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6-1-1977

### Fifth Freedom, 1977-06-01

The Mattachine Society of the Niagara Frontier

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Publication of the Mattachine Society of the Niagara Frontier

JUNE 1977

## New York Bath Burns

At least 9 men were killed and 10 others were injured when a four-alarm fire destroyed the century-old Everard Baths on New York's West Side. The tragedy occurred early on the morning of May 25 and came just one week before a sprinkler system was to be installed.

Scores of men, some clad only in towels or robes, fled the three-story building while others clung to window sills awaiting rescue by the more than 200 firefighters battling the blaze. New York Mayor Abe Beame termed the disaster a terrible tragedy and ordered fire marshalls to determine whether any charges should be lodged against the bath house owner.

Fire authorities in New York say the sprinkler system, which had been ordered installed in the ancient building 13 years ago, would probably have prevented the fire.

Irving Fine, the owner of the baths, had been ordered again early last year to install such a system and said that the system would have been operative by June 1.

George Ames, the manager of the Club Baths in Boston, was in the Everard at the time of the fire. According to Ames, there was no panic by the

customers at the Everard. If there was panic, he said, "it was shown by the young employees who went hysterical."

Ames was one of a score of men rescued from the burning building when a New York City Rescue Squad used a cherry picker to crash through the boarded-up windows of the second floor. "The management at the Everard," added Ames, "showed no regard for the customers. They are just a bunch of straight people coining money at the expense of the gay community."

Ames described the Everard as "a pigsty - a shabby, shoddy, run-down place" that had no fire escapes and no emergency lighting system.

Even before the fire was finally brought under control, gays from across New York City rallied to give blood, raise funds, and attempt to identify the victims. Others expressed concern that the publicity, and the possible legal action mentioned by Mayor Beame, would force a crackdown on gay-oriented establishments in general. Some spokespersons for gay groups in New York said that the fire could be "used as a political excuse" to harass other gay baths and bars.



WHAT WOULD ANITA SAY?

### in this issue

This month's issue of *Fifth Freedom* returns to 12 pages with a variety of articles, news and columns. We're just making it out intime for Buffalo Gay Pride Week 77, so check page 5 for details of events. On page 6 is "No Men Ever Loved Each Other as I and Some of These", a stirring collection of homoerotic writings by Walt Whitman. "Gay Bars as Gay Lib - The Future of an Illusion" is D. Rothenberg's probing look at

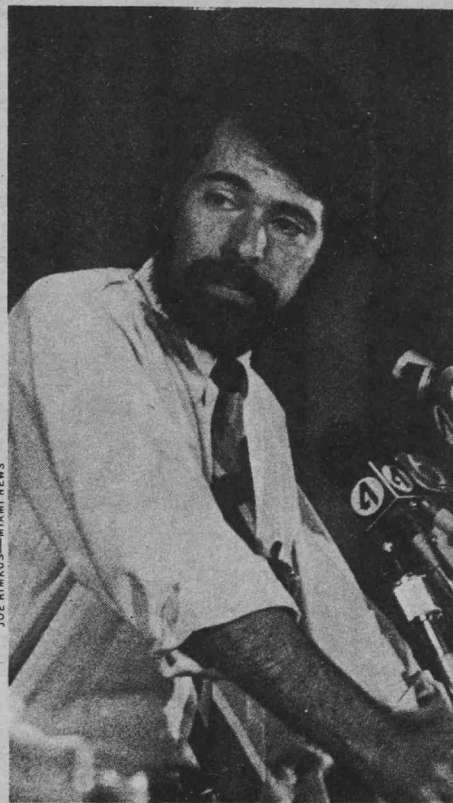
the state of gay liberation- (page 4). And watch out, "Rumour Control" finally shows its face on page 9.

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**NOTE:** Fifth Freedom will not be out in July, but will return again in August after the staff's vacation. Have a gay summer!

## see page 5 for gay pride week events

## GAY RIGHTS FINALE IN MIAMI



GAY ACTIVIST BOB KUNST

As *Fifth Freedom* goes to press today, Tuesday, June 7, voters are going to the polls in Dade County, Florida to vote on the county's gay rights ordinance. The national press, television reporters, and gay people throughout the nation are closely watching this frenzied finale to a bitter struggle between gay activists and anti-gay crusaders, led by Anita Bryant. The ordinance, which protects the rights of Dade County gays in employment, housing, and public accommodations, was passed last Jan. 18 by a 5-3 vote of the Miami Metro Commission. Since its enactment, the new law has been the target of a fierce repeal campaign, waged by singer Anita Bryant and her Save Our Children organization.

Although they have remained quiet in the past, many gays in Miami, where about 150,000 reside, are distributing buttons and hawking T shirts reading ANITA, DEAR, CRAM IT. The group has put together a get-out-the-vote drive and mailed some 250,000 pamphlets in the campaign's closing days. Gay forces throughout the country have raised \$350,000, mostly through small sums. In addition, a large number of gays and pro-gay "outsiders" have come to Dade County to express support for gay rights. Among those who have campaigned for the ordinance are Boston lesbian Rep. Elaine Noble, San Francisco's pro-gay Sheriff Richard Hongisto, California

State Rep. Willie Brown, feminist Gloria Steinem, and poet Rod McKuen. However, the Dade County Coalition emphasizes that there has not been a "heavy reliance on out-of-town personalities," and that the group's main thrust has been to "make inroads into the civic leadership."

The Save our Children forces have focused their campaign on charges that gay people are out to "recruit" young people. Says Anita, "When the law requires you to let an admitted homosexual teach you children and serve as a model for them, it's time to stop being so tolerant."

