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Fifth Freedom, 1973-09-23

The Mattachine Society of the Niagara Frontier

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FIFTH FREEDOM

NEWSLETTER OF THE NIAGARA
VOLUME 3, NUMBER 12

FRONTIER GAY COMMUNITY
SEPT. 23, 73, BUFFALO

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THE FIFTH FREEDOM IS PUBLISHED
BY

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WE WELCOME RESPONSE: If you have any comments or contributions, send them to the above address, attn: Fifth Freedom

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to Mattachine Society.

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Stage Pigalle	Everyman's Bookstore
Amherst Steam Club	Libby's Bookstore
Lexington Food Co-op	Book Art Store
Norton Union (U.B.)	

The following is the continuation of a series of questions and answers about homosexuality. This series is reprinted from a booklet

distributed by GAA in New York, "20 Questions About Homo sexuality." MSNF now has reprints of the booklet available locally.

QUESTION #15: DOES OUR SOCIETY
DISCRIMINATE AGAINST HOMOSEXUALS?

"In the United States," says psychiatrist ~~Wainwright~~ Churchill, "a person of known homosexual persuasion-or even suspected of such-is likely to suffer common abuse as well as abridgement of his human rights more often and in many more ways than a member of any other minority." The very existence of the sodomy laws in most of our United States is evidence that it is official government policy to discriminate against us by denying us our basic human right to consensual sexual activity in private. Even where such laws also apply to heterosexual acts, enforcement is almost exclusively against homosexuals, often accompanied by acts of police brutality and harassment, illegal entrapment and fanatical penalties that could, in some states, send two 15-year-old boys convicted of sodomy to jail until the age of 65.

Because these laws do not serve the proper purpose of protecting the public from any tangible danger, they are violative of our Constitution's due-process clause, and subject their victims to unreasonable seizure. Because they derive solely from theologically-based taboos, they violate the prohibition against the establishment of religion. They violate the right to privacy and free association. They all too often are exploited by police officers, bailbondsmen, lawyers and magistrates. They make fearful "criminals" of millions of law-abiding citizens.

For all these reasons, organizations including the American Law Institute, the International Congress of Criminal Law, the American Law Committee, the National Commission on Reform of the Federal Criminal Laws, the American Civil Liberties Union, the National Institute for Mental Health and the American Mental Health Foundation have unanimously urged sodomy-law repeal. A number of states, including Connecticut, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois and Oregon, have responded by repealing their sodomy laws, and other states are in the process of doing so. These lawmakers are answering with reason rather than bigotry and refusing to confess themselves "scandalized" by a proposal that in England was passed with the support of the Archbishop of Canterbury. (Cont. on p. 4)

The sodomy laws have the added effect of inhibiting us from calling the police when robbed or attacked, for fear of being accused of a crime ourselves. But even when the police are present, a denial of equal protection under the law is often official policy. Officers have stood by while gay women and men were beaten and robbed by gangs of "queer-baiters!"

Assault, theft and even murder have been condoned by police, prosecutors and judges when the criminals have been the supposed "victims" of homosexual seduction. Gay men and women are subjected to forced "treatment" under court orders. Gay bars are harassed on trumped-up charges, underworld exploitation of the gay community is condoned, and groups of us demanding our rights are brutally beaten by the police themselves.

The catalogue of official discrimination also includes denial of employment known homosexuals by virtue of state and federal civil service regulations. Gay women and men are denied the right to serve voluntarily in the armed forces, and if we are in the services we are subject to discharge without veterans rights or benefits on mere suspicion of being homosexual. However stable or hardworking, we are denied the right to keep our own children or adopt others. We have been barred from holding public office, denied the right to public housing, expelled from or denied admittance to state-supported schools which often systematically deny their students the right to learn the facts about homosexuality.

Private institutions are no better, and often worse. Employers and employment agencies use draft and civil-service records or simply their own "impressions" to deny jobs to qualified gay people. Landlords refuse us housing; bonding and insurance companies deny us coverage; hotels, restaurants and bars refuse us admittance to places of public accommodation. Sometimes the sodomy laws are used as an excuse by such bigots, but even without these prejudices. The only way they can be prevented from doing so is by the passage of laws which will protect the rights of sexual minorities, just as they protect the rights of racial and religious minorities.

