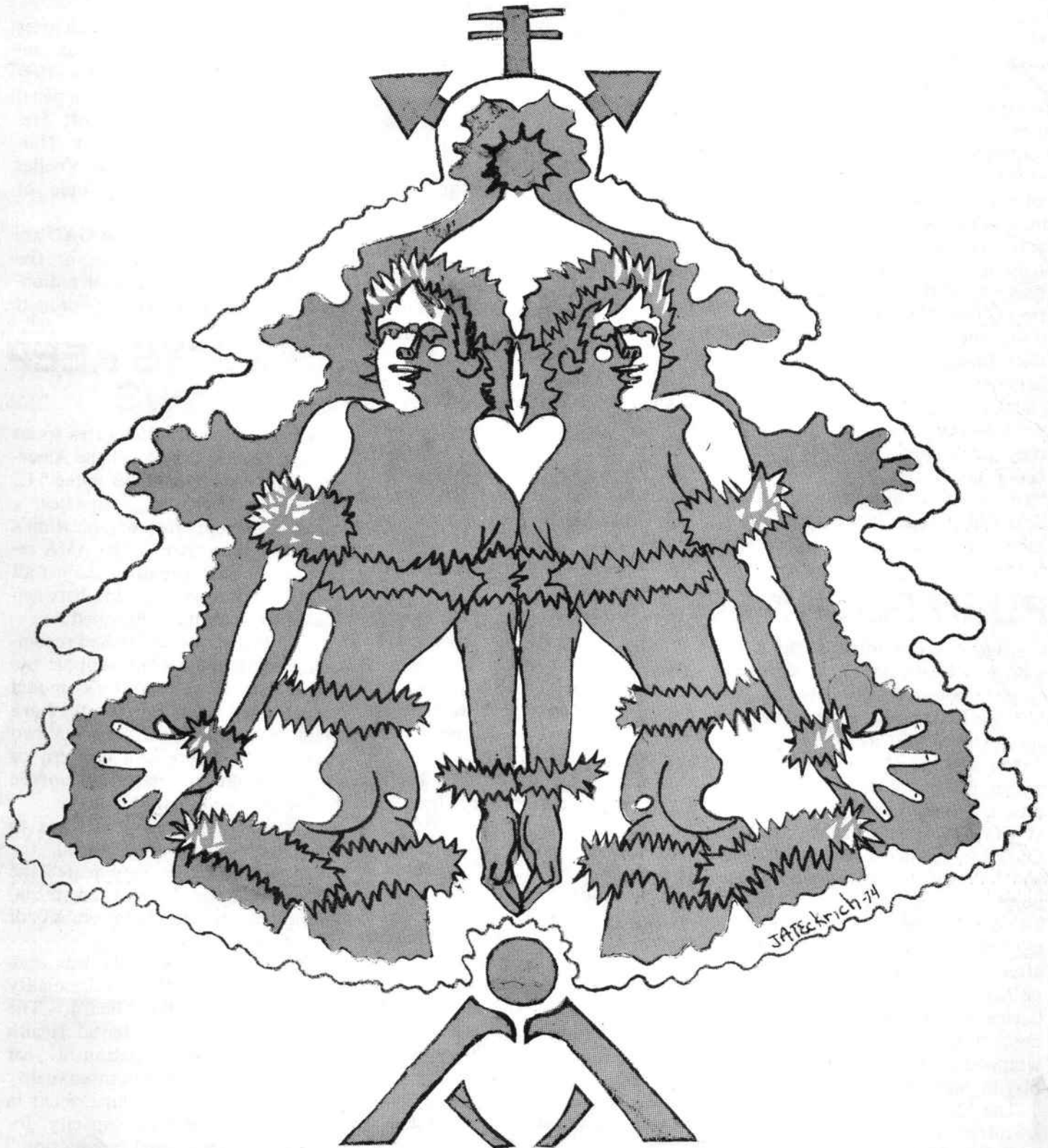


December 1974
Ä GPU NEWS 50¢

VOL. 4, NO. 3



GAY ACADEMIC UNION MEETS

New York - The second annual conference of The Gay Academic Union (GAU) was held at New York University on Friday and Saturday, November 29-30. Some 600 people attended various panels, meetings, workshops, and paper presentations. The theme of the conference, **Toward Community**, brought the issue of separatism out into the open in free exchanges that, while not designed to develop unity, at least created better understanding. Lesbian-feminist separatism, in particular, was discussed throughout the conference.

In the keynote session, Charlotte Bunch, founder of the lesbian-feminist newspaper **Furies**, explained that lesbian-feminists were forced to separatism because they could find no other way of being taken seriously. She said, "The women's movement does not deal with lesbian issues and the gay movement does not deal with women's issues."

PORN FLICKS BOMBED

Chicago - A few minutes before 8 p.m. on November 14, a bomb exploded at the Rialto Theater, 546 S. State St., causing extensive damage. The theater had only about a dozen patrons at the time, all of whom fled uninjured. A few minutes later another bomb exploded at the Newberry Theater, 854 N. Clark St., tearing a hole in the wall and injuring one patron. A similar bomb was discovered at the Bijou Theater on North Wells, after management had evacuated the theater after receiving a phone call. The police bomb squad dismantled the device which they described as being three sticks of dynamite wrapped in a block of TNT with a blasting cap and fuse.

The Newberry and the Bijou featured gay hard-core porn films and the Rialto had only a few

Barbara Gittings of the Task Force on Gay Liberation of the American Library Association said that "questions of definitions are not so important to the vast majority of people." To her "survival issues—special responsibilities to other gays with gay problems" are more important. She said, "Nothing would suit the anti-homosexual bigots more than if we were divided and conquered." She asked if "anatomy is destiny?"

Bert Hansen of the National Gay Task Force called separatism "an urban luxury" and reminded his listeners that smaller communities cannot and do not afford such a luxury.

The conference featured panel discussions on Sources of Lesbian Oppression (women only), Gay Male Identity, and Lesbian Aesthetics, among others. One of the highlights for many delegates was a set of papers on The German Gay Movement. Another on Figures in Gay Male Literature was conducted

months ago switched from gay to nongay porno. Two other nongay porno houses, The Shangri La and The Follies, were also attacked the same evening. A car was pushed onto the sidewalk in front of the Shangri La and set on fire. The gas tank exploded causing fear and confusion within the theater. A fire was set on the roof of the Follies and fire crackers were exploded in the auditorium. Nongay massage parlors and several porn bookstores had also recently been threatened.

Several theories about the persons responsible for the bombings are circulating in Chicago. Some believe that the bombings were a warning to owners from the crime syndicate. It is believed, but not proven, that the five theaters—gay

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by author Merle Miller. GAU hopes to print proceedings of the entire conference as it did with the 1973 meeting.

On Saturday afternoon delegates from the various regional areas caucused and reported to the conference. The final session was a panel consisting of Sidney Abbot, Stephen Bull, Frances Doughty, Martin Duberman and Bruce Voeller who all addressed the topic of **Toward Community**.

Regional conferences of GAU are planned in several areas in the spring and another annual nationwide conference is planned for next fall.

AMA SAYS KEEP SEX LAWS

Portland, Oregon - Delegates to an annual clinical session of the American Medical Association voted 112 to 90 on December 3 to reject a proposal from the organization's board of trustees that the AMA recommend that penalties against all forms of sexual behavior between consenting adults be dropped.

The board of trustees had recommended that the AMA support the American Law Institute's model penal code, which states that private sexual behavior between two consenting adults is a concern of the individuals and should not be subject to criminal penalties.

In sending the proposal back to the board without approval, the delegates said that they feared the recommendation could be misinterpreted as an endorsement of prostitution.

The measure actually was concerned more with homosexuality according to the board. The AMA's Council on Mental Health issued a recommendation a year ago stating that "homosexuality denotes no inherent impairment in physical or mental capacity for social or vocational adaptation."

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH BURNS



Milwaukee Journal photos.

On Friday, November 29, the morning after Thanksgiving, a fire gutted the First Baptist Church, 911 East Ogden, the weekly meeting place of Gay Peoples Union, Inc. for over three years. The first of five alarms was received at 6:27 a.m. and 14 pumpers, 7 ladder trucks, a rescue squad, a mobile hospital, 6 chief's vehicles and more than 100 firefighters responded. According to Fire Chief William Stamm, who took direct charge of the firefighting operation, four firemen were injured before the blaze was brought under control at about 10:30 a.m. The superstructure of the landmark building still stands, but the stained glass windows and the entire interior of the building remain in total ruin.

Early Baptists in Milwaukee formed a congregation meeting at the Ogden and Marshall site in 1836 and the cornerstone of the present building was laid on Thanksgiving day in 1888. The congregation has long been known for its leadership in community services. In 1956 the church membership stood at about 600. Then the

neighborhood began to lose its residential character partly due to a massive community re-development project which cleared and rebuilt a large section of the area and partly due to freeway plans which cleared another tract of residences. In 1959 the congregation decided to remain at the location, knowing that its membership would dwindle. It remained to serve the neighborhood. In the late 60's the church decided to open its doors to members of the counter-culture living in the area. The East Side Community Center was formed and it operated out of the facilities for several years before disbanding. Currently the Milwaukee Council on Drug Abuse, the Milwaukee East Organizations Congress, Gay Peoples Union, the Free University and a new day care center have been using its meeting rooms. Rev. Sanders hopes that the decision to remain in the community will endure and he foresees the possibility of rebuilding a community center-church with offices and meeting rooms available once again to the public.

Meanwhile, Gay Peoples Union

will hold its regular Monday meetings in its new Examination Center for V.D. until other plans can be worked out. GPU suffered no loss of records or equipment except for an addressograph machine. All other property and records were kept elsewhere.

TEXAS PRISON FAILS GAYS

Austin, Tex. - Inmates who are considered troublemakers by Texas prison officials are often put into cells with homosexuals as a form on punishment, a legislative committee was told Dec. 3. John Albach, staff director of the Joint Committee on Prison Reform, also told the panel, "There are serious problems in the prison system with homosexuals. Apparently there isn't any counseling for homosexuals. Being involved in homosexual activity is against the rules, and apparently there is a feeling they can't counsel anyone who is breaking the rules."

