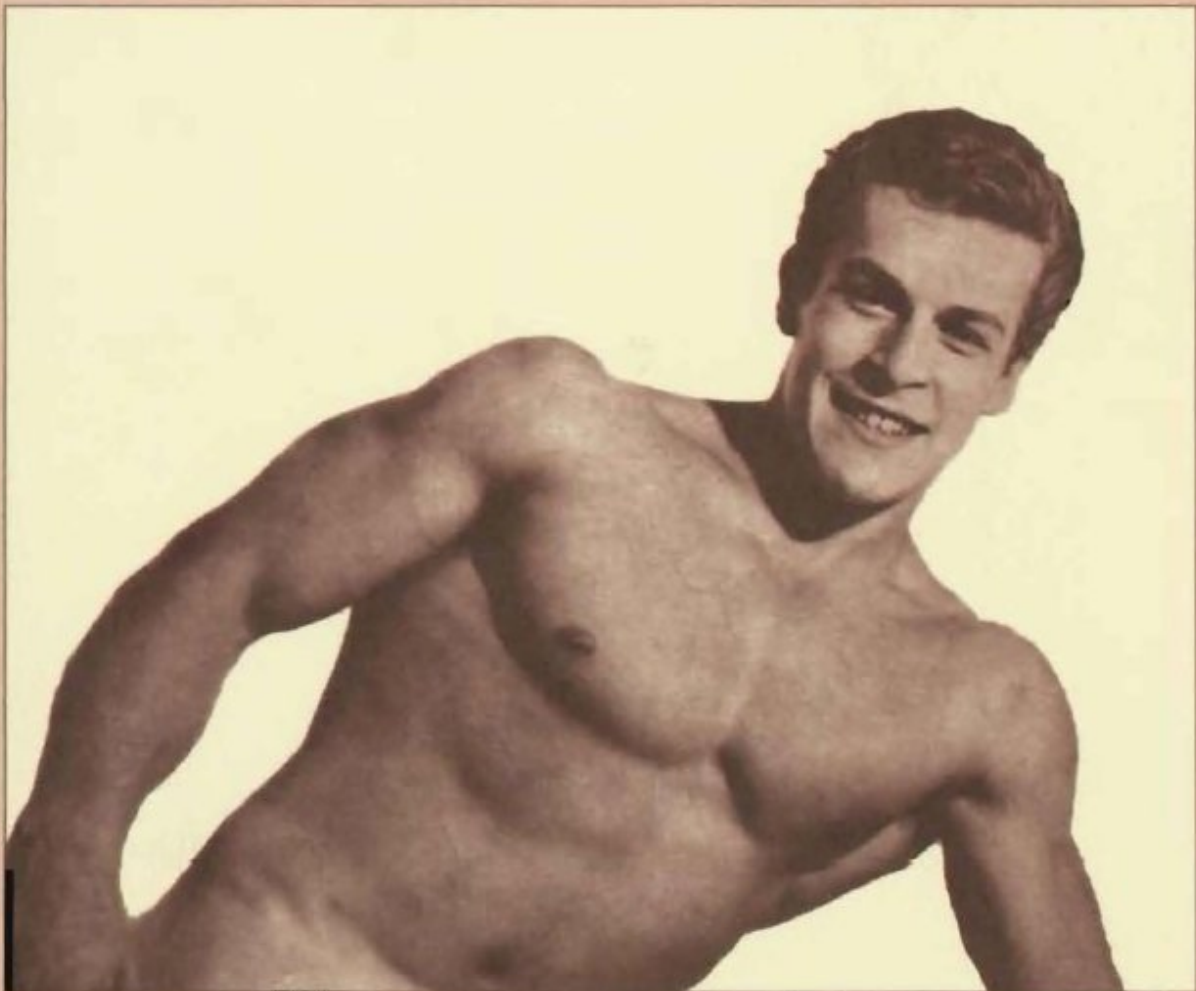


A Brief History of GAY

CANADA'S FIRST GAY TABLOID, 1964-1966

Donald W. McLeod



The Rise of TWO

A publication that appeared in Toronto in July 1964 posed a much greater potential threat to GAY's quest for the attention of gay readers, particularly in Toronto. Gayboy Publishing (later Kamp Publishing Company) launched TWO magazine, which listed its editorial office as the Melody Room club, 457 Church Street. Its name was inspired by the publication TWO (*Truth Will Out*), a supplement to the American homophile magazine ONE, which first appeared in April 1954.³⁸