Repeal of sodomy laws and passage of civil-rights protection will not immediately change the prevalent attitudes toward us—pity, disgust, discomfort, fear and humorous disrespect—but they will help to recast these attitudes by serving notice that a government supposedly built on the principles of freedom, justice and equality will no longer allow a tenth of its population to be used as scapegoats; to be ostracized, dehumanized, persecuted vindictively and subjected as Kinsey and his fellow researchers put it, "to cruelties not often matched."

ON THAT PLAYBOY PANEL.....Greg Kolovakos

The gay community in Buffalo anxiously awaited the appearance of the September issue of Playboy not to see the centerfold but to read the Playboy Panel on "New Sexual Life Styles." The panel of 12 spokespeople for different life styles included Madeline Davis of MSNF fame. What could have been an important, progressive discussion was a disappointment - nothing more than a study of people talking to impress themselves.

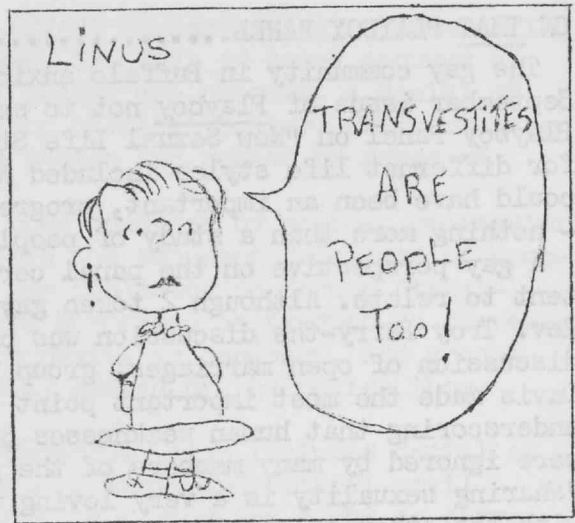
A gay perspective on the panel certainly has little of positive content to relate. Although 2 token gays were on the panel-Ms. Davis and Rev. Troy Perry-the discussion was obviously dedicated to directionless discussion of open marriages, group sex, and continual statistics. Ms. Davis made the most important point of the pseudo-liberal discussion by underscoring that human weaknesses of jealousy and possessiveness simply were ignored by many members of the panel. Ms. Dodson's ideal that "sharing sexuality is a very loving thing" seemed almost out of place with the other panelists views, as well.

The discussion on bisexuality fully illustrates the lack of purpose of the panel. There was no dialectic; members either praised bisexuality (Ms. Dodson: "Bisexuality-relating to both sexes equally-is the fullest form of sexual expression..."); decried it (Ms. Davis: "Bisexuality could fuck you up worse than heterosexuality."); or cited statistics of questionable import. Troy Perry did succeed in making a major point - that among gays it is fashionable to say that one is bisexual so that one can be at least half normal according to straight society.

As for the ensuing discussion of homosexuality, Ms. Davis scored well in her statements about gay women. Perry, on the other hand, lost all credibility when he stated his belief that "as far as politics is concerned, the homosexual community is, in effect, a bloc." Although Ms. Davis calls herself "a moderate separatist," she proudly announced her ideal sexual life style as total homosexuality for at least the next 200 years in which the sexes could learn proper respect for each other. Her sexual hostility is as dismaying as heterosexual scorn of homosexuality.

The Playboy panel made no progress toward an understanding of contemporary sexual behavior, but the article is well worth reading if for no other reason than the superb statements of William Simon...his concluding remarks are important to a proud gay life: "...what we are and what we do sexually should be sufficiently connected to the rest of our lives that we are able to recognize ourselves when we're being sexual; that our sexuality not be something shadowed by silence; that it be something we don't have to hide from others, and still less from ourselves."

NOTE OF INTEREST: The business meeting of the American Sociological Association, held in the New York Hilton late in August, unanimously passed a resolution calling upon the program committee for the 1974 meeting in Montreal to consider sessions, panels, seminars, and contributed papers, on newer topics in the gay area--sources of homophobia, discrimination against gay people. The resolution was prepared by members of the Gay Sociologists Caucus and presented by Philip Parker of Rosary Hill College. Also in evidence at the annual meeting



were members of the recently formed Gay Academic Union, which will host a national convention for gay academicians over the Thanksgiving holiday in New York. The October 24 program of "Stonewall Nation" (every Wednesday at 9:30PM, WBFO-FM, 88.7 on dial) will give a preview of the G.A.U. convention

BIGOTS IN N. TONAWANDA? - the Fifth Freedom makes it a practice to send gratis copies of the F.F. to all area politicians. Recently 3 aldermen from North Tonawanda returned their copies, unopened - they are: Raymond Klinek - J. Brzozowski - Walter Kuebler. Could it be that these 3 'fine' gentlemen are so unresponsive to their gay constituents that they don't wish to keep up on the news of our local gay community?????