EDITORIAL

by Rev. Wilbur C. Cain

Removed by time and place from a Milwaukee Christmas gives one the opportunity to keep a clear perspective about Christmas—namely, it's the celebration of the birth of an individual in a distant place in the dusty past who would "be born in us" and "live with us" in our time and in our place.

Christmas, for some, is a matter of place, of geography. Here, at my place, Christmas is in a setting with a patio, a pool, several palms, a courtyard, in the French Quarter of old New Orleans. Yours will be kept on the frozen shores of Lake Michigan, with biting winds, frozen streets, evergreens, and probably, snow falling. The Christmas Manger scene—if one recalls the first Christmas—is no more appropriate in one place or another, on the frozen snow covered yard of Milwau-

MEMBER COSMOPOLITAN

COMMITTEE OF SMALL MAGAZINE
EDITORS AND PUBLISHERS
BOX 703 SAN FRANCISCO, CA. 94101

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If you wish to place an ad in future issues, write to us at the above address for rates and information.

If you want counseling about a homosexual problem or would like to have a speaker on the subject for your group, contact us at the above address or telephone 271-5273.

Yours in Liberation,
THE PUBLICATION
COMMITTEE

kee or on a courtyard balcony on the reaches of the Gulf of Mexico. If Christmas were only a matter of place, then we would be caught up in a cultural residue and it would be difficult to catch the significance and celebrate the meaning of that Birth that took place in Bethlehem...in a stable...in a manger.

Christmas, for others, is a matter of time, of past time, of nostalgia. Many people "go home" for Christmas. It's trips, reunions, togetherness, a journey into childhood. Airports, train stations, bus depots are crowded with pilgrims to the past, on a round-trip ticket to nostalgia. The first Christmas had its travel too—a two-way donkey ride to Bethlehem, to the family home. But there was a difference in the element of time—those first travelers, Mary and Joseph, were going "home" with a future in mind. They didn't understand, probably, at the time, but they were caught up in a series of events shaped by divine decree: "when the fullness of time had come" Mary "brought forth her firstborn Son" which "the angels announced. . . unto you is born this day, a Savior, which is Christ the Lord."

Too many are willing to settle for the residue of that first Christmas. People celebrate with the residue—family, parties, gifts, decorations, concerts, nostalgia, fantasy. But the Spirit of Christmas is tied up in relationships rather than with the residue of some place or some time.

That's the "big gift" of Christmas, the gift of relationships with our self, with our peers, with our friends, with our loved ones. Because God so loved us and gave us His Son to restore, to mend, to cement our relationship with Him, we have the incentive and the power to restore, to mend, to cement our human relationships. Now is the place and now is the time to be about the celebration of relationships. Now, at this time, and in

(continued on page 7)

FEEDBACK

Dear Editors,

The National Officers of DIGNITY wish to express our sincere thanks for your warm, concrete expression of support for Brian McNaught. Because of your beautiful dedication, and that of our DIGNITY family across the country, we have helped our Church to understand more fully the serious Christian love of our Gay brothers and sisters, and the need for an end to discrimination. We appreciate your being with us in this great victory.

We would also like to extend to you our sincere congratulations on your fourth anniversary. Your publication is a gem in the Community, and gives much of value to the Gay understanding. Please continue knowing how great you are, and getting even better.

The Community in Milwaukee may be interested to know that we are currently forming a chapter there. If anyone would like more information, or to be a part of the forming chapter, please tell them to write to us in Boston until we can get a Milwaukee address.

Continued success in all you do,

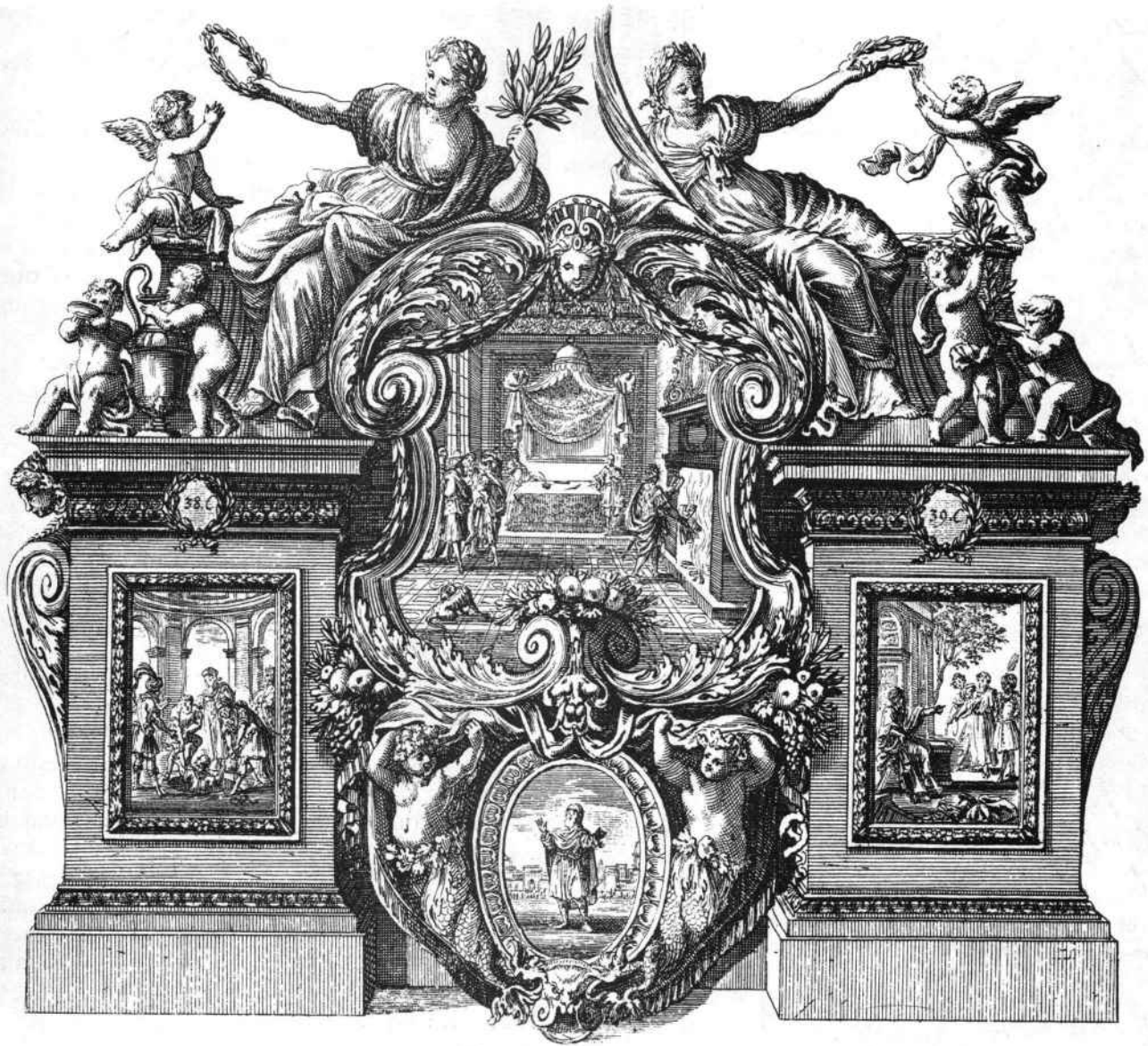
Yours in Dignity,
Paul Diederich
National President
Dignity
755 Boylston Street
Room 514
Boston, Mass. 02116

Dear GPU NEWS:

I happened to catch Sunday night's television special "Another Face of Love" and I just want to say thanks for the fantastic representation you gave to the gay community.

As a member of the nongay community, yet a friend of a few gay people, I greatly appreciate the fact that some effort is being put forth to educate the public on the gay lifestyle. It makes me wince and it

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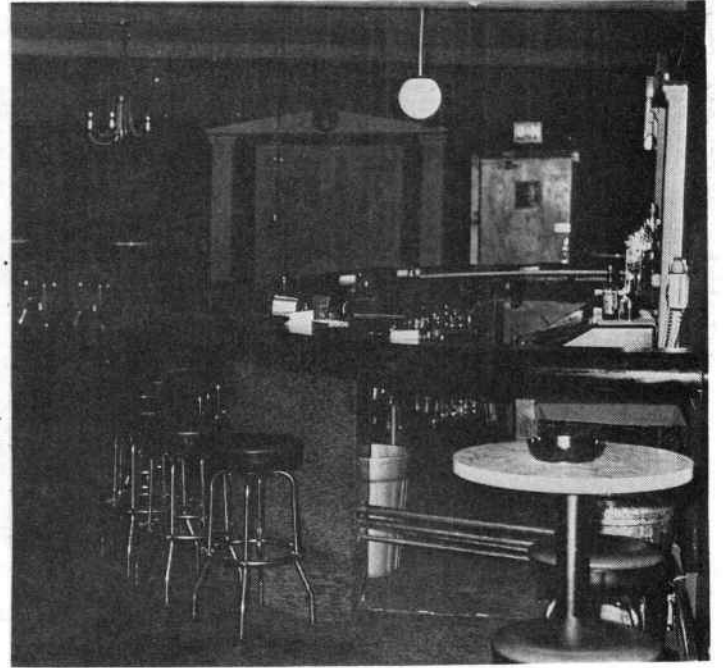
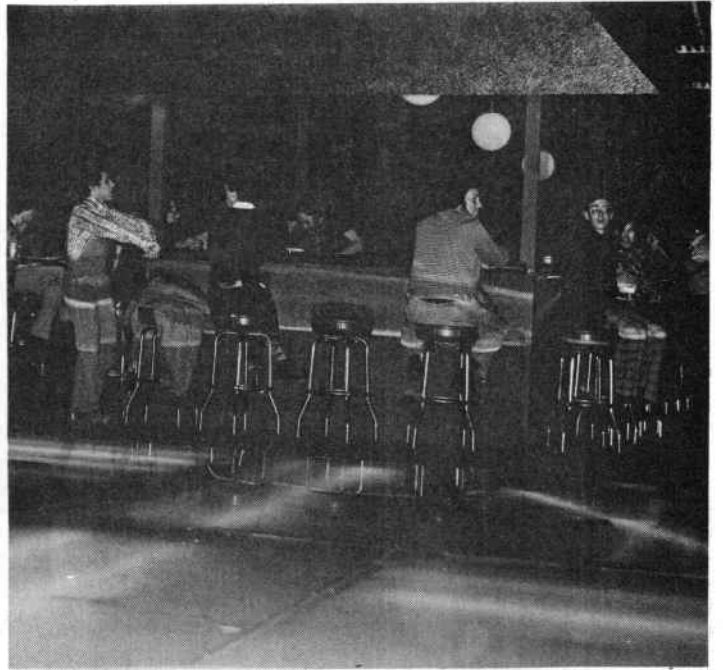
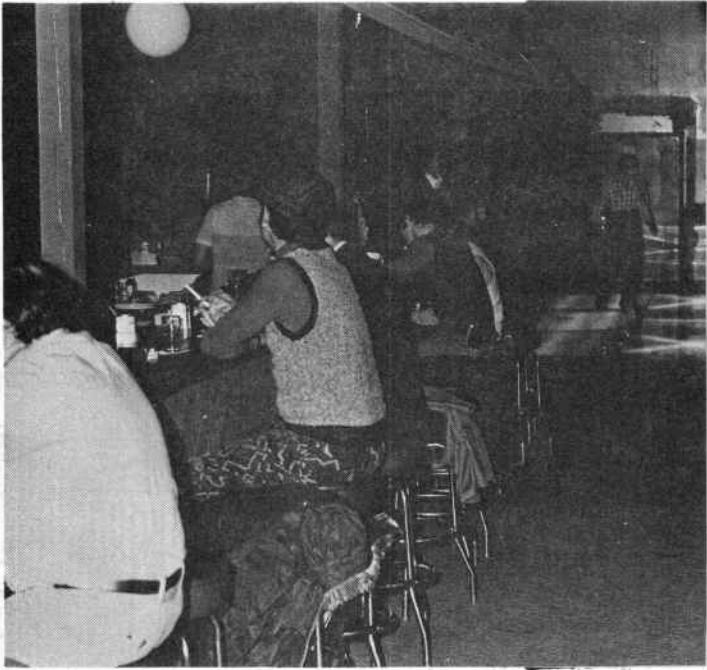