Replying to Bryant's charge that gay teachers could harm their pupils, Miami's gay activists say there have been no such incidents in any of the 38 other cities and counties with similar laws. They claim with the help of some psychiatric evidence, that a person's sexual orientation is fixed between the ages of three and five.

In the heat of the campaign emotions have got out of hand. A gay worker was hospitalized after a beating; others have received crank calls. Urges a bumper sticker: KILL A QUEER FOR CHRIST. After receiving many telephone threats, Jack Campbell, a gay-rights leader, has installed guards around his house. Bryant has also hired security men because of phone warnings.

To some, Bryant's style and rhetoric has become pathetic. She told one interviewer that God does not like homosexuality because "the male homosexual eats another man's sperm. Sperm is the most concentrated form of blood. The homosexual is eating life." During a debate with Gay Rights Activist Bob Kunst, she startled the audience by breaking into a rendition of *Battle Hymn of the Republic*. Bryant's aides have pointedly asked male interviewers their marital status before granting talks.

The vote is expected to be a close one, but gay activists have been hoping for a large turnout, which early reports today have indicated. Whatever the outcome, gay rights has become a national issue, one not to be forgotten.

(Gay Community News, Time)

# 5th Freedom

JUNE 1977

VOL. 7, #6

5th FREEDOM is a monthly publication of the Mattachine Society of the Niagara Frontier. It is distributed free of charge in any establishment and with any organization permitting such distribution. Our monthly circulation is 3,000.

The presence of the name or picture or other representation of a business, organization or person(s) in articles or advertising in this newspaper is not an indication of the sexual orientation of such person, organization or business.

We welcome any contribution of news items, written articles, letters, art work or photography by members of the gay community. We cannot guarantee the return of any materials submitted for publication, whether used by 5th FREEDOM or not, unless specifically requested and accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. All materials submitted are subject to editorialization.

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# EDITORIAL

Nongenital expressions of love and nonsexual resolutions of intimacy needs are becoming central issues of the gay liberation movement as its work of human liberation progresses. Our culture acknowledges the need for intimacy, openness and vulnerability only between members of monogamous heterosexual couples, and even then only in very limited ways. Resisting this oppression is making people conscious of need other than those sanctioned by society: straight men are acknowledging their need for closeness with each other, with gay men, and with women in ways other than sexual; gay men are finding rich and satisfying relationships with women and straight men, despite the absence of direct sexual interaction; many women are discovering that not only is a good relationship with a man possible without sex, but sometimes impossible with it.

This is not to say that genital expressions of intimacy are to be abandoned, but rather that they are to be understood as one of several equally valid modes of

relating. Not understood this way, we are in danger of closing ourselves off from many opportunities for closeness which do not have the potential for sexual expression. As Allen Ginsberg put it, "How am I to deal with someone who really loves me, but doesn't want to play with my cock, and doesn't necessarily want me to blow him?" A love that cannot have a genital expression is still love, and ought to be cultivated with care and energy.

Ginsberg recommends carezza (lying together naked and caressing each other without intent to achieve orgasm) as a way of expressing love nongenitally; the Big Brother/Big Sister program is another example. This issue's feature story presents Walt Whitman's experiences as a nurse to soldiers during the Civil War as yet another instance of nongenital resolution of intimacy needs. The possibilities are as endlessly varied as are human beings and their needs; a fully human life is one which is open to all those possibilities.

## FROM OUR MAILBAG

Since when has the Fifth Freedom decided to become a porno mag? It's bad enough that you've been running articles on a perversion like S & M, but that picture you published in your last issue

was really disgusting. I don't think I need to identify the picture, because anyone who saw it knows which one I mean. I shudder to think what straight society must think of us when it sees stuff like that. They'll figure Anita Bryant is right! A picture like that sure doesn't liberate us--it pushes us back in the closet. Is this policy (or is it a lack of policy?) to continue? I was ashamed to be gay when I saw it.

Frank Brackow

*Editor's note: The Fifth Freedom's policy is to be a forum for the ideas, needs, and feelings of all gay people; the policy is not to make judgments. This city's gay counseling services repeatedly receive requests for information on S & M, watersports, cross-dressing, scat, fist fucking, and other "perversions." Clearly, unbiased information on these subjects is needed, however objectionable or offensive this may be to some straights or gays.*

*As for the offending photo, around which a considerable amount of controversy has raged, the staff felt that its publication would indeed be a liberating experience for gays, and perhaps some*

cont. pg. 7

## COMMENT

### ON MATTERS OF CONTROVERSY

The Fifth Freedom has become the voice of the Mattachine Society of the Niagara Frontier. As such it serves as the collective voice of a large proportion of the gay community of the area.

There seems to be only one idea on which the gay community, as represented by the Mattachine Society can agree. That is, of course, the fact (which seems to me to be intuitively obvious) that men and women with a homosexual orientation have the right to live their lives openly, honestly, happily, and productively as they see fit without interference from the social structure in which they find themselves so long as they do not attempt to force their orientation on others.

It must be remembered, however, that no "collective" voice can reflect the individual attitudes, opinions, and orientations of its members. There is as much variation among the specific sexual activities of the individual members of the gay community as among the straight one. Indeed, almost all of the sexual activities performed by homosexuals are performed also by heterosexuals. Therefore, from time to time, it seems right that we should provide for the

expression of individual differences regardless of the repugnance that others, both gay and straight, might feel for that difference. When we lose the ability to learn about those who are different from ourselves, then we lose a chance for our own liberalization. If we refuse to learn, we are immediately open to the charge that we so rightly make against the heterosexual community: "Although we don't expect you to live as we live, we have the right to live in the manner we find healthy and productive even if you find it personally repugnant."