Subtitled "The Homosexual Viewpoint in Canada," TWO hoped to find a community to "join in an effort to establish the rights and responsibilities of homosexuals." TWO's specific purpose was to

promote knowledge and understanding of the homosexual viewpoint among the general public and to educate homosexuals as to their responsibilities as variants from the current moral and social standards.³⁹

Richard (Rick) Kerr, the owner of the Music Room and Melody Room clubs in Toronto, was the publisher of *TWO*. He was a Scottish-born entrepreneur with design and photography skills.⁴⁰ Under the pseudonym Alex Edmond, Kerr used these skills to ensure that *TWO* exhibited a professional standard of design and content through its eleven-issue history. *TWO* was published irregularly in the standard physique format (21 x 14 cm) and was printed in black on white paper. After starting at sixteen pages (plus an eight-page insert) *TWO* expanded to its regular size, 36 pages, and sold for 75 cents. The text was interspersed with quality physique photographs (without frontal nudity) supplied by Kerr's studios, R.A. (Rik Art) Studios and Can-art Photographers. Editorial content was eclectic and mostly of local interest. A typical early issue contained an editorial, a "Cameo" section on local drag performers (with photographs), one or more book reviews, the gossip column "Grapes from the Vine," the local happenings column "Very Much Out ... and About," as well as the physique pictures. The novel "Wrong Road to Happiness" by Edmond Kaye (another pseudonym for Richard Kerr) was serialized beginning in issue one.

Clifford Collier (under the pseudonym Claude Collier) compiled the editorial content of the first three issues of *TWO*. Collier recalls that *TWO* was started very much as a reaction against contemporary articles or publications that spread negative stereotypes of homosexuals or, in the case of the tabloids, exploited the camp "scandal of 'The Set.'" Even so, Collier believes that Kerr started *TWO* as a kind of in-house newsletter:

I think he was really aiming at the membership of the clubs. If it was going to go further, that was fine. I mean on a news-stand, or something. But it clearly wasn't the type of magazine that the news-stands would pick up. It was circulated primarily through the two clubs – the Music Room and the Melody Room – that Rick Kerr owned.⁴¹

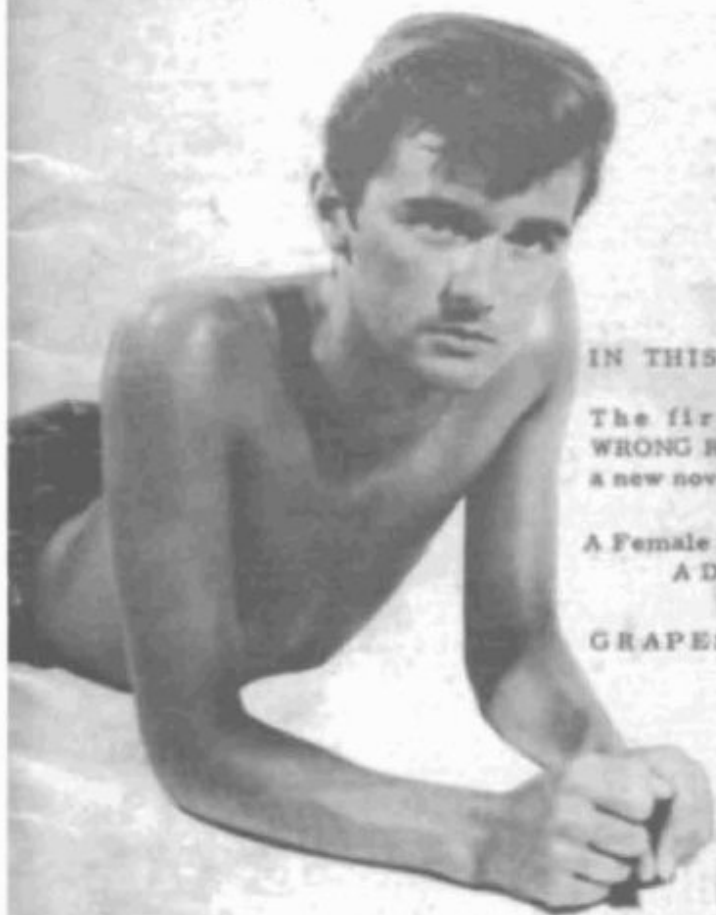
Collier fell into this work accidentally. He had no previous editorial experience but had worked as an unofficial greeter at the old Maison d'Lys club in Toronto, which later became the Music Room. He recalls that he would assemble and type the text for each issue at his apartment, and Kerr would take the typescript, lay it out, insert the photos, and arrange for printing.