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EDITORIAL (from page 4)

whatever place, we have the reason to be Christlike—finding “peace” within ourselves, bringing “peace” to others. This is the place, wherever your place is, to be Christlike, being the unique person you are and sharing yourself with those you love. This is the time—time for you—to see the eternalness of your be-

ing, and to realize that your times are in the hands of God who is interested and invested in your becoming completely the person you have been created and redeemed to be.

A postscript needs to be added. This message of the Gospel of Christmas is “for all people” that all relationships, the relationships of gay people, too, might be re-

stored, mended, cemented. In this Gospel gay men and gay women can find cause for celebration, for God is not a respecter of persons, but a respecter of that wonderful Person—in His Son—who was born that we might all have life and have it abundantly. So, this is the time, and this is the place—in the congregations of the redeemed—for gay people to Celebrate Christmas.

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BEER BUST TUESDAYS AND THURSDAYS

New York: A Hellava Town

By Wayne Jefferson

Bounding two-at-a-time up the New York subway steps, I burst upon Greenwich Village, that kaleidoscope of tree-lined streets, exotic curio shops, and inhabitants of every fiber, from straight-starched tourists to the tatterdemalion denim of the hippie/dropout. And other minorities too: males with left-ear earrings whiz by me on the sidewalks everywhere. It's unisex time; a sign in a bookshop states "Men's shoulder bags must be checked at desk, too." This, then, is the Village, the historic artists-and-writers bohemia where gay liberation all started—or rather, erupted and solidified—five years ago during the Stonewall riots of June, 1969. Now it is the autumn of 1974, yellow leaves on the cobbled side-streets—including, yes, Gay St. In town on semi-business for a few days, I decide to check out Gotham's gay scene now, "at this point in time," both history's and my own.

Want the latest in Movement literature? I find it meticulously garnered at the Oscar Wilde Memorial Bookshop, including that rarity, a satisfyingly complete selection of lesbian-feminist material comfortably cheek-to-jowl with the more-usual male stuff. No chauvinistic segregation or exclusion here. (Of course, there's a whole dim-lit dive of male skin books, pix, and flicks buried elsewhere in the Village, if you wish; whatever turns you on.) The genial woman at the OWMB desk, it turns out, knows a Milwaukee person I know. Small world; smaller gayworld; even-smaller gaylib world.

Meetings at Night

Still on Christopher Street, it's on to the Mattachine Society, which keeps on trucking—providing its broad range of social services via both walk-in and hot-line. And the Gay Activists Alliance was—at that point in time—still zappily activist, though this was since the recent, and disintegrating, fire at the Firehouse (its turf). Then there's the West Side Discussion Group, in existence since 1956. This Wednesday, its weekly discussion topic is gay marriage, led by couples who have been together over 15 years. I attend. The overflow crowd is older, staid—perhaps too traditional? Poor tired aunties? No, good people, and a meeting full of warm community for them. As often in these forums, much of the better wit—more relaxed,



wacky, wry, sprightly, genial-ironic—seems to emanate from the women on the panel, rather than the men. I also notice that, perhaps too often, only one of the partners does most or all of the talking, the other sitting silent. Shades of residual, old-time role-playing? Also, during the awarding of "one-year service pins" later, only the first names are called out, the last names remaining closeted in their initials only. "Laura K., there you are—and now Peter G." Aren't they among friends, I wondered? I felt a savage, small desire to inscribe my last name on my visitor's tag (overliberated, undoubtedly). But when in Rome . . . to each his own, and after all the WSDG has been usefully at it, and with it, years before upstart Stonewall. So more power to them.

Thursday, and to the newer Ninth Street Center. In an East Village basement room, a clean well-lighted place, 25-35 people, weary of the bar scene and traditional roles, come in out of the cold, gather almost nightly. Inspired by a Dr. Paul Rosenfels and his book *Homosexuality: the Psychology of the Creative Process*, they rap together with no domination, no ego-tripping. Self-directing, self-correcting, leaderless but directional, they aid members, solve their problems, come out further into self-liberation. The key concept is personal growth. Tonight, one man, formerly promiscuous, seems to have found a lover. "What difference can you make in this person's life?" he is asked. Maybe it's at time a little party-lineish—the phrase "as Paul says" is heard often, and I understand the guru himself orbits into these soirees twice a week—but it's still providing



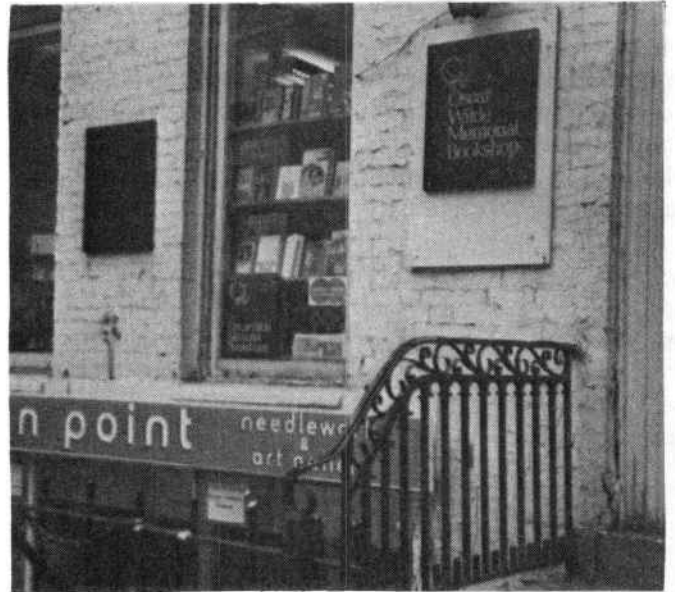
GPU NEWS photos

good counselling.

During the day Friday, I visit the National Gay Task Force. In its sparse-but-cluttered suite of offices at 80 Fifth Avenue (room 903), I meet director Bruce Voeller, learn that the NGTF was instrumental behind the scenes in gaining the anti-“sickness” statement from the American Psychiatric Association. Now it is about zapping ABC for that particularly offensive Marcus Welby segment “The Outrage,” about the rape of a male high-school student. I read over their posted series of letters to ABC—clear, reasonable, but hard-nosed and unforgiving of oppression, they are the very models of spunky liberation-in-action (as against the blandly-evasive, woolly-worded replies by the ponderous pundits at ABC). Next in sight on the NGTF docket are: 1) repeal of the immigration statutes against gays by test cases; 2) amending the Civil Rights Act; 3) changing the sex laws nationally; 4) providing tax relief, child visitation rights, etc., for unmarrieds; and then who knows what else on the horizon, toward that Utopian day when gay activism is no longer needed. But I departed feeling that, at **this** “point in time,” the NGTF both needs and deserves the support of all of us, whom they’re working to support. You can write for info at the above address.

And Time Out

Saturday night—and the bars. There’s the usual embarrassment of riches, in the Village alone. The Ninth Circle, and its constantly circulating crush of



cute cruisers. Peter Rabbit, off-the-wall crazy and wacky anytime. One Potato, your average friendly neighborhood tavern—but with that slight difference. (The Ninth Street Center crowd uses it as its local, welcomes me there.) Ty’s, the new stellar spot on the horizon, overflowing the surplus bodies into the street. Danny’s, a smokey tunnel with many Blacks. The Eagle’s Nest—“leather and western only, please.” Plus many more—whatever turns you on, indeed. Though it’s the first cool weekend of the autumn, still at the almost-ceremonial hour of midnight the Village streets overflow with a human tide running at the flood. And later there are the baths, those gigantic, hushed-shuffling, do-it-yourself bordellos, if not, as Lord Byron described them, “those Paradises of sherbert and sodomy,” yet redolent with Muzak and chlorine around the clock . . . can it be that they haven’t closed down since my last time there during that uncertain summer of 1972?