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GENERAL STAFF NEEDED

We need people to serve as staff members at the Gay Community Services Center during Center hours. Hours are divided into shifts of 3 hours each. If you have time during the week and/or on Saturdays to serve as a staff member, stop by the Center or call and talk to a staff member about what's involved.

COUNSELING SERVICE

Starting the 1st week of October, counseling training sessions will be given at the Gay Community Services Center. If you are interested in becoming

a part of the counseling service at the Center, leave your name and phone number with a staff member at the Center, or call 881-5335 for more information.

DONATIONS NEEDED

We need donations of furniture, books, posters, etc. - and of course, money to keep the Center operating. Anything usable that you can donate will be greatly appreciated. We need support from all the gay community to make this Center a successful venture. Please do your part to help!

SERVICES CENTER OPEN

HOURS: MON. - FRI., 1 PM - 10 PM

SAT., 1 PM - 6 PM

..... MAKE THE CENTER A PART OF YOU"

ORGANIZATIONAL ACTIVITIES * COUNSELING

COFFEEHOUSE EVERY WED.

Every Wed. night from 7PM-10PM there is a general coffeehour at the Center for the purpose of getting gay people together to rap, be with friends and to meet new people. It's open to all and we encourage you to attend and enjoy an atmosphere of togetherness.

PASS IT ON

If you have a skill, talent, hobby, etc. that you want to pass on to your fellow gays we encourage you to start a class at the Center so your fellow gays can benefit from your knowledge. Depending on time and space avail-

able at the Center, a weekly time slot can be provided for you to pass your skill, hobby, etc. on to others. Inquire at the Center for more information.

CLASSES STARTING

Classes in GARDENING and INTERIOR DESIGN will be starting soon at the Center. Definite times will be set at a later date according to the schedules that can be arranged between the participants and the space availability at the Center. You can sign up for these classes NOW at the Center.

THE LIT KIT #5: THE TRIALS OF OSCAR WILDE

by Bernard

- "I can resist everything except temptation."
" We are all in the gutter, but some of us are looking at the stars."
" In America the President reigns for four years, and Journalism governs for ever and ever."
"The only thing to do with good advice is to pass it on."
" Duty is what one expects from others--it is not what one does oneself."

Quotations from Oscar Wilde's plays

The flippant tone of Wilde's writing becomes painfully muted during and after his prison ordeal. In "The Ballad of Reading Gaol" (pronounced: Jail) he describes a fellow prisoner who had been sentenced to death:

He walked amongst the Trial Men

In a suit of shabby grey;
A cricket cap was on his head,
And his step seemed light and gay;
But I never saw a man who looked
So wistfully at the day.

I never saw a man who looked
With such a wistful eye
Upon that little tent of blue
Which prisoners call the sky,
And at every drifting cloud that
went
With sails of silver by.

.....
Like two doomed ships that pass
in storm
We had crossed each other's way:
But we made no sign, we said no
word,
We had no word to say;
For we did not meet in the holy
night.
But in the shameful day.
.....

I know not whether Laws be right
Or whether Laws be wrong;
All that we know who lie in gaol
Is that the wall is strong;
And that each day is like a year
A year whose days are long.

But this I know, that every Law
That men have made for Man,
Since first Man took his brother's
life,
And the sad world began,
But strews the wheat and saves
the chaff
With a most evil fan.

The vilest deeds like poison weeds,
Bloom well in prison-air;
It is only what is good in Man
That wastes and withers there:
Pale Anguish keeps the heavy gate
And the Warder is Despair.

.....

(continued on next page)

LIT KIT, cont.

In Reading gaol by Reading town
There is a pit of shame,
And in it lies a wretched man
Eaten by teeth of flame,
In a burning winding-sheet he lies,
And his grave has got no name.

And all men kill the thing they
love,

By all let this be heard,
Some do it with a bitter look,
Some with a flattering word,
The coward does it with a kiss,
The brave man with a sword!

