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Fifth Freedom, 1979-01-01

The Mattachine Society of the Niagara Frontier

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5th Freedom Fate Flounders

The more astute amongst you might notice that this issue of the Fifth Freedom is both later and smaller than usual. The problem is not one of funds as these issuers are quite faithful to us and I hope readers support them with equal loyalty. The issue seems to be perseverance. We simply do not have enough people who are interested in working on the damned thing on a regular basis.

The Fifth Freedom enters its ninth year of publication with this issue, making it one of the oldest existing gay publications in the entire country. As it enters the nineteen eighties, it shares with other gay newspapers an identity crisis: what exactly is the role of a local gay publication in 1979? The dissemination of national gay-oriented news is gradually being transferred to more accessible press; it is not unusual to find impartial coverage of gay issues in The New York Times and Time magazine, as well as by large circulation gay publications like Christopher Street.

The role of the Fifth Freedom, then, becomes one of community defining and building. We do not cover national issues in depth because they are covered adequately elsewhere. We do focus on local news and opinion, and offer the gay community here an opportunity to express their ideas, feelings and creativity.

Our less frequent schedule—bi-monthly at the moment—and decreased page count limit that focus. This issue does not feature chapter 3 of "Mort d'Amour", part 2 of "Science Fiction in the Cinema", a number of copy-busters and other features and news articles because we simply don’t have enough people willing to work a few hours a month to lay out, type, distribute and write for us.

We would like to offer local gay people that opportunity. Our next general editorial meeting is Monday February 26 at 7 pm upstairs at 45 Allen St. and we invite interested people to stop up and say hello.

Publication of the Mattachine Society of the Niagara Frontier

GAY GROUPS MEET

Members of local gay organizations met January 21 to discuss the future of the gay movement in Buffalo and to investigate a possible coalition of Western New York organizations.

The meeting was called by Bill Coplon, a NYSCGO chairperson and president of the Mattachine Organization. The meeting included Nickel City Leather/Levi Club, Mattachine, G.A.S.E of Buffalo State, Greater Buffalo, N.Y.S.C.G.O., the Stonewall Nation radio show, GLF of Buffalo and the Fifth Freedom.

Areas discussed among participants included what the current needs of gay people in our area are, and how to go about filling those needs. It was generally agreed that local goals include a local gay visibility, information dissemination, and the recapture of lesbians and gay men. It was also felt that local organizations could "scratch each other's backs" more effectively. One participant suggested that a group function needed as much support and publicity from other organizations as possible. Technical and person-power resources also need to be traded more regularly.

A second meeting of the ad hoc coalition is scheduled for Sunday, February 18th at 4pm at the Unitarian Church, Elmwood and West Ferry. Interested parties can call 881-5335 for more information.

Gays Needed To Speak To Med Students

By a 7 to 0 vote the City Council of Troy in upstate New York banned discrimination against gays in municipal employment.

Under the Troy Plan, women and minorities, including gays, who are discriminated against in municipal employment, including promotion, have legal standing to petition for relief. In addition, businesses which sell goods and services to the city must conform to the affirmative action plan’s guidelines, including the ban on sexual preference discrimination.

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Dear Fifth Freedom:

Socialization in society has programmed the male into ignoring his feelings and suppressing his emotions. Socialization begins upon birth. The male learns at an early age "Boys don't cry", "Don't be a sissy", "Take the pain like a man". Males from boyhood to manhood must continually prove to himself and others, that "He is a man". Some mottos ingrained in the minds of males are: COMPETITION, The strongest survive. Get the other guy before he gets you', Don't trust anyone but yourself. A man's status is determined by his achievements!

It is not surprising that "MEN" in general have less male friends than female friends. When men are in the company of other men, there exists a peculiar tension. The origin of this tension seems to be due to competition. Males view other males not as friends or acquaintances, but as competitors. The other males (competitors) are to be feared, watched, checked up on, observed with caution. The male is afraid to express his feelings or allow his true self to emerge because it will make him vulnerable to others. The state of vulnerability is anxiety producing. The idea of being taken advantage of and losing in some way in a friendship or business deal would be much too difficult for the "socialized male" to accept.