. . . And Sunday Morning

A crisp clear Sunday afternoon, actually, and I bleakly rouse myself out to attend the Church of the Beloved Disciple. Out of a dingy storefront, in a year or so, this eucharistic Catholic group has created a weekly service complete with incense and spirit. In the face of immense opposition, next month, this same group will make history when their pastor, Father Robert Clement, will become the first openly gay priest ever to be consecrated a bishop in holy church. Today, a crusty, feisty

old archbishop on deck with us pledges his total and relentless support of the move, despite the threatening flak from within the church. This feeds the sense of triumph, which already runs high. Onward, gay Christian soldiers. A surprise presentation of new garb to Father Robert. Campy comments before the sermon. Afterwards, coffee, cupcakes, and chatting. I meet an English chap on holiday, also a nice lad originally (very originally) from worlds-away Racine, Wisconsin.

An hour later, the Eulenspiegel Society, dealing with sadism and masochism, holds its own weekly meeting at the church. But, becoming aware that most of the crowd, however genial, consists of "straight male masochists," I fold my shoulder bag and quietly steal away at the intermission. Whatever turns you on.

The Bisexual "Ideal"?

Then it's on to a new wrinkle, the very latest thing. Just read the trendy *Village Voice's* classifieds. "National Bisexual Liberation is back!" proclaims the ad. Approaching their party and rap group, I sense apprehension—in jaded me? Will it be a bevy of indiscriminate swingers, forcing me into something I don't dig? It actually turns out to be nothing like that at all—and not dull, either. I quiz its founder as to whether some people don't charge him with copping-out, with cloaking his gayness under this mask of "bisexuality," in other words with duplicity, not being honest. "Yes, many do," he replies, "and my answer to that is, how can that be, when I do such things as spend twenty-minutes on national television going on about the delights of sex with another man?" Gotcha—as Rhoda would say. Discovering his gayness at 28, he felt he hadn't lost touch with women, he said.

NBL believes that—for some, not for all—bisexuality can be the fullest expression of human liberation, of lovingly relating "to any individual we care about—be they genital females or males." And indeed, maybe I'm either brainwashed or on some kind of natural high, but the vibes among the dozen people there did seem remarkably free of conventional role-playing, and that includes not only the rough-and-coy, Dick-and-Jane tone of all-straight parties (what a wearisome, plastic drag, a la American graffiti) but also the archly bitchy-campy-fey hue of some all-gay gatherings as well ("under the surface, more surface"—as well as wary hostility). By contrast, here it was people-as-people. Each guest knowing that they had both gay and straight within them, each knowing this about the others and that the others knew it too,

they seemed more ready to interact simply as people at various way-stations in their personal odysseys. Not "confused" (as *Time* magazine stamped bis) but complex. No defenses, no pretenses. No heavy cruising as such, but something better (and, for that matter, just as efficient)—receptivity on many levels. A first for jaded me.

During the rap, many new ideas emerge. Some paradoxes of psycho-sexual existence. First, "roles" do constrict one; but, how can one operate, at least with others, without at least some of the facilitating guidelines (greasing social intercourse) that roles do provide? Then, one does want "permanence" in his life; but, one also wants to enjoy the moment(s), including experiencing many people. Also, one shouldn't be a "doormat"—but not over-controlled and super-"cool" either, but receptive. The opening topic was actually the founder's recent visit to Japan. His impression of Japanese males: underneath a superficial machismo, "they're pussycats." It gets later, and some of the people have to depart. Now only males remain. "But we haven't really discussed women yet," one participant notes. Snapshots from Japan are brought out and handed round. "There's the token women" in one of them, someone jokes. The talk continues to circle around males, of many countries, as the hour grows later yet and the anticipation of post-midnight magic begins to emerge for some in the room . . .

Later, Baby

To all things there is a season and, rinsed by my sojourn, I and my shoulder bag prepare to depart Manhattan the next day. I didn't see the whole scene by a long shot. There's also more religion—the MCC, the Catholic Dignity, gay synagogues; the Gay Academic Union; alliances of medical and law students; Gay Youth; lesbian-feminist alliances, of course. Whatever serves your needs. In the midst of the grit and grime, iron gates and crime, of this town, and beyond the traditional gayworld's dubious offerings of the bars, baths, tearooms, parks, and streets **only**, all these various little groups have carved out humane turf, have cultivated—through actually having centers, premises, locations, places to go, where gay Community can take root and flourish, nourished by liberated heads. It ain't perfect; the Big Apple is no Mecca, it still lacks a certain West Coast openness, it's often more warily pulled-together than openly Together—but it's still a start and a good one. I board the Greyhound (casting that ever-speculative glance around . . .) with memories of good places, and faces, illuminating the City of Night.



THE GAY GOURMET

3 Bean Salad

It's genuine German sweet-and-sour (rich and zippy both), it's great with chili and the like, it's surefire for potluck parties, where they'll damned well know "it's not out of a can, is it?"

(1) In a non-metallic or stainless-steel container, assemble the following prepared ingredients:

1 package frozen green beans - cooked **briefly** only, then drained **well**

1 package frozen yellow (wax) beans - ditto the above

1 can red kidney beans - drained well, then **rinsed** and drained also

1 cup celery - diced

1 cup onion (red or white) - diced

1/2 cup green pepper - diced

1/4 cup red pimento - diced

(2) In a saucepan, make the dressing. Combine 1 cup white vinegar, 1 cup sugar, 1/2 cup vegetable oil. Bring this to a **boil**, stir-dissolve, then **cool** before thoroughly stir-blending it into all the ingredients.

(3) Cover and refrigerate 24 hours **before** using.

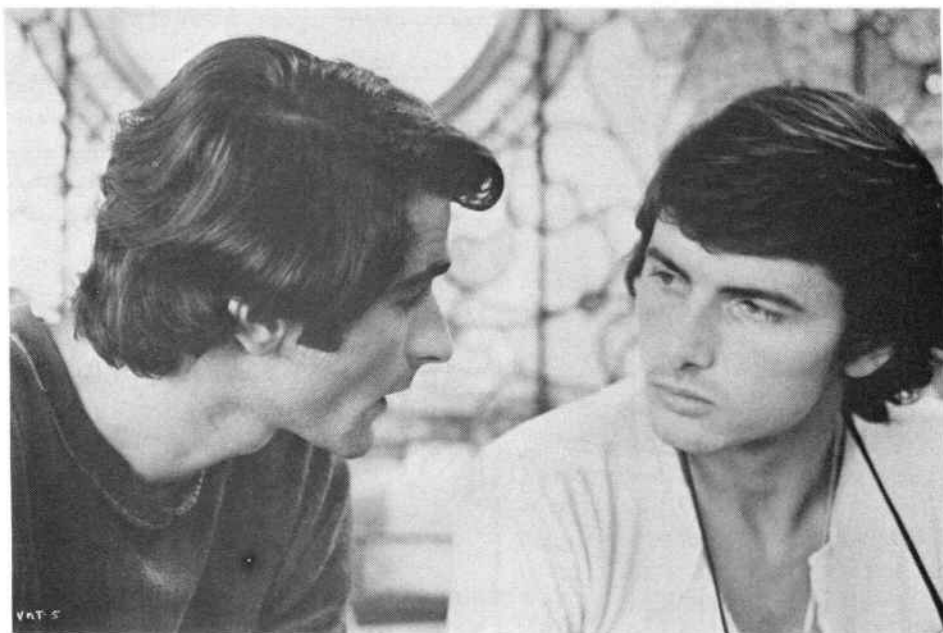
Remember: don't overcook the beans; drain them well; boil, then cool, the dressing first; and marinate the salad a day before devouring. (Why not double the quantities given? A bigger batch isn't getting older, it's betting better, as time goes on and marination works its magic apace in the icebox.

REVIEW

Film writer, producer and director Christopher Larkin has released his feature length color film titled *A Very Natural Thing*. Since this film is produced entirely from the gay point of view and sensibility, it should be judged in that light alone. Gay audiences will find it "natural" indeed, since such a broad slice of the gay experience is portrayed as to give almost every gay viewer, particularly gay males, something with which to relate emotionally. However, the film is so totally directed to gays that nongays will probably have difficulty in relating. *A Very Natural Thing* is basically a gay love story and nongays usually have difficulty realizing that love between two members of the same sex does not carry the same emotions and values as love between members of the opposite sex. Perhaps this is why nongay reviewers have, for the most part, failed to see the significance of this film, while most gay reviewers have overpraised it.

Mr. Larkin and his co-author Joseph Coencas have set out to chronicle a male love affair in non-exploitative terms in order to counter the stereotypical depictions prevalent in both major commercial productions and gay pornography. They offer perceptive insight into the problems and dreams of two males who, while in love, spurn the traditional male/female roles that society seems to find necessary for the explanation of love.

The film, if anything, is an understatement because Larkin is self-consciously trying to avoid sentimentality. His characters, like most gay males, can express love physically, but have difficulty in verbalizing their feelings. In addition, he tries too hard to depict large portions of the gay lifestyle by showing, though realistically to be sure,



A VERY NATURAL THING



bars, baths, elegant dinner parties, cruising episodes and even a Fire Island orgy. His best departure from the love story is when he uses cinema verite interviews with proud gays taken at New York's 1973 Stonewall Anniversary march.

The plot is deceptively simple. The central character, David, leaves his life in a monastery (a heterosexual institution?) and moves to New York to take a teaching position. In a gay bar (a homosexual institution?), symbolically decorated with altar candles, he meets Mark, a handsome advertising man. They have sex. David is looking for love and Mark is looking for sex. David pursues Mark and they begin to see one another regularly. Mark is reluctant to settle down to a one-to-one relationship even though he is beginning to have strong feelings for David. He knows himself well enough to understand that he is not the "marrying kind."

When a nongay friend gets married, David and Mark decide that they should live together. The decision is apparently made while attending the wedding where the two men are obviously influenced by the sheer joy reflected on the faces of the nongay couple as they exchange vows. The point that should be made here is that the film is neither a put-down of the heterosexual lifestyle nor a panegyric to the homosexual lifestyle. The two lifestyles are simply contrasted in a matter of fact way as

being viable alternatives.

In a series of short vignettes we follow the progress of the love affair for about a year. There is no high drama of outside forces conspiring to tear the couple apart. The obstacles that ultimately bring about the demise of the relation-

ship are of their own making. The camera follows the men in their day-to-day life, at work and at play. Gradually the relationship begins to change as David becomes more possessive and Mark becomes more restless and in need of freedom.