The very fact that homosexuals publish a paper advocating liberation for themselves is shocking to most of the straight (and some of the agy) community, and is all of the evidence needed to enact further oppression. That we might go further and discuss activities in no way exclusive to the homosexual orientation can be even more terrifying. Thus, any discussion of nudity, transvestism, transexualism, sado-masochism, dominance or any of the other esoteric forms of human sexuality cause tension

cont. pg. 7

# SHORT SHOTS

## Good Grades for Gays

Two more colleges have joined the growing number to take positive action on gay rights. The New York University Student Senate voted unanimously April 14 to include "sexual orientation" in the University Statement of Policy of Non-Discrimination/Equal Opportunity. And in Pennsylvania the State Department of Education has ruled that all 14 of the state's colleges must include "affectional or sexual preference" in their non-discrimination language. Also on the list of schools which have made policy statements on gay rights are Cornell, Harvard, Haverford (pa.), Portland State, Rutgers, Temple and the State University of New York. (Gay Community News).

## The Gayer Nineties

Los Angeles Community Guild has plans for a gay retirement village. The village will not be an institution but a "nice place to live" says Guild chairperson Bob Arthur. Money will be raised by special events and bequests from older gay people. (Gay Community News).

## Movie on Matlovich

Brad Dourif, nominated for a best supporting actor Academy Award for One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest - he played Billy - has been chosen to play Leonard Matlovich in the upcoming NBC special two-hour movie about the discharge of the gay Vietnam war hero. (Chicago Gay Life).

## "L & L" Anyone?

The New Hampshire Senate has passed a bill making "lewd and licentious" public behavior by homosexuals a crime. The bill passed with a 12-11 vote after an amendment which would have prohibited overt public sexual behavior by heterosexuals as well as homosexuals was killed. The bill's sponsor, Sen. Robert Monier (R-Goffstown), denounced homosexuality as "an unnatural act", "against God, social morals, against values". Judiciary Committee chairperson Sen. David Bradley (R-Hanover), who sponsored the defeated amendment, calls the bill vague and "probably unconstitutional". N.H. Governor Meldrim Thomson is expected to sign the measure if it passes the state's House. (Gay Community News).

## Not-so-Minor Minority

There are 20 million predominantly gay people in the United States says Indiana University's Institute For Sex Research (the Kinsey Institute). New tabulations based on original Kinsey interviews indicate that 13.95% of males and 4.25% of females (a combination average of 9.13% of the total population) had either extensive (21 or more partners or 51 or more experiences) or more than incidental (5-20 partners or 21-50 experiences) homosexual experience. NGTF News Release.



"Frankly, I think Howard has been taking this GQ stuff a bit too seriously."

## Alder Gay

An openly gay man has been elected Alderman on Madison's City Council, despite his homosexuality being used against him by his rival candidate. Jim Yeadon, 26-year-old gay activist, played a leading role in framing the Madison ordinance which extended anti-discrimination safeguards to gay people. (GPU News).

## Cash Cuts Cops

Gay cash hurt Long Beach Finest's feelings. An \$800 donation to the Long Beach Police Association widows fund from the gay community "hurts the reputation of the police department" said Police Chief Ralph Kortz. Countered Sgt. Michael Tracy, president of the Police Officers Association: "Being a bigot and discriminating against certain segments of the community - that hurts the department's reputation". (Philadelphia Gay News).

## Bisexuality a Copout?

"I can't believe that when you're born, your body says you will only love this way. I just can't believe that. If I was gay, I'd say I was gay, if I was straight, I'd say I was straight...No one's ever really accused me of being a copout". - Janis Ian on her bisexuality in a New Gay Life interview.

## Feeling "Gay"?

"Is 'gay' (homosexual) as an adjective and as a noun appropriate to formal speech and writing?" the American Heritage Dictionary asked its "usage panel". No, said Isaac Asimov, author. "I bitterly resent the manner in which 'gay' has been forced out of speech. I can no longer say 'I feel gay' or speak of a 'gay spirit'." "Yes", said Sheridan Baker, English Professor, "Even though I must register as a morose". High Gear.

## Frank Sam

"I'm unsympathetic and I don't care whether they have rights or not" - Former Senator Sam Ervin on the rights of homosexuals. High Gear.

## Hippocratic ...

The national governing body of the American Medical Student Association passed an expanded pro-gay policy resolution during its April national convention in Chicago. The resolution supports gay rights legislation at all levels, opposes discrimination against gays in medical education and calls for the study of problems encountered by homosexuals receiving and providing health care. High Gear.

## ...Hypocrisy

Over 80 per cent of Portland, Oregon, area physicians would not accept a gay person as a patient, according to a Multnomah County Medical Society survey. The poll of physicians was conducted in early April as part of discrimination studies by the Oregon Task Force on Sexual Preference. Gay Community News.

## Childcare Collective

A group of predominantly gay men in Cambridge, Mass. has formed a collective to provide child care for groups of women and women's events. Says the group: "For men against sexism, doing childcare is a way we can come together and do something that has an immediate, positive effect". (Gay Community News).

## All in the Family

William Carter Spann is the only convict who can legitimately call the President of the United States uncle. However, no member of the Carter family has been in touch with Spann since July 1976; Spann is convicted of two armed robberies and recently testified at a robbery trial in San Francisco against a man he described as his prison lover. (New York Times)

## Gays by Cable

The latest addition to Manhattan's cable TV offerings is "The Emerald City," self-proclaimed as "the world's first TV show for gay men and women." Televised on Channel J ("Gay on J") and named for Judy Garland's city of Oz, it opens with Ella Fitzgerald singing "Anything Goes," and follows a magazine format of news reports, interviews, special material recorded at various clubs, and commercials geared to gay interests. The venture, intended to be self-sustaining through the sale of commercials to gay segments of the business community, is overseen by a production company ironically called, "Truth, Justice, and the American Way, Inc.". (New York Times)

# Gay Bars As Gay Lib— The Future of an Illusion

By David Rothenberg

The following article is reprinted from the March 14, 1977 issue of the *Village Voice*, Vol. XXII No. 11.