Clifford Collier does not recall meeting any of the Toronto staff members associated with *GAY*, but he does remember that its original incarnation

two

75¢

THE HOMOSEXUAL VIEWPOINT IN CANADA



IN THIS ISSUE:

The first instalment of
WRONG ROAD TO HAPPINESS
a new novel by EDMOND KAYE

A Female Impersonator is NOT
A Drag Queen.

GRAPES from the vine.

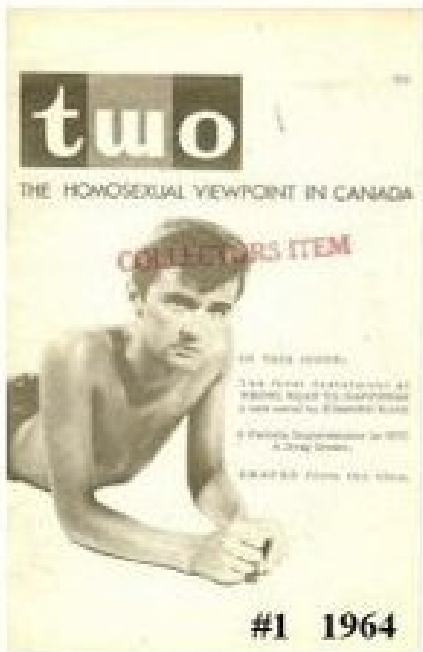
TWO, number 1 (July 1964)

as a pink newspaper “grabbed everybody’s eye.” He doesn’t think there was much competition for readers between *GAY* and *TWO* as they were designed for different audiences: a general audience for *GAY*, and the local Toronto club crowd for *TWO*. Collier remembers *GAY* as being “more tabloidish, and you looked at it and it just struck me as being something very gossipy.”

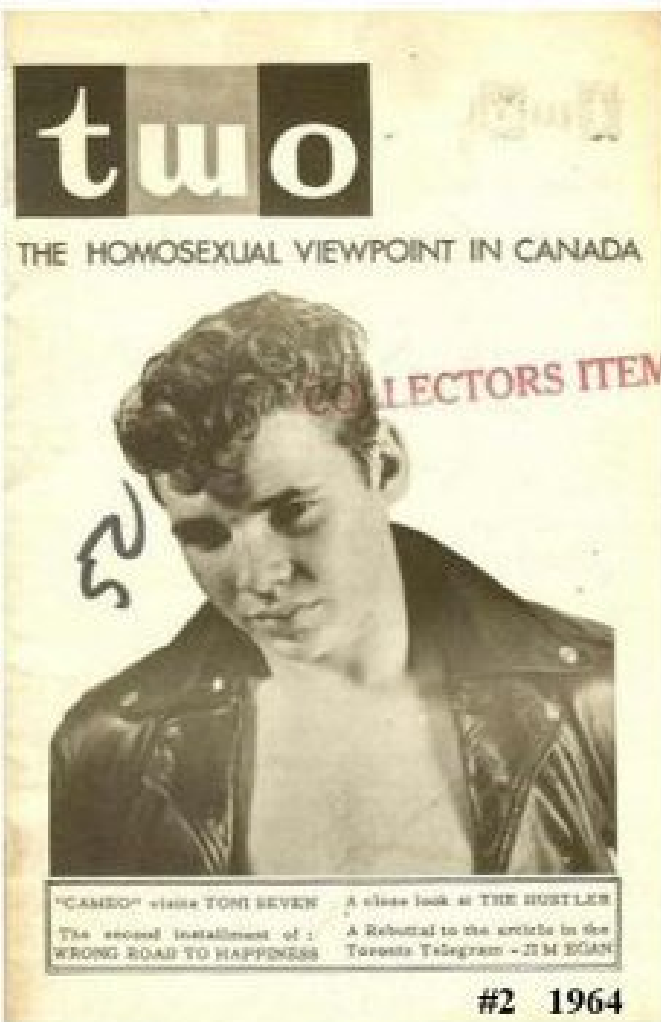
Collier left *TWO* after issue three (1964). As he recalls:

I only did the three issues.... I broke from *TWO* partly because Kerr was making a physique magazine of it. He seemed less and less interested in what I’d call copy, and [was] more and more pushing the photographs. And that didn’t interest me.⁴²

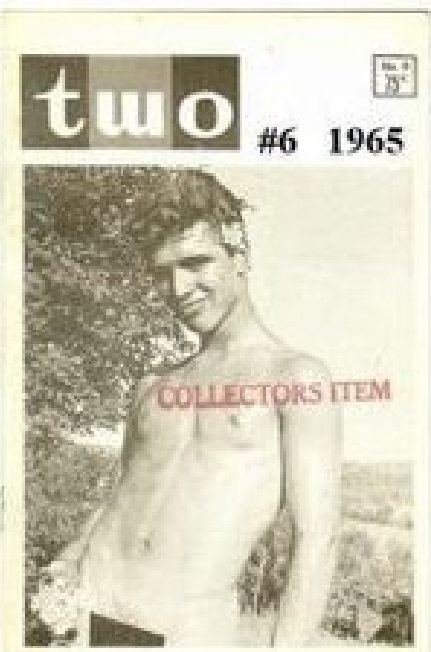
With issue four, Alex Edmond (Kerr) assumed the editorship. And although many of the established features continued, the physique photographs certainly came to dominate *TWO*’s space, particularly in the Special Supplements, usually eight to twelve page inserts that highlighted the models of the Can-art or Frank Borck Enterprises studios in Toronto. The professional design and content never slipped and were certainly of a higher standard than that exhibited by *GAY*. But *TWO* was never really able to compete with *GAY*, certainly not internationally. *TWO* focussed on local content, which led to its dual failure to establish a profile in the American market and to secure reliable American news-stand distribution. The final issue of *TWO* (number eleven) was published in July–August 1966. The reason for the magazine’s demise is unclear, although Collier speculates that Richard Kerr sold his interest in the clubs and gave up the publication as well.