(continued on page 26)

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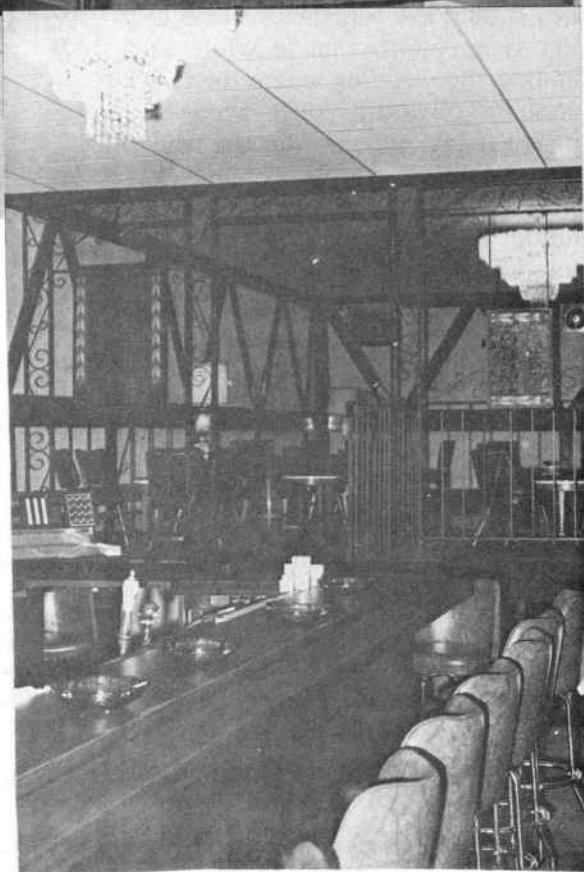


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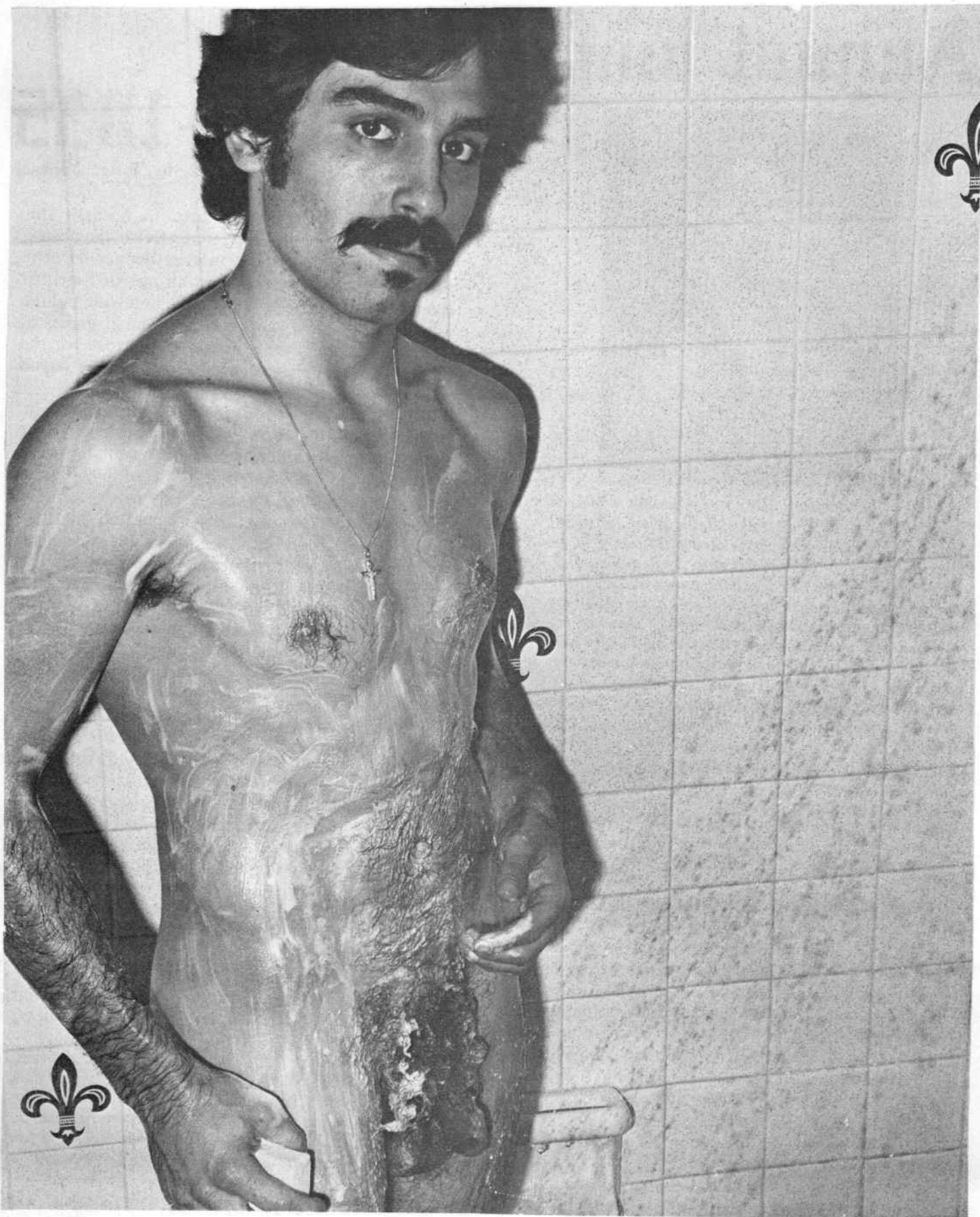


photo by Conrad Hunter & Associates, Inc.

August von Platen

1796 - 1835

by Bruce Michael



It is not without reason that I fear returning to Munich lest I fall prey to love's folly. I am at an age which demands love; friendship alone cannot suffice. I would like to draw close to another person. I can dull my feelings through serious activity, but I cannot assuage them. But what I fear the most and tremble to admit is that my inclinations are directed far more toward those of my own sex than toward women. Can I change what I have not done? . . . Love without sensuality cannot be. But never and in no wise has Federigo ever aroused sensual urges within me. But what if I should go that far with others? I would be lost. I would be consumed with despair. I would never achieve my life's goal and would even shudder to strive for it. I already know how even noble love can lead one to the brink of ruin and despair, but I have never experienced how sensual passion can utterly destroy a man. But I have a terrible presentiment of it. There are so many things about life that make me wish I had never been born.

These words were entered into the diary of a young German poet in October, 1817, and pre-saged with uncanny accuracy his destiny: to give poetic shape to inner needs that he perceived as potentially destructive both to himself and his art. He succeeded in creating poetry of astounding classical perfection; he succeeded in creating a place for himself in German letters that has never been disputed; he succeeded in creating a life, however, of desparate loneliness and isolation. Embittered in self-imposed exile, he died eighteen years later, at the age of 39. His name was August Graf von Platen-Hallermünde.

Platen was born in Ansbach, Germany, in 1796, the son of a family whose noble ancestry extended

well back into medieval history. A brilliant student who eventually mastered twelve languages, he was not an attractive figure, rather an eccentric personality, a neo-classicist in an age of romanticism. Even today, he is not read by a wide public, but known mainly to a relatively small group of **literati**. He stands as a figure who strove for the highest ideals of classical literature, ideals he served with the passionate intensity of a priest.

There is no question that, for him, beauty in its highest earthly form was represented by young men. His love for them, bordering on the mystical, is theme and substance of most of his literary creations. In lyric, in epic, in dramatic form he extolled the virtues of beauty, celebrated the sublimity of noble friendship, the joy of platonic love. As is not seldom the case, the reality of his life reflected more the torment of unrequited love, the guilt of homosexual passion and the pain of striving for utterly unattainable happiness with a beloved friend, preferably young and preferably blond. Platen was very much a human being who suffered the anguish of all men who love with all-too-human intensity.

At the age of seventeen, as a page at the Bavarian court, he glimpsed a Count Mercy d'Argenteau at a courtly ball and realized immediately that this man embodied all his ideals of beauty and nobility of mind. Platen never once spoke to this beloved, never found out anything about him and never saw him again. However, he had found his object of adoration and remained faithful to it, although naturally not to him, all his life and in all his art. This meeting set the pattern for most of his subsequent passionate affairs, for his chosen idols always remained distant, usually unaware of the intensity of his feelings, in short, fantasies of his own creation. Platen himself later reflected upon his quest for love:

I became accustomed to focusing my hopes and dreams for love on members of my own sex, seeking in their friendship the same thing a bridegroom seeks in marriage. I became accustomed to honor rather than to love women, to love rather than to honor men. I feel that true friendship and true love can be combined in a relationship with men, whereas love for women will always be mingled with erotic desire.

TRISTAN

Wer die Schönheit angeschaut mit Augen,
Ist dem Tode schon anheimgegeben,
Wird für keinen Dienst auf Erden taugen,
Und doch wird er vor dem Tode beben,
Wer die Schönheit angeschaut mit Augen!

Ewig währt für ihn der Schmerz der Liebe,
Denn ein Tor nur kann auf Erden hoffen,
Zu genügen einem solchen Triebe:
Wen der Pfeil des Schönen je getroffen,
Ewig währt für ihn der Schmerz der Liebe!

Ach, er möchte wie ein Quell versiechen,
Jedem Hauch der Luft ein Gift entsaugen
Und den Tod aus jeder Blume riechen:
Wer die Schönheit angeschaut mit Augen,
Ach, er möchte wie ein Quell versiechen!

an FRIEDRICH von BRANDENSTEIN

Nie hat ein spätrtes Bild dein Bild vernichtet,
Das fühlt' ich stets vielleicht und fühl' es heute,
Da sich's nach langen Jahren mir erneute,
Nachdem ich manchen Wahn der Welt gesichtet.

O Zeit, in der ich noch für dich gedichtet,
Was, ausser mir, sich keiner Leser freute!
Noch war mein Name nicht der Welt zur Beute,
Die selten fühlt und oft so lieblos richtet!