And there, till Christ call forth
the dead,

In silence let him lie:
No need to waste the foolish tear,
Or heave the windy sigh:
The man had killed the thing he
loved,
And so he had to die.

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Jean Genet and The Gay Politic

Total freedom has nothing to do with the world beyond us but rather can come only through inward exploration. Or, at least, this is what the French novelist Jean Genet attempted to demonstrate in Miracle of the Rose written in 1943 in the solitude of a prison cell. Genet tried desperately to create his own beautiful world out of the pain and degradation of years in prison, but the same author of the '70s has rejected his novels as mere literature. He has, in fact, moved beyond his own imaginary miracles.

Miracle of the Rose is set in the state prison of Fontevrault which is fused in Genet's mind with Mettray, a prison colony for boys. For those studying sexual communities, Genet's depiction of the homosexual hierarchy in the prison is unequalled. Millet in Sexual Politics points out the exact correspondence between the sexist stratification within the prison and the sexist heterosexual society. In Fontevrault, the young Genet is in love with one prisoner, Harcamone, whom he only knows from a distance and who is to be executed for killing a guard. The early character of Genet underscores his loathing and disgust of his homosexuality. But Genet as author sees Fontevrault not as a homosexual society but as a mystic community ripe for the occurrence of miracles of the mind.

The author does not hesitate to describe explicitly his sexual activities, but there is never anything positive, meaningful or gay about them. All sexual encounters in the prison are related to the power structure within that society. The young, frightened Genet wanted only to prove his own "virility" and worth by means of some great act; he sought ascension through degradation. Hence, the very act of writing this novel, the grand act which would elicit an angry reaction from society; expiation could come through the straight world's scorn of the literery faggot.

But Genet's ethic turns in upon itself, for in attempting to destroy categories and traditions, the author reshapes the private vision. He is another of the French existentialists who recognizes the surrounding chaos and is nevertheless willing to play with that chaos, stretch

(con't. on p. 14)

POET'S
CORNER

A T A G A Y B A R

Good Friends
Kind friends
Merry friends all
You are all very greedy for each
 other, as someone once remarked
And you have all become inured
To the shallowness and hardness
Of people who use you and
Then cast you aside
Like disposable tissue
Or a Christmas toy that has
 fallen out of favor.

Yet instead of rising
To set a new example of caring
For others to follow
You, my friends, true friends
Merely follow in the patterns
 set by others.
In being used, you use others,
Or should I say
After realizing that you have
 been used
You feel that there is no recourse
 but to fight back
In the same fashion
Not realizing that you are merely
 stooping to their level
And in so doing, debase only
 yourselves.

So, my friends, do not allow the
 flashing lights
And the loud music
And the quaint newspaper headlines
 on the walls
To turn your heads.
Do not think for a moment that
 those inquisitive looks

Could ever signify anything but
 the voyeuristic stare
Of a window shopper, dazzled by
 your pretty exterior.
I have seen enough, traveled enough
 in my short (but full)
Life of twenty two years to know
That in this, the first mass-produced,
 disposable society
People can be thrown away, too.

So it shall remain
Unless we can learn to rise above
The tawdry, tinsel sham of the very
 bar I sit in
As I compose this poem.

Now, dear friends, since you
 must know by now
That I am, by nature, not an optimist
I do not hold great hopes for you.
Either you will become hardened to
 the uncaring ways of others
And imitate them and their ways
Or you will remain forever dissatisfied
An Angry idealist.

Perhaps, friends, you will become
 like me
A trifle cynical
Wise to the ways of the world
Unwilling to allow yourselves to
 be let down again.
If you are truly sane, you will
 learn to laugh at yourselves
At the absurdity, the utter idiocy,
Of hoping to find love, of all things,
At a gay bar.

F. B.

it, permute it. Genet's fictive creations are a substitute universe with which he can make amazing combinations, both physically and philosophically.

Genet, as prisoner and homosexual author, does succeed in creating through the imagination his private vision and his own mythology. He transforms, at least in his mind, Harcamone's chains into a garland of white roses and, on the eve of Harcamone's execution, Genet travels via the imagination into Harcamone's body, and finds a Mystic Rose where the heart should be. By means of the imagination, Genet has at that moment of discovery moved beyond his self-hatred as a queer to a respect of himself and an understanding of the beauty (the rose itself) within the individual.