*My argument is not the physicality of vertical sex in a dark room. But I take issue with gay men who are under the illusion that shadowed sex represents liberation.*

My friend Harry is perfectly content. He has diligently ignored the the gay activist movement and does not feel affected by, nor is he interested in, gay politics. Neither family nor coworkers are aware of his sexual inclination. (At least it is not discussed, although his being single at age 31 is.) Harry is well concealed in the closet.

Harry is also a well-manicured businessman who occasionally makes the back-room scene at gay bars. At those times, he comfortably dons the costume of jeans and leather jacket, his keys dangling. He enjoys the well-publicized anonymity of fantasy sex.

I thought of Harry when I read Arthur Bell's recent *Voice* piece on the gay back-rooms, for social critic Bell at once went too far and not far enough. Specifically, he told us more than we care to know about the nuances of anonymous sex among gay men: The details of who does what to whom, and why, merely provided titillation for housewives in Haworth. Simultaneously, he fell quite short in his assessment of the political and social ramifications of sex served up like TV dinners. It's quite available and it satisfies an immediate hunger—but the aftermath is that you know you could have done better.

My argument is not the physicality of vertical sex in a dark room; that is a matter of personal choice. But I take issue with gay men who are under the illusion that this shadowed sex represents liberation.

Quite simply, the public sexuality indulged in by the homosexual male of New York City in 1977 has not been achieved as a "right" but has been patronizingly permitted as an act of political indulgence. Gay men embrace openly on a three-block strip (Christopher Street from Seventh Avenue to Hudson Street), but they have traded off job protection, economic guarantees, and a social atmosphere of understanding. The male gay community has bought the tradeoff, but it has about as much durability as a love affair in the Toilet.

Without a political or economic base, the gay community has no power. What is called progress, then, is in fact paving the way for a gay back lash that could surpass anything this city has known.

No legal rights for the gay community have been sanctioned by the City Council of New York. Their decision not to act is based on the Council members' interpretation of their constituency's moral view of the gay lifestyle.

So, while backroom fistfucking is happening tonight at the Anvil—and reported in graphic detail by Arthur Bell—it remains a trap some gay people choose not to see.

The trap has been carefully set. You must go to publications such as the *Advocate*, *GCN*, or *Christopher Street* to find positive stories about gay lifestyles and accomplishments. Many well-known artists, performers, and public personalities have "come out" in the gay press—and are practically ignored in the larger media. Yet *Time* magazine gives a glossary about keys and handkerchiefs that reflects the lifestyle of only a partial segment of the gay population. The straight press portrays gay men as being sexually permissive and morally questionable, as if the totality of their humanity could be defined by their sexuality—a verdict few would pin on a heterosexual. There is little media coverage of homosexuals that would muster a public defense.

At a recent Sunday brunch I was among the minority who had not danced and groped all night in one of the city's several bumper-to-bumper back rooms. I commented to a few of the men that this privilege could be taken away from them as quickly as it had been given. Every one of them, colored hankie dangling from the back pocket, protested. One of the old-timers told the group that twenty years ago men in gay bars were warned about holding hands, and that open cruising would lead to their being bounced. He praised the advances—and the roomful of gay men dismissed my warnings as paranoid, and proceeded to their Bloody Marys and Quiche Lorraine, annoyed at my intrusion.

The gay back room is the perfect issue for a political moralist or a tighter-than-Jimmy-Carter-fundamentalist to campaign on. In an era of high unemployment, and in a city where people feel frustrated, unfulfilled, and ignored, a scapegoat is always needed. Gays, perceived as sexually immoral, could easily fill the bill.

Who remembers the Cherry Grove arrests of ten years ago? The Mattachine Society existed to protest such entrapments, where gay males were arrested at the point of assignation, and their names and addresses printed in Suffolk County newspapers. I recall the married man from Long Island, who, after his entrapment, learned that his fourteen-year-old son took the detailed information over the phone from the local police department. What makes a gay person think that backroom fistfucking will continue to be tolerated (publicized as it is with regularity on the pages of the weeklies) when job protection and housing rights are denied?

I have made a few notes for liberated 1977:

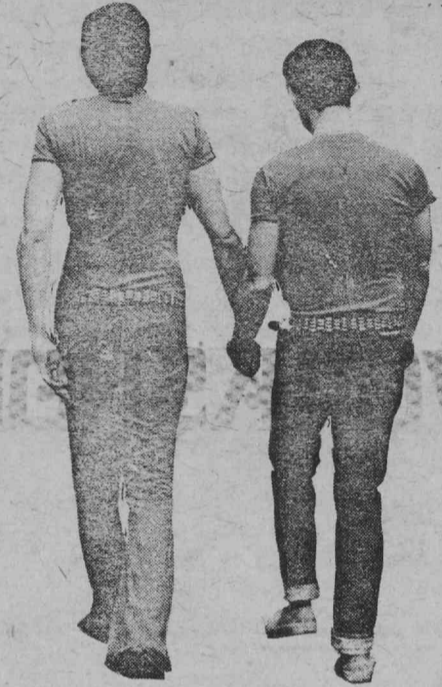
The Anita Bryant Crusade may create a few giggles among the gay cognoscenti of New York City and San Francisco, but I have little doubt that if she gets her issue as an election-day referendum, it will be Ms. Bryant who will win.