Men in society must begin to question society's operational definition of masculinity and "what it takes to become a man". I think an appropriate way to begin to change the societal restrictions is simply "Don't accept them". An individual should ask him or herself, "What does it take to become a feeling responsible adult?" One must act on their feelings and determine what is right for him or herself. Who gave society the right to prescribe designated male and female modules in which to cram every member into their corresponding mold? No one!

If people have the ability to change laws and legislation that is harmful to the populous, then people can also change destructive social roles, norms, mores, institutions.

Remember the important thing is that the individual continues to find ways to liberate himself from his dilemma. One must choose his own solutions to his problems. One does not have to exist in an environment or situation that is suppressing. Every individual has the power to change and to determine the course of their lives.

S.B.P.

FROM OUR MAILBAG

5th Freedom
JANUARY FEBRUARY
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5th Freedom is a monthly publication of the Nattachine Society of the Niagara Frontier. It is distributed free of charge in any edition and with any organization permitting such distribution. Our monthly circulation is 4,000.

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 editorial revision.

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HITTING RIGHT AT HOME

SALT LAKE CITY, Utah--Couples who fight together may stay together more often than those who don't. A University of Utah study has found that married couples who hit each other hard during "play fights" are better suited for each other than couples who are less aggressive with one another.

The study measured the non-verbal communications in marriage by selecting young university couples from the Salt Lake City area to participate in experimental 60-second pillow-clubs bouts. After agreeing to fight, the couples were led one by one to a six foot pane ring where they were armed with padded bataca clubs. The clubs were wired to a hidden computer so that the frequency, number and intensity of the swats could be measured.

After the "play fights," the couples filled out questionnaires describing their agreements and discord on 10 common marital issues. The study reports that those couples who openly showed their anger and hit hard in the play fights were less alienated and unhappy than couples who softly tiptoed around the ring, barely tapping each other.

PHILADELPHIA GAY NEWS

WHISTLE, WHILE YOU WORK IT OUT

Couples who fight a lot should keep a whistle in the house. At least this is a recommendation from the American Academy of Psycho-analysis, which has made a study of recurring domestic quarrels. A spokesperson for the association says that when tension builds towards the breaking point, one partner or the other should literally "blow the whistle" to interrupt the fray. The association says a cooling off period often results, and fights can be ended before they start.

GAY NEWS

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

TORONTO--A Toronto, Ontario man has filed a class action suit against the American manufacturers of the widely publicized "Gay Bob" doll.

Bob Yuill, who says that he is not gay, claims that the product represents the misuse of a respectable name. Says Yuill, I've nothing against the gay movement, but I don't want to see it promoted among children. Yuill has asked all Canadians names "Bob" to join his suit, contending that the term "Gay Bob" is harming their reputations.

GAY LIGHT

MESSAGES IN A REAR-VIEW MIRROR

ALBANY, N.Y.--The State of New York has issued a list of banned words for those people seeking a new "vanity" license plate for their vehicles.

The Dept. of Motor Vehicles devised a five-page list of words prohibited on the plates. Drivers can buy new plates of up to eight characters for a $15 fee.

Besides obvious swear words, the list covers such items as "Pervert" and "ShackUp". Specifically gay messages are also banned, including "Gaylib", "LaBean" and "Rugay".

GAY COMMUNITY NEWS

"TRIP" ON IN
YOU WON'T "RUSH" OUT

the Roman Sauna
100 North Street
ROCHESTER, NEW YORK 14604

- MOVIES (Wed.-Sun.)
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- SAUNA BATH
- REFRESHMENTS
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- SPECIAL LUNCH HOUR RATES
- SPECIAL RATES (SUN.-WED.)
history

Still the rain does not come
and we wait in our separate
rooms
like monks
we don’t know why
in a dream
this morning
I met history
its smile was your smile
only I
knew it wasn’t you
it was holding a baby
in its mechanical arms
I still don’t understand
why we like monks
every morning
with the sun
bathe in the lake
not noticing each other
but examining our nakedness
on the shore
and sometimes masturbating
but
not together
sort of a moment or two
before and after the other
history says: you can’t forget
and the baby cries
throwing up blood &
jolting like a broken machine
it’s then I notice it’s only
made of glass;&
when history drops it,
it shatters
—Tommi A.