Noch unbekannt mit meinen eignen Trieben,
Zu ernst, zu schüchtern, allzusehr verschlossen,
Bin ich dir fremd durch eigne Schuld geblieben.

Da wieder nun ich deines Blicks genossen,
Empfind' ich wieder jenen Drang, zu lieben;
Doch meine schönste Jugend ist verflossen.

an KARL THEODOR GERMAN (1825)

Die Liebe scheint der zarteste der Triebe,
Das wissen selbst die Blinden und die Tauben,
Ich aber weiss, was wen'ge Menschen glauben,
Dass wahre Freundschaft zarter ist als Liebe.

Die Liebe wird mit feurigem Betriebe
Sich in sich selber zu verzehren schnauben;
Doch meines Freundes kann mich nichts
berauben,
Bis nicht ich selbst in leichten Staub zerstiebe.

Er zeigt mir Kälte nur und Uebelwollen,
Er spottet mein, er hat mich längst vergessen,
Doch dacht' ich nie daran, mit ihm zu grollen.

Nie wird er meine Hand in seine pressen,
Stets aber werd' ich neues Lob ihm zollen,
Und was man lobt, hat man im Geist besessen.

TRISTAN

who beauty has beheld before his eyes
to death itself already has succumbed
will be no use in earthly service more
and yet still tremble at death's door
who beauty has beheld before his eyes

he ever must endure love's anguish now
for none but fools could hope upon this earth
here ever so insatiate need assuage
whom beauty's arrow ever has so pierced
he ever must endure love's anguish now

he will, alas, be poisoned like a spring
and venom with each breath of air inspire
find death anew in every blossom-scent
who beauty has beheld before his eyes
he will, alas, be poisoned like a spring

to FRIEDRICH von BRANDENSTEIN

no other image ever dulled your own
this i could swear and swear it still today
now as you stand before me once again
with years of worldly madness come between

there was a time i wrote for you alone
no other ever saw a single line
my name as yet unsullied by this world
that seldom feels, then judges heartlessly

i was a stranger to my own desires
too shy, too grave, too silent then as well
it was my fault that we remained apart

now as i feel your presence once again
i sense anew desire and need to love
but now my fairest youth, alas, is gone

to KARL THEODOR GERMAN

though love appears to be tenderest desire
as even blind and deaf alike proclaim
yet i maintain what very few believe
true friendship tenderer still than love abides

for love consumes, destroys with fiery lust
and raging, burns, consumes, destroys itself
while nothing could deprive me of my friend
till i myself have turned to dust in death

he offers me but scorn and cold ill-will
he laughs at me and claims to have forgotten
yet i shall never think to curse his name

though he will never hold my hand in his
always, ever shall i grant him praise
for praising offers respite to my soul

(translations copyright Bruce Michael)

He consistently maintained that his search was a search for ideal friendship, untainted as it were by sensual desire. Indeed, he struggled intensely against any clearly erotic feelings: "I separate sensual and spiritual love and consider the former unworthy of human beings." So long as he lived in Germany, he never consummated any relationship with any man, beloved or otherwise, but there is little doubt that his last ten years in Italy offered him some fulfillment of the desires he denied so bitterly in the dour northern climate. There is also little doubt, however, that he never found, in

reality, his perfect lover and friend, noble companion for life.

In fact, there is good reason to question how genuine this search for an ideal lover may have been. On a deeper level, he realized it was a quest for a mythical figure, a spiritual search for absolute beauty. His most famous poem, "Wer die Schönheit angeschaut mit Augen," speaks in mellifluous, yet foreboding tones of the curse that befalls him who seeks beauty in its purest form. It is hardly a classical celebration of the unity of Beauty, Truth and Goodness, but evinces a curi-

ously modern sensibility in its expression of doomed sacrifice in the service of art. Beauty destroys as well as creates; it is the tension between life and death that drives an author to create, for only by creating can he master the dionysian forces unleashed by the experience of beauty beheld. In this sense, Platen was at least as aware as any of his romantic contemporaries of the deeper currents underlying artistic creation. His poem speaks, finally, of the inevitability of surrender, decay and death in the consuming service of art, a theme extensively explored a century later by Thomas Mann in *Death in Venice*.

In light of this, it is hardly inexplicable that Platen deliberately avoided intimate acquaintance with any of the many men he adored. As soon as he felt strongly attracted to anyone, he literally feared knowing them well lest they fall short of his imagined perfection. His diaries speak poignantly, often pathetically, of his constant struggle to harmonize reality and fantasy and of his inevitable failure to do so. If one friend was beautiful, he turned out to be a philistine; if another a passionate lover of literature, he was also completely unenamored of Platen, this strange, bespectacled mixture of Tristan and Don Quixote.

In November, 1814, Platen met one of the greatest loves of his life, Friedrich von Brandenstein, a dashing young lieutenant. Brandenstein plays a greater role in his literary works than any other figure and is, in fact, the Federigo of the diary entry quoted earlier. He became the subject of an entire series of sonnets, and is the hero of one of Platen's epics. In it, ideal friendship between the hero and his faithful companion, a barely disguised Platen, is realized. In reality, Brandenstein never had the slightest notion of the depth of Platen's feelings for him. Again, not so much because the author felt he would reject them, though he might well have done so, but because Platen preferred to keep his hero at a distance lest he discover a reality that would dash his fantasy:

The pain of an inclination that is not requited is great. But if I should be mistaken about you, then that pain would be greater still. Indeed, should I come to see that no noble heart beats in your breast, it would be unbearable.

Platen never fell out of love with Brandenstein and, in 1824, after a ten-year separation, wrote still another sonnet to him, reiterating his faithful love.

After nearly a decade of similar affairs, involving several men, that generally were either of lesser intensity or duration, he met the second greatest love of his life: Karl Theodor German. German

reminded him of d'Argenteau and Brandenstein; they resembled each other physically and all were blond. Platen believed he had finally found his perfect friend and wrote ecstatically:

How could I ever surrender this ideal I have had since childhood? I have finally found a friend. Even though I have often erred in the past, I hope I shall not be disappointed this time.

But this relationship was to be one of the most bitter disappointments of all. Platen wrote no less than twenty sonnets to German before he even dared approach him, but to no avail. German rejected his overtures instantly.

This personal rejection occurred as several of his dramas failed in Germany. Despondent, he retired to his parents' home where once earlier, in 1822, he had written words he could now probably not even articulate:

I ask nothing wrong, nothing that either law or nature condemns. But that I should not be allowed to love where I see beauty, where I see virtue, where my very nature impels me—that I should not love at all—that is a harsher demand than any man should make upon another. I have been abysmally unhappy because of my tendencies, never finding response, let alone happiness. My life is becoming more and more unbearable. Here I can hide from society, but eventually I must return to the world. Who will care for me or my future if not I myself? God, grant me no future!

Subsequently, he left Germany to spend the last ten years of his life in Italy. Constantly travelling from one city to another, he lived in Venice, Rome, Florence and Naples and found some degree of accommodation to his wandering, unhappy life. He wrote a great body of poetry celebrating the cities he explored and the art he encountered. Nevertheless, true to his presentiments, his infatuation with beauty itself, this deadly passion, continued to devour him. He died, fleeing cholera, in Greece in December of 1835.

As most of his works are not available in translation, a few words about his literary reputation might be of interest. As mentioned, he was a dramatist as well as poet. In addition, he translated from many of the languages he studied and is recognized as one of the finest translators of Persian poetry into German. Though feeling isolated and unappreciated—he was viciously attacked for his homosexuality on occasion—Platen had, in fact, many admirers and faithful friends during his life. Goethe himself had praised his poetry. A courageous man, a defender of individual rights and freedom in a politically conservative age, this complex author deserves to be more widely known. He himself would have it be known that his love for men—whether purely ideal or not is beside the point—inspired all his efforts.

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS

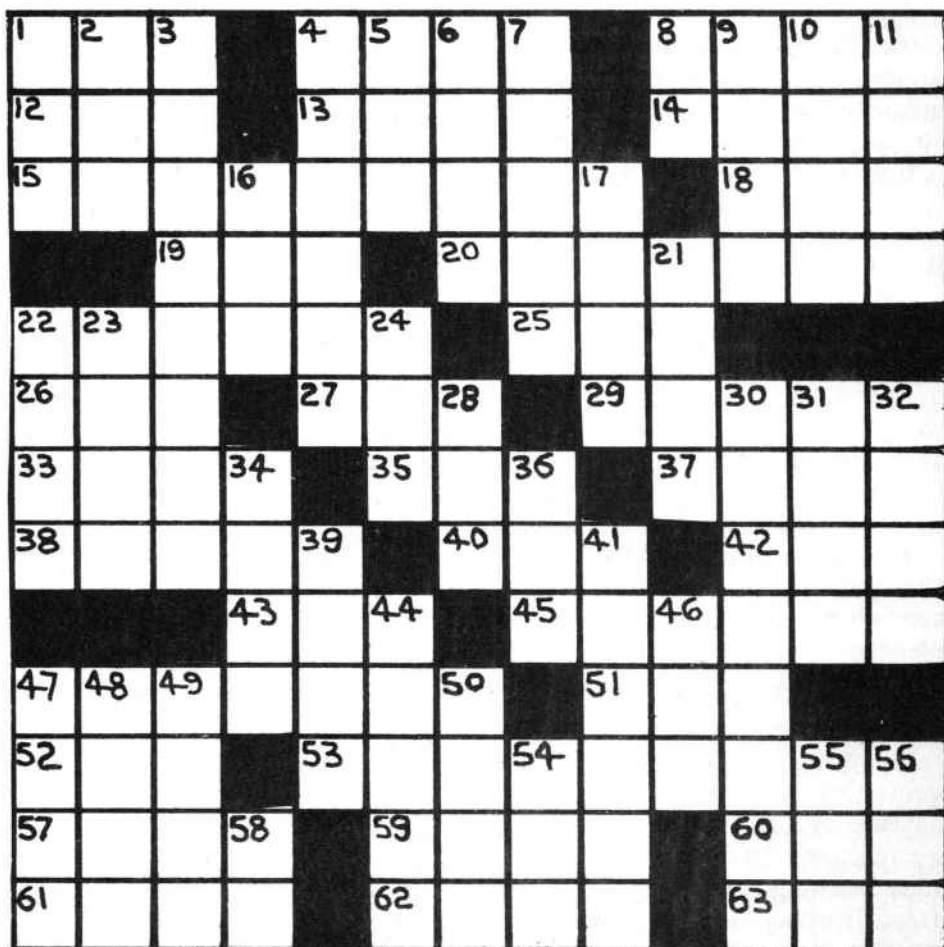
- 1) Rin --- Tin
- 4) Oh My ---
- 8) Peter to pay ---
- 12) Idaho: abbr.
- 13) International Nickel Company: abbr.
- 14) African tribe
- 15) Grass
- 18) Type of trip
- 19) Talk amorously
- 20) Uppers and ---
- 22) Very high
- 25) Scot. explorer
- 26) A --- of amyl
- 27) Sister for short
- 29) Country in Arabia
- 33) Drop ---
- 35) --- party
- 37) Miami's county
- 38) Prefix ten: pl.
- 40) Resin
- 42) Illinois Institute of Technology: abbr.
- 43) Recruit: abbr.
- 45) Mary "J": pl.
- 47) Drug ---
- 51) California: abbr.
- 52) United States of America: abbr.
- 53) Drug derived from a cactus plant
- 57) Drugs: slang
- 59) Against
- 60) Negative reply: pl.
- 61) Snakes
- 62) College official
- 63) East north east

DOWN

- 1) Tiny ---
- 2) Mountain on Crete
- 3) Habit-forming drug
- 4) Military men
- 5) Ohio Northern University: abbr.