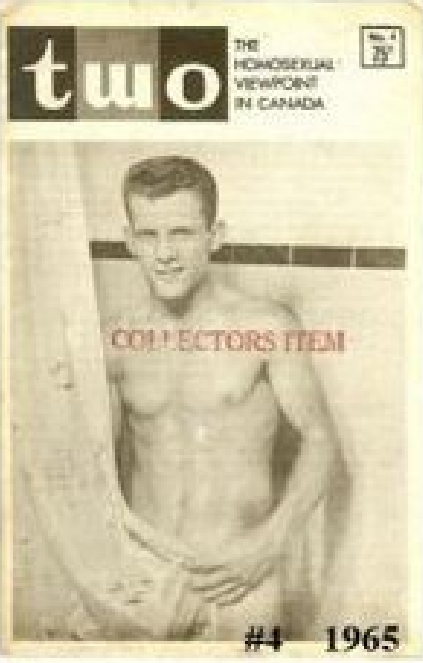
#1 1964



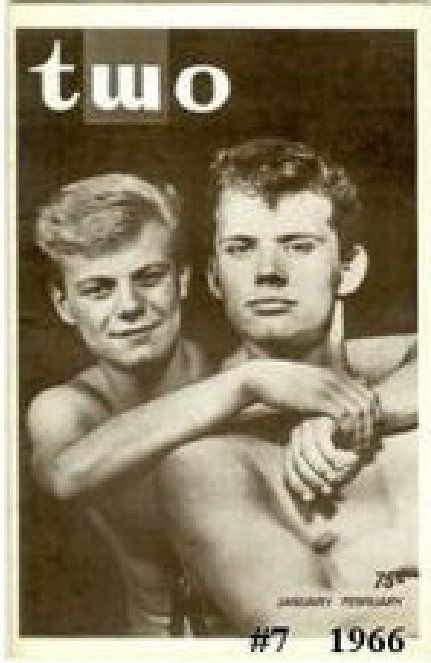
#2 1964



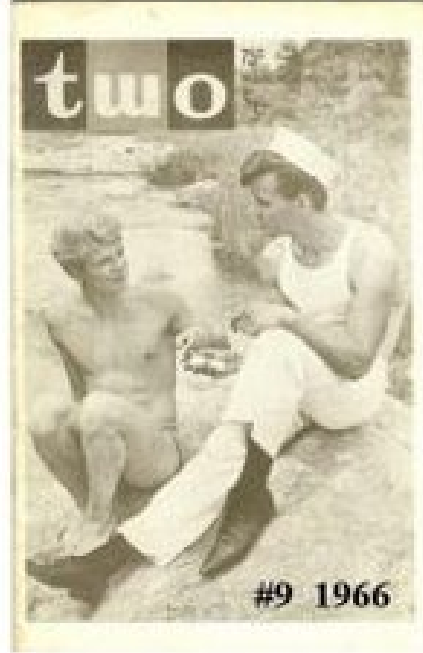
#6 1965



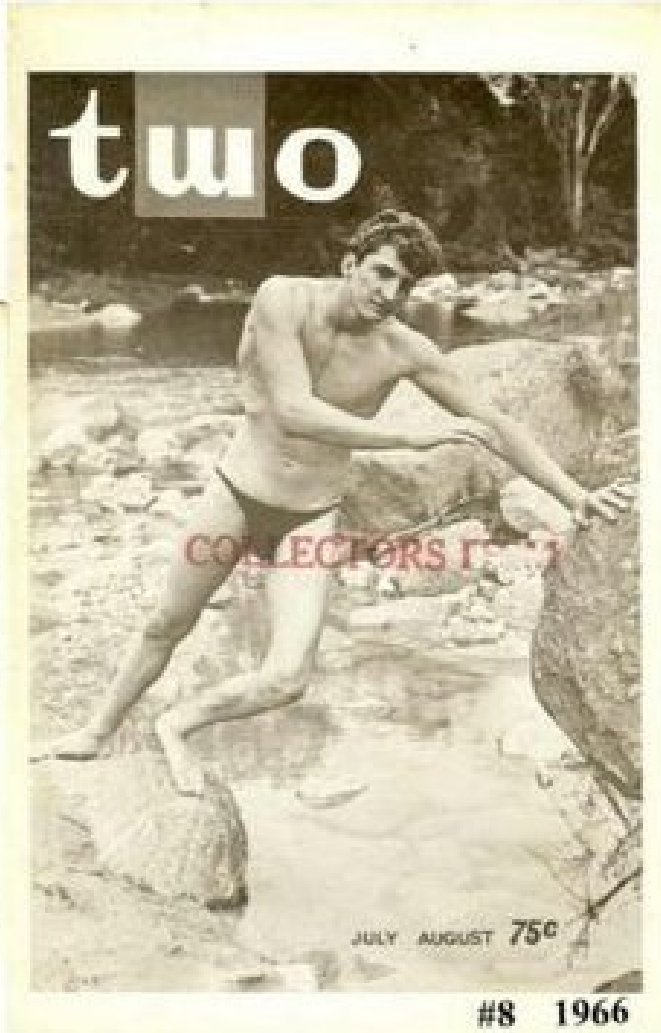
#4 1965



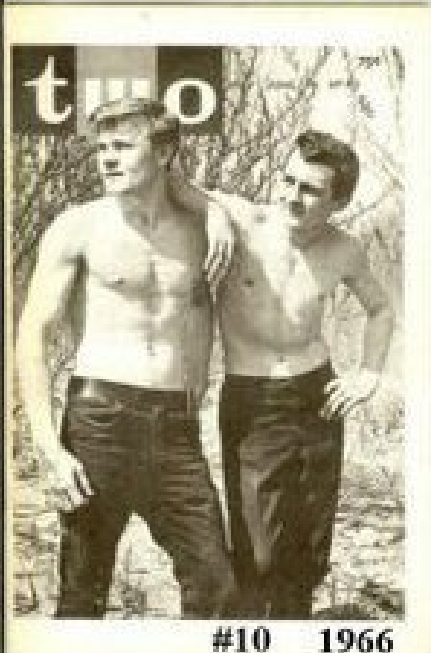
#7 1966



#9 1966



#8 1966



#10 1966