Pinocchio

Like that little Jewish boy
in the picture
from auschwitz
this rain has left me without eyes
my toothless baby’s grin
cannot cut you, yet
wait
it conspires
it is always Smile, Smile,
monotony sets in
everything’s stiffening

TEAROOM HAiku

Hard to say what con-
ditions make for poems that
tell it like it is.

nijinsky
In the morning
faun-bodied
long legs suddenly
grasshoppered
then eyes move slow over
careressing
the lover’s body
made &
asleep

—Tommi A.

CANDOR

Set your sights at being a major
female inventor,
write the country’s first great long
poem.
Accompany choirs in parishes around
the nation,
love our children into learning,
fill our galleries and decorate our
homes,
Preach us into our finest states of
grace,
Entertain us with a thousand dances,
plays and movies,
Design our clothes, dress our hair,
and in America, darling, you’ll still
be just a queer—Louie Crew

Terry #4

terry i’ve tried to erase
but this many headed moon
concentric
frantic as medusa
pouring inky waters
i tried to escape
tiptoeing down the stairs
thinking the darkness
might cloak
wrapped warm as a newborn
but my bones rattled &
my teeth shook

And i wanted you to possess me
like something i couldn’t
shake off
Inhale/exhale you
in the world of unborn babies
my unborn soul
i wanted you to dream me
like the teevon men
And terry the moon again tonight
while i
thought i had escaped
again large as a guillotined head
bloody red at the edges
wearing the halo of a sainted
martyr
its eyes—your eyes
its lips— tall & long
sheddng no shadow
as yours did
slipping into—
through—
mine

SATURDAY

Queen Nellie
Had a suitor.
She let him
Stay the night.

Queen Nellie
Forgot to shave;
Breakfast smelt good
Nonetheless.

Queen Nellie
Waited the proposal,
She waited like a tern
On the beach.

Queen Nellie
Stared at the sky,
She crimped her toes
And smoked benignly.

GETTING FAMILIAR

The trick of daylight to night
and back is nothing my Venetian blind
can’t perform. I will see
finally the way I want to see,
me cornered away
in my sullen bed.
A perfect time to take
up smoking again.

The bed lamp lights
a complement of lunar terrain;
in the rumpled sheets, eye
the topography of the fit
you’ve let me have,
the impasse of embarrassment
It’s led me to.
I won’t go out.
Anymore. For fear

What will be my love? As a scribe,
ancient,
bent over his abacus, his deft hands
greedily caressing his instrument,
delighting in the numbers he can
there's cement for my face
& some for my feet
you have looking glass eyes
that cleave me out, a
taxidermist
your antique stuffing
refills
and the wine intoxicates
i eat cancer
to deteriorate the straw
insides
i will conspire
& conspire
tomorrow
i will have no strings
i will creak no strings
i will creak like old boards
when i walk

Queen Nellie
Roasted peanuts;
She outdid herself
For Bobby.
Bobby had a wife
And a ticket for noon.
Bobby waited too long.
And Queen Nellie too.
By three her cheek
Grew dark.
Bobby stared in his cup:
No fate came forth.
Finally she
Unlocked the door.
Her birdie fled.
The house reeked
Of sour feet.

---Tommi A.

I'll run into you
with your elbows stuck
to whichever bar,
following my awkward
circling saunter with your eyes
like two dead fish
floating through your head--
and no word, after
having had words,
as they say,
"Your decision" sprung
on me with words
you'd been cranking up weeks
without without my consent.
So I'll stay in my sheets here
until I smell familiar
again and this world is more
than just at the foot of our bed.

---Stephen C.

I'll stay in my sheets here
until I smell familiar
again and this world is more
than just at the foot of our bed.