- 6) An abundance
- 7) Your --- or --- roll
- 8) Public address: abbr.
- 9) Apt
- 10) Union of Soviet Socialist Republics: abbr.
- 11) Measurements of mary jane: pl. slang
- 16) Positive electron: chem.
- 17) Gone
- 21) Necessity
- 22) Food fish
- 23) Allure
- 24) Pickpocket
- 28) Sun
- 30) Take heroin intravenously
- 31) Redact
- 32) Open weaves
- 34) Move quickly
- 36) --- Mahal
- 39) Low class: slang
- 41) A drug from coca leaves
- 44) --- mill
- 46) Adjective suffix
- 47) Short for baracuda
- 48) Service men's place to go: pl.
- 49) Scandinavian
- 50) Anglo-saxon slave
- 54) Chicago Transit Authority: abbr.
- 55) Not: prefix
- 56) East south east
- 58) Einsteinium: abbr.

(Answer on page 21)



HERE&THERE

New York - The Gay Activists Alliance has warned the operators of 50 night clubs and bars in New York City that it will take legal action against any places that prohibit customers of the same sex from dancing together. GAA pointed out that a recent decision by the N.Y. Court of Appeals that stated, "There is no sound reason to distinguish between the actions of homosexuals and that of heterosexuals in respect to dancing." A ban on dancers of the same sex would be a violation of the city administration code that bars discrimination on the basis of sex.

-*The Gay Alternative*

Green Bay, Wis. - A convict convinced a jury here that he was justified in walking away from his job outside the State Reformatory because he had been homosexually attacked. Michael Cooley, 19, was acquitted of escape, but returned to the prison to serve the rest of a three-year term for burglary.

-*Milwaukee Journal*

Buffalo, N.Y. - The owner of the Shadows, a gay bar here that burned June 26, has been charged with second-degree arson as a result of information provided by a private investigator hired by the insurance company involved. An Erie County Grand Jury indictment claims that Salvatore Spano and Morris Satz intentionally started the fire, fully aware that upper apartments were occupied. Both pleaded innocent.

-*Fifth Freedom*

Washington, D.C. - The U.S. Supreme Court has refused to review the case of Joseph Acanfora III, a gay teacher ousted from his eighth grade teaching position in 1972. In effect, it upheld the decision of the lower court, the Fourth Circuit

Court of Appeals in Richmond, Va. The appeals court upheld an earlier district court decision that homosexuality was not a sufficient reason for ousting Acanfora from his job, and that his publicizing his case was not reason for dismissal either—that they were the exercise of free speech. But the appeals court did support ousting Acanfora because he failed to list his association with a gay group on his application for the job.

-*Advocate*

Michigan - Prison rape is the topic of a 5-volume report, a summary of which was released by the Michigan Department of Corrections. The report was completed after a circuit court judge charged that sexual assault was rampant in the state prisons and the motivation for many escapes. The report documents 31 cases of sexual attack or threat, but state officials have discounted most of them because the complainants were known gays.

-*Gay Liberator*

Philadelphia - A major newspaper publishing company has agreed not to discriminate against homosexuals in its employment policies. The agreement is part of the contract recently negotiated by the American Newspaper Guild with the Philadelphia Inquirer and the Philadelphia Daily News.

-*Advocate*

Seattle, Wash. - About 50 women and children recently protested the advertising policies of the Seattle Times after the newspaper removed the phrase "lesbian literature" from a list of material advertised by the "Madwoman" feminist bookstore. The Times then charged the bookstore \$2.50 extra for the editing.

-*Big Mama Rag*

Britain - A British psychiatrist has found that homosexuals probably make better school teachers than straight people do. Dr. F. E. Kenyon of Oxford Hospital says that his study shows that gays are particularly attracted to artistic and creative professions, including teaching: "Homosexuals may well have a special affinity with the young." He dismissed the notion that a gay teacher might molest a student, stating the possibility is no more likely than with a heterosexual teacher.

-*The Gay Alternative*

New York - The American Civil Liberties Union Foundation has released its 1973 financial report which shows that \$21,563 was spent that year for the 'sexual privacy special project.' Not all of that was spent for gay issues, nor does that include all the money spent by local chapters for gay issues. Other special project areas which relate to gay issues and the amounts which ACLU Foundation spent for each are: Church/State \$16,183; Equality in Housing \$15,000; Juvenile Rights \$41,264; Mental Commitment \$44,857; Military Rights \$49,303; Privacy-Data Collection \$60,871; Prisoner Rights \$179,111; Women's Rights \$47,290.

-*Civil Liberties*

San Francisco - ABC-TV in San Francisco has fired Stan Dale, a popular talkmaster, for being too "controversial." Dale had aired a call where one of his guests announced that his wife was bisexual and he was homosexual. ABC then prohibited all other talkmasters from receiving calls from people wanting to discuss the issues of the Marcus Welby episode, "Outrage."

-*Gay Post*

SOLUTION
TO
CROSSWORDS
PAGE 19



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CLAP.
Don't give it
a hand.

Clap, drip, dose, gonorrhea, V.D. ... whatever you call it, it's an epidemic. Someone new becomes infected every 15 seconds. Maybe you. Don't give it a hand.

Gonorrhea is spread only through sexual intercourse ... not from toilet seats, doorknobs or holding hands.

And if you or your partner is on the pill, the chances of spreading gonorrhea are greater than ever. For two reasons. The pill has reduced the use of the condom (rubber), which not only protects against pregnancy but also against the transmission of gonorrhea.

The pill also increases the moisture of the female genital tract, so gonorrhea bacteria grow more rapidly than ever. It's estimated that for a woman *not* on the pill, the risk of getting gonorrhea from an infected partner is 40%; but for a woman taking the pill, it is almost 100%.

So ... if you think you might have the clap, or have been intimate with someone who might have it, get a check-up. See any physician or come to one of the two free V.D. clinics in Milwaukee. V.D. can be completely cured if treated early by a doctor.

Clap Down on V.D. Call 273-CLAP
for confidential help.



Prepared in Cooperation With
The Medical Society of Milwaukee County

HERE&THERE

Norway - Det Norske Forbundet, a Norwegian gay civil rights organization, has succeeded in persuading the Norwegian government to introduce gay sex education into the public school curriculum.

-*Body Politic*

Minneapolis - The National Lawyers Guild, representing a membership of 4400, unanimously declared support for gay and lesbian liberation at its annual convention.

-*Lavender Opinion*

Hamburg, Germany - In an exclusive interview with *Du & Ich*, a German gay magazine, rock star David Cassidy was asked if he loved girls or boys. "I have many friends, men friends, who I sleep with—and I enjoy it," he said. David admitted he didn't know if he'd have had the same success if it had been known he slept with men. "I only know that I wouldn't want to sing to audiences who didn't like me just because I had slept with a man."

-*Gay News*

Los Angeles - Rock radio station KMET-FM held a "dream date contest" offering a date with David Bowie as first prize. The winner was Gary Shriek, who, according to the station, was "one of the majority of males who entered the contest." Instead of the date, Gary received a front-row seat at a Bowie concert and a meeting with him backstage.

-*Gay Horizons*

Los Angeles - The Metropolitan Community Temple here has become a member of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, a Reform group claiming membership of more than one million Jews. MCT is the first gay congregation in the Union.

-*Chicago Gay Crusader*

Salt Lake City, Utah - The 79-year-old president of the Mormon church, Spencer W. Kimball, urged his 3.3 million followers against the sexual revolution—from streaking and pornography to unisex styles and homosexuality. The warning opened the fall conference of the church.

-*Milwaukee Journal*

Los Angeles - The L.A. City Council passed a motion commending the Rev. Troy Perry on the sixth birthday of the Metropolitan Community Church.

-*Pacific Coast Times*

Perth, W. Australia - The West Australia Royal Commission on Homosexuality recommended to the State Parliament here that laws

against homosexuality be relaxed. It also recommended that acts between consenting adults in private not be banned in the criminal code. Homosexual acts between males are now punishable by up to 14 years hard labor, with or without whipping. The law does not recognize lesbian acts.

-*Advocate*

Los Angeles - The Daisy Borden Harriman Library on Human Sexuality has been established. Located in the Baker Memorial Library of One, Inc., 2256 Venice Blvd., Los Angeles, the Library includes the topics of male and female homosexuality, transvest-female homosexuality, transvestism and transsexualism.

-*Lavendar Opinion*



OH, DON'T WORRY CINDERELLA, IF PRINCE CHARMING LOVED THE DRESS ON ME LAST WEEK, HE'LL LOVE IT ON YOU THIS WEEK!