*The Village Voice* still thinks it does not offend anyone when it headlines

a story on Arnold Schwarzenegger, "This Hunk is not a Fruit."

*The New York Times* is not at all comfortable with gay rights as a legitimate civil rights issue. Gay people on the *Times* staff have told me that coming out for them would probably mean dismissal. And, sadly, the influential *Times* book review section has trouble finding space to comment on such books as Jonathan Katz's *Gay American History*, the first scholarly work of its kind with a gay perspective.

In the city and state of New York, basic protection is not available for the gay community. Many gay men in this post-zap political era accept the illu-



FRED W. MC DARRAH

**The gay community has traded economic guarantees for a deceptive brand of freedom.**

sion of freedom when they are permitted public displays of their private acts.

The Catholic Church, Orthodox Jewry, the New York City Police Department, and the Citrus Commission of Florida do not think that the basic civil rights of 10 million or more Americans is an issue that matters.

Men like Harry have been lulled into thinking there is nothing to fear. But pendulums swing back and forth; though some gay men might view that pendulum as one more instrument to insert, it is one that ticks from left to right. And as it could physically destroy the inner tubes of an insatiable orifice, it could also toll the death of a lifestyle.



"I think I should stay away from the bars for a while. I've been getting too much exposure."

**GAY PRIDE WEEK**  
BUFFALO  
NEW YORK



**GAY PRIDE WEEK**  
BUFFALO  
NEW YORK



**GAY PRIDE WEEK**  
BUFFALO  
NEW YORK



**GAY PRIDE WEEK**  
BUFFALO  
NEW YORK



## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### DANCE

SATURDAY JUNE 11  
9pm

UNITARIAN CHURCH CORNER ELMWOOD & W. FERRY

••••• **THE 8th ANNUAL GAY PRIDE WEEK DANCE!**  
**DOOR PRIZES, 50\50 SPLIT DRAWING, BEER & POP AT CASH BAR, COSTUMES WELCOME. DONATION \$1.**

### BIKE-HIKE

SUNDAY JUNE 12  
12 Noon

DELAWARE PARK ROSE GARDEN

• **BRING YOUR BICYCLE & A FRIEND FOR A PLEASANT RIDE AROUND TOWN.**

### WORKSHOPS :

ALL WORKSHOPS WILL BE HELD IN ROOM 271 OF THE SCIENCE BUILDING AT BUFF STATE, 1300 ELMWOOD AVE.

MONDAY

JUNE 13 / 7:30pm

**"GAYS & RELIGION":** From "Dignity" of Buffalo.

9pm **"GAYS and/in EDUCATION":** Self-education & gay educators.

TUESDAY

JUNE 14 / 7:30pm

**"GAYS & HEALTH":** You asked for it you got it! V.D., scabies and everything that bugs you.

9pm **"GAY ALCOHOLICS":** Dealing with it...as it affects a friend, or you.

WEDNESDAY

JUNE 15 / 7:30pm

**"GAY IDENTITY":** Problems in developing a positive self-image.

9pm **"A SOCIOLOGICAL SURVEY"** of the chicken/chicken-queen relationship in the context of our subculture.

THURSDAY

JUNE 16 / 7:30 pm

**"COUPLES":** Gay relationships as they relate to gay couples.

9pm **"S & M":** Variations vs Lifestyle.

### SHOW

FRIDAY JUNE 17

9 pm

ALLENTOWN COMMUNITY CENTER, 111 ELMWOOD AVE.

••••• **AN EXCITING PERFORMANCE BY THE "TWILIGHT REVIEW"...A DRAG TROUPE FROM THE TWILIGHT VILLA SOCIAL CLUB IN St.CATHERINE'S, FEATURING BUFFALO'S OWN 'RIKKI RAE'!**

### PICNIC

SATURDAY JUNE 18

ALL DAY

FRONT PARK NEAR THE SOFTBALL FIELD

••••• **B.Y.O. BEVERAGES & FOOD FOR FUN-FILLED DAY. VOLLEY-BALL, SOFT-BALL FOR ALL. GUEST SINGER & GUITARIST CARM YERO.**

### FEAST

SUNDAY JUNE 19

6 pm

UNITARIAN CHURCH CORNER ELMWOOD & W. FERRY

••••• **DIG INTO A HOME-MADE ROAST RIB-OF-BEEF DINNER! JUST BRING A SALAD...THE REST IS FREE!**

# "NO MEN EVER LOVED EACH OTHER AS I AND SOME OF THESE..."

**AMONG THE FINEST EXPRESSIONS  
OF HOMOEROTIC TENDERNESS ARE  
WALT WHITMAN'S CIVIL WAR  
JOURNALS AND LETTERS, WRITTEN  
WHILE HE WAS NURSING THE  
WOUNDED SOLDIERS.**

by Tim Denesha

Walt Whitman was forty-two years old when the Civil War began in 1861. Although not a soldier, he journeyed to the Virginia battlefield in 1862 when his brother, George, a Union army lieutenant, was wounded and hospitalized there. Appalled by the disease and neglect he saw among the soldiers, Whitman remained in the war zone after finding his brother, hoping to relieve some of the suffering he had seen.

Supporting himself as a federal office clerk in Washington, D.C., Whitman devoted the remaining three years of the war to volunteering as a "wound-dresser" in the makeshift tent hospitals established there to care for Union and Confederate casualties alike. In addition to changing dressings and feeding and bathing the soldiers, he also wrote letters for them; distributed such luxuries as fruit and sweets which he purchased with his own funds; read to, prayed with, and provided emotional support for all in need. Underlying these actions was a profound empathy and homoerotic love, which served as healing factors over and above the medical acts he performed. So absolute was his dedication that his own health suffered, obliging him at one point to return North to recuperate.