---Michael G.

delighting in the numbers he can add?
Yet another number an I to be,
Numbered carelessly for moments
pleasure.
And, like the bead, knicked, then
flipped quickly free,
While the numbering is the true
amour?
Or as a jeweler who, even with large
store
Will number some lucky bauble dearer
Than the great. To be numbered and
adored
For one's own worth is love much
happier.
And yet treasured as rare jewel or
cheap bead
Somehow either love is still love
indeed.

Clan Chattan

---End---
One of my pet peeves concerning a good many people in the lesbian community is a lack of knowledge concerning gay literature and art forms. Sad to say, in many cases this extends well beyond the current scene into gay history of people who gave us the bulk of our past art and literature as well. The people that I've met who fit into this pattern seem to be well educated, intelligent and often read a great deal (except it seems about their own history). Tome this is sad. An even sadder fact is that most of the people referred to have been out for a long while. Currently there are many brilliant gay artists and writers. Certainly our past history is filled with brilliant, talented people of whom we can be proud (if we are aware of them). Pride in one's history can only add to self-pride, a thing we need desperately. A gay person does not have the media resources available to the straight community - there will never be a long running "Gay Roots" broadcast. Certainly things have changed a bit in these areas but still, good visual representation of our life-style is very limited. If we are to be aware, and we should be, of the people that shaped our past, and of those shaping our present - the responsibility is our own. By neglecting our own history, we are cheating ourselves and remaining ignorant of many great human beings. Gay human beings who helped to shape the world and of whom we can be proud.

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Gay M - 23 - wishes to contact other white males (gay only, ages 16-25). Address correspondence to Jim, c/o Mattachine (address on back cover). Please include recent photo with full name, age and telephone number printed on back. Sorry, photos cannot be returned.

Small built, thin moustached, young white male seeks same - under 21. Am aggressive. Please contact: Art Hicks, 1968 Cudaback Avenue, Niagara Falls, N.Y., 14303
What do several well-known personalities and the writer of this column in a local gay-orientated newspaper have in common?

Celebrity memoirs as best sellers was the feature article of an issue of Newsweek last month. Two excerpts from books of this genre particularly caught my attention, and while one you will recognize as dealing with the author's homosexuality, the other does not. Both, however, express experiences I have had in verbalizing the facts of my sexual orientation and affectional preference.

In The Times of My Life by Betty Ford with Chris Case the former President's wife wrote after publicly admitting her alcoholism: "...It was scary, but once it was over, I felt a great relief." David Kopay and Perry Deane Young wrote in The David Kopay Story of the ex-football player's coming out experiences: "Talking about my life has an almost erotic quality to it. Telling people such deep things is almost like having a relationship with them. It's that erotic."

The authors are correct. There is something about harboring something very important about oneself that becomes absolutely unbearable after a while. And many of us have chosen to tell others about ourselves rather than wait until we were found out by accident or uncomfortable circumstance. But the planning and the timing that go into telling one's story that leads up to "...Well, you see, the fact of the matter is that I am gay," rival preparations for a Cape Kennedy launch.

"Scary?" Oh, yes. Each time when I arranged the situation for "a telling" I knew there was yet a possibility for retreat. But why retreat? In each case (in chronological order) -- my friend who was to become my lover, sister, wife, children, other selected friends and colleagues, mother, and other sister -- I came to realize that I was denying them the complete knowledge of who and what I am. And that was fair neither to them nor to myself.

In each instance the relief was overwhelming. It was as if a tremendous weight had been lifted off my shoulders, and with the improved posture that was then possible I could breathe freely, unencumbered by my own body working against itself.

Sharing of oneself is nearly erotic, and that does not mean going into explanations of the physical aspects of homorotism. It is the closest experience to acts of love that I have ever known, a real giving of myself to another human being. No artificially induced "high" could begin to approximate such experiences.

I cannot and will not deny the tears that accompany such coming out events. There have been plenty. But along with the tears of sorrow and uncertainty, pain and disbelief, there are tears of relief and pride in having been ready and able to say, "Yes, that's right. I AM GAY!"

...