But to practical people Genet's vision appears supremely impractical. Indeed, to live in such a fantastic world it must be a closed world and existence can occur only in the individual imagination. The reader, especially the gay reader, can easily imagine along with Genet up to a certain point, but the author begins to lose the reader in the privacy of the former's fictive world. However, look beyond the novel itself, the almost random placement of ideas on the page. For what has happened to Genet as a person is most important: the private, imagined miracles allowed him as an individual to respect and to love himself as a gay male. But the now politicized Genet realizes that the salvatory faculty of the imagination is not enough; therefore, he has rejected his novels and moved into the realm of radical politics. The movement is clear, is understandable, and is tremendously important to our gay lives. For Genet discovered that it was not enough to view himself proudly as a gay person; it is necessary to move beyond the private vision into the world where people recognize and work for what they believe.

Jean Genet in his search for the cosmic pineal gland, the point at which the mind joins the body, found a visionary answer in his imagination. But miraculously he learned that the true connecting point lies in society itself.

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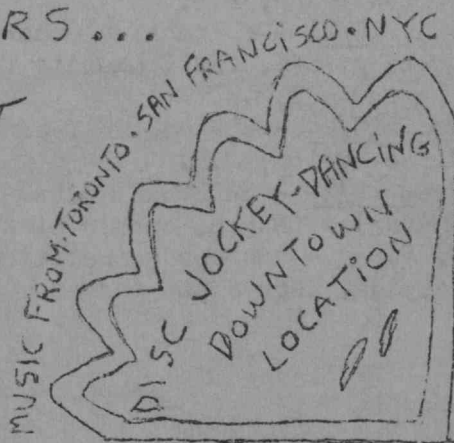


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CALENDAR

Sat., 9/22 - G.L.F. Dance, 8pm
Millard Fillmore Room, Norton Hall
Univ. of Buffalo

Sun., 9/23 - Mattachine General
meeting 8PM, Gay Community Center,
Progran - "Gays on Film"; an origi-
nal 5 min. film produced on the
Univ. of Rochester campus.

Wed. 9/26 - GLF Meeting, 8PM,
Norton Union, U.B.

Sat., 9/29 - Coffeehouse, with
folk music & poetry readings -
Unitarian Church, cor. Elmwood &
W. Ferry - 9PM

Tues., 10/2 - Mattachine Board
Meeting, 8PM, Gay Community Center

Wed., 10/3 - GLF Meeting, 8PM,
Norton Union, U.B.

Sun. 10/7 - Mattachine General
Meeting, 8PM, Gay Community Center
Program - T.B.A.

Wed. 10/10 - GLF Meeting, 8PM
Norton Union, U.B.

Tues. 10/16 - Mattachine Board
Meeting, 8PM, Gay Community Center

Wed. 10/17 - GLF Meeting, 8PM
Norton Union, U.B.

SUn. 10/21 - Mattachine General
Meeting, 8PM, Gay Community Center
Program - T.B.A.

Wed. 10/24 - GLF Meeting, 8PM
Norton Union, U.B.

Sat. 10/27 - HALLOWEEN GALA - 9PM
Unitarian Church, corner Elmwood &
W. Ferry - costume competition,
dancing, beer & pop served

SISTERS OF SAPPHO - listener call-
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Mon. night, 12Mid - 3AM WBFO-FM
88.7 on FM dial

STONEWALL NATION - gay radio show
encompassing various topics of
interest to gays. Every Wed., 9:30PM
WBFO-FM, 88.7 on FM dial. A list of
future shows includes:

Sept. 26 - Ageism: A panel of
gay men ranging in
age from teens to
middle age

Oct. 3 - "Our Lady of the Powers"

Oct. 10 - Gay Community Services
Center: A Progress Report

Oct. 17 - The Bar Scene: Varied
Perspectives

Oct. 24 - Gay Activism in the
Academy

Oct. 31 - The Masque Fall

ATTENTION WOMEN: Michelle is looking
to compile a magazine of Buffalo
lesbian art and poetry. She needs
contributions and/or help in putting
the magazine together - call 839-2869
or 831 -3405

MEMBERSHIP DRIVE: Through its many
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Buffalo a better place for gay
people to be. To express your sup-
port of Mattachine's efforts, join
those efforts by becoming a member.
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pledge for the rewards of helping
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