Despite Whitman's stature as a poet and thinker, the letters, journals, and news articles he wrote during the war were not collected and published until 1960; their value as intelligent first-hand accounts may have been overshadowed by concern over their homoerotic content. The following excerpts are a vivid, poetic account of how Whitman resolved his homoerotic intimacy needs in ways which were certainly non-genital, and usually not at all directly sexual.

*Our manliest, our boys, our hardy darlings...the men looked young and healthy and strong, handsome young American men, a large proportion of light-haired, blonde, light-grey-eyed young men among them...There did not appear to be a man over thirty years of age, and a large proportion fifteen to perhaps twenty-two or twenty-three years of age...rude uniforms, well worn, all good riders, full of the devil; nobody shaved, very sunburnt...As I stood quite close to them, several good-looking enough youths, nodded or just spoke to me, without doubt divining pity and fatherliness out of my face--for my heart was full enough of it. Alas! How many of these healthy, handsome, rollicking young men will lie cold in death before the apples ripen in the orchard...*

Five-sixths of the patients are American young men, intelligent, of independent spirit, tender feelings, used to

hardy and healthy life...How can I describe to you the mute and appealing look that rolls from so many a manly eye, from many a sick cot, as you walk slowly down one of these wards...To see these and be incapable of responding to them is enough to make one's heart crack. I go through, cheering up the men, distributing now and then little sums of money, letter-paper, and envelopes; oranges, tobacco, jellies, etc. By these and like means, one gets on intimate and affectionate terms with noble American young men; and now is where the real good begins to be done after all...I can testify that friendship has literally cured a fever, and the medicine of daily affection, a bad wound. The men feel such love more than anything else. I have met very few persons who realize the importance of humoring the yearnings for love and friendship of these American young men, prostrated by sickness and wounds...



*Some hospital visitors, especially the women, pick out the handsomest-looking soldiers, or have a few for their pets. Of course, some will attract you more than others, and some will need attention more than others, but be careful not to ignore any patient. A word, a friendly turn of the eye or touch of the hands in passing, if nothing else.*

You would all smile to see me among them--some of them like children; ceremony is mostly discarded; they suffer and get exhausted and so weary; lots of them have grown to expect that as I leave at night that we should kiss each other--sometimes quite number...I have to go around, poor boys--there is little petting in the soldier's life in the field, but I know what is in their hearts--always waiting--though they may be unconscious of it themselves.

*I could not describe to you what mutual attachments and how passing deep and tender these boys. Some have died; but the love for them lives as long as I draw breath; these soldiers know how to love too, when once they have the right person and the right love offered them...I remember one in particular right off; I found myself loving him like a son; he used to kiss me good-night--kiss me. He got well, he passed out with the crowd, he went home, the war was over. We never met again. Oh! I could tell you a hundred such tales!*

I go to hospital every day or night--I believe no men ever loved each other as I and some of these poor, wounded, sick and dying men love each other...I stayed a long time tonight beside the bed of a new patient, a young Baltimorean aged about nineteen years...very affectionate, held onto my hand and put it to his face, not willing to let me leave. Visited him daily for about two weeks after that, while he lived. I loved him much, always kissed him, and he did me...

*I urged the men to write; and myself, when called upon, wrote all sorts of letters for them (including love letters, very tender ones)...letters for their friends, letters for their folks--fathers, mothers, sweethearts...they were too sick to write, or not sure of themselves, or something. Why, I even said their prayers for them, some of them. What didn't I do?...Have struck up a tremendous friendship with a young Mississippi captain (about 19) that we took prisoner, badly wounded... poor boy, he has suffered a great deal and still suffers--his eyes bright as a hawk, his face pale; our affection is an affair quite romantic--sometimes when I lean over to say I am going, he puts his arms around my neck, draws my face down, etc., quite a scene for the New Bowery.*

In one of the hospitals I find Thomas Haley, Company M, 4th New York Cavalry--a regular Irish boy, a fine specimen of physical youthful manliness--shot through the lungs, inevitably dying...he lies there with his frame all exposed above the waist, all naked for coolness, a fine built man, the tan not yet bleached from his cheeks and neck. I often come by him and sit in perfect silence; he will breathe for ten minutes as softly and evenly as a young babe asleep. Poor youth--so handsome, athletic, with profuse, beautiful shining hair...

There are many women in one position or another among the hospitals, especially as nurses...quite a number of them young ladies acting as volunteers. They are a help in certain ways, and deserve to be mentioned with respect. Then it remains to be distinctly said that few or no young ladies, under the irresistible conventions of society, answer the practical requirements of nurses for soldiers. Middle-aged or healthy and well-conditioned elderly women, mothers of children, are always best. Many of the wounded must be handled. A thousand things which cannot be gainsayed must

occur and be done. The presence of a good middle-aged or elderly woman, the magnetic touch of hands, the expressive features of the mother, the silent soothing of her presence... One of the finest nurses I met was a red-faced, illiterate old Irish woman; I have seen her take the poor, wasted, naked boys so tenderly up in her arms...

I wish you would go in Ward B and tell a young cavalryman (his first name is Edwin, he is wounded in the right arm) that I send him my love; and on the opposite side, a young man wounded in the right knee, and also a young man named Charley, wounded in the left hand; and Jennings; and also a young man that I love that lays now up by the door... Tell Miss Gregg in Ward A that I send my love to Pleasant Barley; I send my love to little Billy, the little Ohio boy in Ward A, and to Miss Gregg herself... I would like you to give me love to a young man in ward I named Burns-- and indeed in all the wards, from A to K inclusive, and all through the hospital, as I find I cannot particularize without being tedious... saw Lewy Brown; Lew is so good, so affectionate; when I came away, he reached up his face; I put my arm around him and we gave each other a long kiss, half a minute long...

Soon after met John Wormley, a West Tennessee raised boy, parents both dead... large, clear, dark brown eyes; didn't know what to make of me; told me at last he wanted much to get some clean underclothes and a pair of decent pants, and



## Comment cont.

among both gays and straights.

Such matters of controversy should cause tension among us all until the day arrives (if ever it does) when the human (inclusive of both gay and straight) community can accept its own sexuality in all of its many variations. Such is the Utopia of which fantasies are constructed. Until that day comes, however, the Mattachine Society should express in its voice the ideals to which the majority of its members can agree. We have only limited energy and resources to continue our work to establish liberation for the homosexual; they must be expended where the most good can be accomplished for the largest number of people. Most of the time this conservative approach is, quite properly, followed. We must, however, recognize the voices of the subminorities among us (each of us is a member of some subminority.) They, too, have a right to be heard; but it must be emphasized that their activities are not those of all gay people.

The Mattachine Society welcomes all criticism, hopeful that most of which will be constructive, of its activities and especially of articles that appear in the Fifth Freedom. The Society welcomes even more new members and old members



a chance to wash himself well, and put on the clean underclothes. I had the very great pleasure of helping him accomplish all these wholesome designs...

Dear friends,

I thought it would be soothing to you to have a few lines about the last days of your son, Erastus... sometimes when I would come in, he woke up, and I would lean down and kiss him; he would reach out his hand and pat my hair and beard as I sat on the bed and leaned over him... I assure you I was attracted to him very much---Some nights I sat by his cot until far into the night--he behaved like a noble boy... Poor dear son, though you were not my son, I felt to love you like a son... Farewell, deary boy, it was my opportunity to be with

who are willing to work in some aspect of its activities... to help us maintain our strength and our presence, please drop a line and/or call. Remember, our meetings are on the third Sunday of every month at the Universalist Unitarian Church at the corner of Elmwood Avenue and West Utica.

Jim Haynes

## Mailbag cont.

straights. Socially unacceptable sex fantasies are often a source of guilt, and the staff felt that this frank portrayal of such an "unacceptable" fantasy would help many people feel more acceptable of their own sexual fantasies.

To challenge and question traditional sexual and social norms shall continue to be the editorial policy of the Fifth Freedom.

Have you ever loved the body of a woman?

Have you ever loved the body of a man?

Do you not see that these are exactly the same?

-Walt Whitman

you in your last days... you did not lay there among strangers without having one near who loved you dearly, and to whom you gave your dying kiss...

I saw in the New York papers the announcement of Charley Chauncey's death... When I went up to my room that night towards eleven, I took a seat by the open window in the splendid soft moonlit night, and, there alone by myself, devoted (as is my custom sometimes under such circumstances) to the dead boy the silent cheerful tribute of an hour or so of floating thought about him, and whatever rose up from the thought of him--his looks, his handsome face, his hilarious fresh ways, his sunny smile, his voice, his blonde hair, his talk, his caprices--the way he and I first met--how we spoke together impromptu, without introduction; and then our easy falling into intimacy--he, with his affectionate heart, thought so well of me, and I loved him then, and love him now...



**AGONIES ARE ONE OF MY CHANGES OF GARMENTS. I DO NOT ASK THE WOUNDED PERSON HOW HE FEELS, I MYSELF BECOME THE WOUNDED PERSON.**

-Song of Myself

Walt Whitman's Civil War, edited by Walter Lowenfels, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1960.

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# POETRY

## SON OF MAN

by Will Inman

He was not a priest: he was a shaman.  
He entered the bodies-and-souls  
of men and women  
with words and self.  
He touched them, and  
more virginal than ever they gave birth  
to themselves.

Now he stands with me outside the mausoleum:  
it will have nothing to do with him,  
taking priests' dust and nosepickings for his  
joyful vibrations.

*How can we destroy that monstrosity?* I ask him.  
*It destroys itself,* he answers.  
*But don't you feel responsible?* I challenge him.  
*No,* he says: *I generate life, I do not preserve it.*

*Did you really make love with John and Lazarus?* I ask.  
*I loved--and love--many men,* he says. *And women, too.*  
*I loved, and I love, in all the ways love can be shared.*  
*But the Bible says--I begin.*  
*The Bible remembers,* he interrupts me. *But learn how  
to remember the future: it works at the core of now.*  
*Eternity grows at the marrow.*

*What does that mean?* I demand.  
He looks at me, from inside, shielded  
with scornful love. *Listen to your heartbeat,*  
he says. *All your life, it is the sound  
of your inmost being making love with me.*

(reprinted from INTEGRITY: Gay  
Episcopal Forum, April 1976.)

## GIVING IN

by Regina Kahney

We sway at first,  
as saplings do in breezes,  
the desire to please disguising  
the need to succeed at love.

Sway becomes bending,  
submitting the will  
to the best of intentions.  
Insistent winds moan,  
"It's for your own good, dear."

But with the wind's demise  
the trees-  
having suddenly nothing  
to yield to-snap free  
then go limp in the stillness,  
unshaken but sure  
they will never be moved again.



## CURIOSITY

by Regina Kahney

They want to know  
how we "do it."  
They all want to know  
how we "do it."  
So I put on my best  
Lenny Bruce voice, man,  
and I go out there  
and I just tell 'em:  
man, we go out and we buy  
the biggest sausages  
and salamis and cucumbers  
and carrots we can find  
and we just shove 'em  
up there,  
man,  
as many as'll fit  
at one time,  
and we buy all kinds  
of gizmos and geegaws  
and gadgets and battery-  
operated and manual models  
and fake thises and phoney  
thats and we just  
grab women off the streets,  
man,  
we just throw a sheet  
over their heads and  
drag 'em off screamin'  
to our chambers of horror,  
man,  
and tie 'em to the bed  
and just do it to 'em.  
How do we "do it."  
Jee-sus.



Chris  
Bernie  
Joey  
Mike  
& Mickey  
Mouse

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# gay directory

## BUFFALO

### MOVEMENT

MATTACHINE SOCIETY OF THE NIAGARA FRONTIER, Box 975, Ellicott Station, Buffalo, NY 14205. Pot Luck Dinner (6:00 PM) and General Membership Meeting (7:30 PM) held every 3rd Sunday of the month at the Unitarian Church at Elmwood & W. Ferry. Phone 881-5335 for information and counseling.

SISTERS OF SAPPHO, Meetings held 2nd & 4th Wednesdays of each month at 7:30 PM at the Buffalo Women Center, 499 Franklin St. Phone 886-5293.

STUDENT ALLIANCE FOR GAY EQUALITY (SAGE), Buffalo State University College, 1300 Elmwood Ave., Buffalo, NY. Phone 862-6511.

GAY LIBERATION FRONT/SUNYAB, College F (Tolstoy House) Winspear Ave., Phone 831-5386. Meetings every Wed. at 8:00.

G.R.O.W., Meetings held every Friday at 7:30 PM at the Buffalo Women Center, 499 Franklin St., Phone 886-5293.

PARENTS OF GAYS/LESBIANS, 144-25 Roosevelt Ave., Flushing, New York 11355

### BARS & RESTAURANTS

DOMINIQUE'S, 20 Allen Street, Buffalo. 886-8694.

DOWNTOWN MANOR, 212 Franklin St., Buffalo. 842-1182.

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MEAN ALICE'S, 729 Main Street, Buffalo

MURPHY'S OMEGA CAFE, 369 Pearl St., Buffalo 856-3690

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### BATHS

CLUB AMHERST, 44 Almeda Street; 835-6711. Club membership required.

### BOOKSTORES

EMMA, WOMEN'S BOOKSTORE, 2223 Filmore Avenue; 836-8970.

### RADIO PROGRAMS

SAPPHO, WBFO-FM 88.7 FM, Mondays 9:30-10 p.m. "Music, material from lesbian periodicals, an original lesbian soap opera, etc." 831-5394 for further information.

STONEWALL NATION, WBFO-FM, Saturdays 9-9:30 p.m., 88.7 FM. "Mainly a talk show, interviews, reviews, etc. Mostly gay men."

### RELIGIOUS GROUPS

DIGNITY (Roman Catholic), call John 884-5631.

St. Basil & St. Gregory's Liberal Catholic Mission, 365 Plymouth (rear house), Buffalo 14213. Services every Sunday at 6:00 PM.

### CLUBS

NEW YORK/ONTARIO LEATHER CLUB (NYOLC), Box 684, Ellicott Station, Buffalo 14205. Meetings held every 2nd Sunday of the month at 699 Elmwood Ave. at 3:00 PM. Call 886-9469.

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## FREUD FOR GAYS?

Sigmund Freud, founder of psychoanalysis, publicly supported the early German gay liberation movement, show four previously uncirculated documents just published in The Body Politic. In 1930 he signed a petition for the repeal of an anti-sodomy law and two years earlier wrote that the "lifelong struggle" by homosexual emancipationist Dr. Magnus Hirschfeld "against the cruel and unjustified interference of legislation in human sexual life deserves universal recognition and support".

Freud also told a Vienna newspaper that "homosexual persons are not sick, but they also do not belong in a court of law". The documents were discovered by author James Steakley last year while researching the German and Austrian gay liberation movement during the nineteen thirties. They also reveal that Freud took a professional position in favor of homosexuals becoming practicing psychoanalysts.

(Gay Community News).



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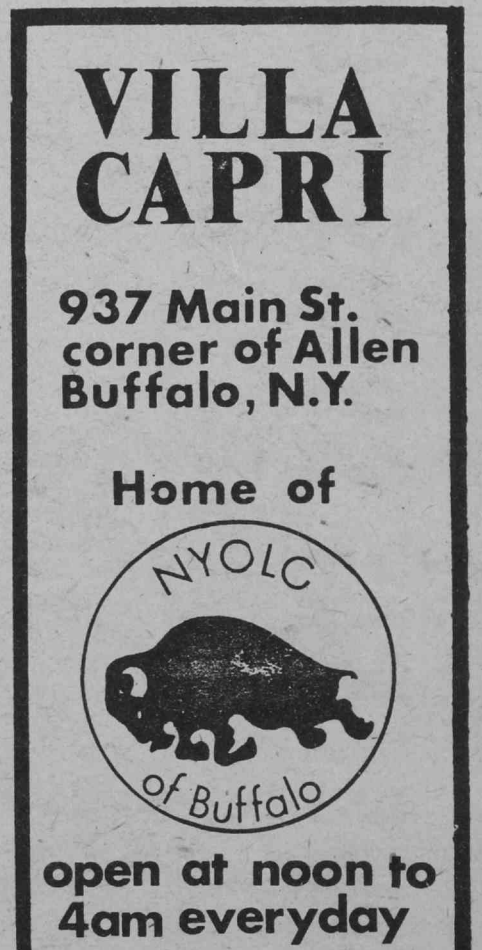
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Publication of the Mattachine Society of the Niagara Frontier

JUNE 1977

# BUFFALO GAY PRIDE WEEK 1977