REVIEW

The cry that "the theatre is dying" has been heard in New York for many years, even during the period when tickets for smash shows were very hard to get. Soaring restaurant and theatre ticket prices have now put some truth into the statement. SRO (standing room only) signs have disappeared and twofers (two tickets for the price of one) are now commonplace. The current Broadway season offers the smallest number of new productions in anyone's memory and most theatres are still only half full. "Dinner and a show" has become a very expensive evening in New York.

Throughout the rest of the nation, particularly in the midwest, "dinner and a show" has long been economically combined under one roof in many successful dinner theatres. Until recently New Yorkers snobbishly refused this trend.

New York City's first Dinner Theatre!



In April of 1974, Richard Scanga, who owns and operates several dinner theatres in the east, decided that the time was ripe for one in New York City. He leased and refurbished a former fabric house at 227 East 56th Street and opened New York's first dinner theatre, **The Little Hippodrome**. He was also responsible for the elegant red and gold decor of the spacious main



floor and wrap-around balcony. Mr. Scanga has broken with theatre tradition in New York, but his dinner theatre is successful.

Recently he decided that the time is ripe to return to a theatre form, the small musical revue, that has been missing from the New York scene for a long time. The small musical revue, unlike the night club revue, usually does not rely on the talent of a single well-known star, elaborate costumes, or blue humor. The material should be witty, humorous, urbane and most of all timely and current. It is designed, then, to amuse an intelligent and sophisticated audience. Serious social comment is not the object, but humorous satire on the current scene cannot help but offer a special kind of social comment in itself.

What could be more timely for a small musical revue than the kaleidoscopic gay scene? The time is right for a gay revue, particularly in a dinner theatre located in New York's smart, sophisticated east 50's. This area has long been the ghetto of that rapidly dying breed—the piss elegant queen. Values in

the gay lifestyle are changing and there is a lot of wit and humor in the contrast of the old and new gay lifestyles that gays are now more willing to share.

Whether all this went through Mr. Scanga's mind or not, I cannot say, but on October 29 through the auspices of **Scorpio Productions**, a "try sexual musical revue" called **Gay Company** opened at **The Little Hippodrome**. The critics (except for an *Advocate* reporter) liked it and while not yet having a regular full house, business is brisk. "It looks as though **Company** will settle in for at least another year," said Marvin Hammond of **Scorpio Productions**. After seeing the show, I can easily see why. It's delightful.

Gay Company was originally going to be called **Fast Compnay**, but as the production took shape it became apparent that almost all of the material was gay-oriented. Accordingly, the decision was made to drop or rewrite the non-gay portion and concentrate on the gay material.

Scorpio selected a very talented writer, Fred Silver, for the lyrics and music. Although he has writ-

ten several shows, Mr. Silver is most well-known as a coach and trainer for a long list of show business personalities. His music is light and melodic and his lyrics vary from the simple and direct to complicated word plays.

The director, Sue Lawless, is a veteran director and performer in off-Broadway and dinner theatre productions. She obviously knows how to get the most out of a small, but talented cast.

As an example of the loving care put into this revue, Mr. Hammond confided that over 900 persons were auditioned before the cast of four men and one woman was selected. Each performer was selected not only on personal ability, but to compliment the others, thus forming a harmonious whole. All are attractive, talented and experienced. Their professionalism allows each to shine without casting sha-

dows on the others. Their names are Candice Earley, Rick Gardner, Cola Pinto, Gordon Ramsey and Robert Tananis. **Gay Company** just might be the showcase that could catapult any one of them to fame.

The opening number, a song of welcome, explains that "minorities should get priorities—that's why our cast is all white." The men then deliver a rollicking number called **Beginners Guide to Cruising**. The lyrics are a campy list of public lavatories in Manhattan and the chorus is the repeated warning "Don't cruise the men's room at the BMT" (this is good advice since the subway washrooms are now closely patrolled by police.)

Candice sings a song about a special boy with whom she has fallen in love. He has every quality she had hoped for in a man, but she knows her love is hopeless. In the last line she explains, "I'm in

love with a boy who is gay—and I'm very sad."

Suddenly the scene shifts to a construction site at lunch time. The construction workers make the necessary butch remarks about Candice while actually making dates with one another. Bob sings "Everybody's had you but me" to his friend Rick who shrugs and walks away just as Bob is professing his love.

The firemen who opposed New York's gay civil rights bill are roasted next. Dressed as firemen, the men express their fears that "there is a fairy in the firehouse." They don't know who it is, but "someone's greased the pole with vaseline." All protest the very idea of a gay fireman. Cola manages to let the audience know that he is the culprit, but his three buddies never tumble to the fact.

Then the show takes a gentle dig



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at gay lib. Bob sings a straightforward song about how he met his love. It all seems quite romantic until he explains that they met at a Mattachine Society Masquerade Ball.

The first act closes with a song about opera. The gay first-nighters, dressed to kill, make bitchy small talk about opera revealing the fact that they actually know very little about it, but are there because it's the smart thing to do.

The second act begins with a song about **Your Home Away from Home** which turns out to be that nice place called the YMCA. Candice sings a sad song called **Two Strangers**—"Tonight you are lovers, so savor tonight—tomorrow not even friends."

Gordon and Cola meet after many years and remember their love affair as poor youngsters and Bob portrays a has-been dancer who is faced with the fact that his dancing career is over.

The last two numbers in the show are probably the best if any could be selected. Rick sings a song called **If He'd Only be Gentle**. He tells how difficult it is to "live in a world where a tender word is never permitted" and says "I want a gentle man. If he'd only be gentle, I'd do anything for him."

Freddy Liked to Fugue is done in fugue form with all of its counterpoint. While the other boys liked baseball, Freddy liked to fugue. This odd child grew up to a fabulous career in classical music, but went stark raving mad when he was caught in a stalled elevator that piped in rock and roll Muzak. Parents are advised to encourage children who liked to fugue, because they can make lots of money and even though they may go mad like Freddy, they will be happy.

My evening at **The Little Hippodrome** proved one thing. **Gay Company** is good company.

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REVIEW

(from page 13)

They discuss what is happening to them and Mark suggests that they vacation at Fire Island, primarily to bring others into their sexual sphere, because variety is so important and necessary to him. David reluctantly agrees, but the attempt is a fiasco because he cannot relate so casually.

The relationship continues to deteriorate and when Mark begins to bring his tricks home, David moves out. He stays with friends who recommend the time-honored remedy of lots of sex as a cure for the loss of self-esteem involved in the break up of an affair. David dutifully tries the remedy (the bath sex scenes), but does not find it satisfactory. There is a poignant scene where the lovers explore the possibilities of a reconciliation. They go

to an amusement park and while riding on a ferris wheel—which goes round and round, getting nowhere—they find that they have little to say to one another.

Then David meets Jason, a divorced photographer, while attending a gay liberation rally. After a lot of serious talk about liberation, they have sex. This time it is not David who is looking for love, but Jason. They continue to see one another and plan to vacation at Nantucket together. In a touching scene, Jason meets with his ex-wife and son. When the ex-wife wistfully suggests that he spend his holiday with her and the child, he gently explains that he is in love and has already made plans for the holiday. He sums up his feelings for David by saying, "I can talk to him."

On holiday, the men finally express their love for one another with Jason immediately suggesting that they live together. Remem-

bering his earlier affair, David simply isn't ready for this and Jason struggles to understand. The film ends with a long slow-motion sequence of the pair cavorting nude on the beach and in the ocean.

Christopher Larkin has given us a motion picture in which we can take pride. He has obviously taken great pride in his production, choosing good actors and coaxing excellent performances out of them. Robert Joel, as David, has the most demanding role and his performance has just the right amount of sincerity and sensitivity in it. Curt Gareth, as Mark, gives depth to what could easily have been an unsympathetic character. His portrayal leads to understanding. Bo White is astonishingly good looking and manages the smaller role of Jason so well that he almost steals the show. Even the minor parts are well done.

Because of a limited budget, the filming was done in 16 mm, but the

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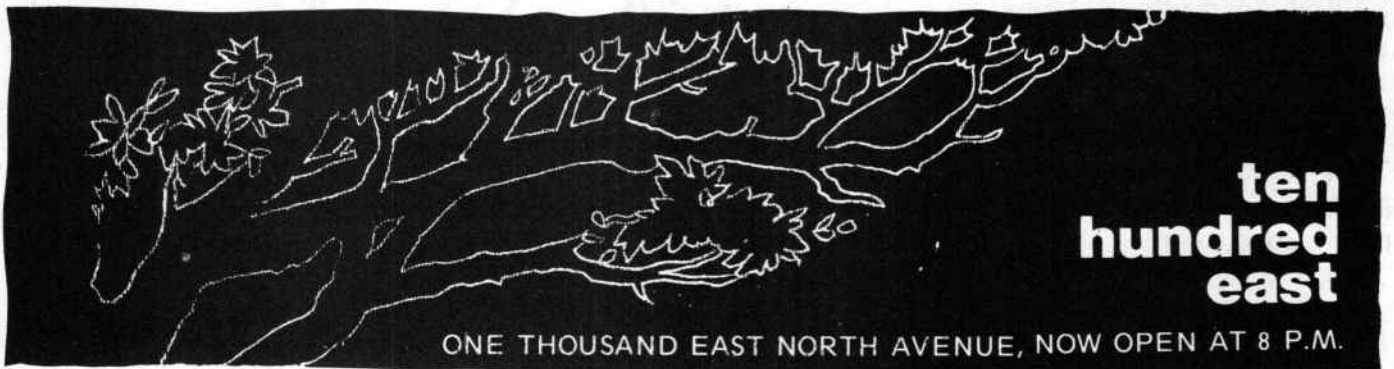
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transition to 35 mm is not as jarring as one would expect. Larkin's dependence on techniques of the film masters will be appreciated by film buffs as will his frequent use of symbolism. Nudity and sex are used in a natural non-exploitative way. The film carries an R (restricted) rating.

We have been clamoring for a long time for a "good gay film"—one that doesn't show us as villains or sick—one that isn't simply an excuse for kooky or hard-core sex—one that shows us as our natural selves. *A Very Natural Thing* is an 80-minute excursion into what we have been asking for and leads one to wonder whether we are really ready for it. Hopefully, we are ready and it will be the first feature length film of many that can be called "good gay films."

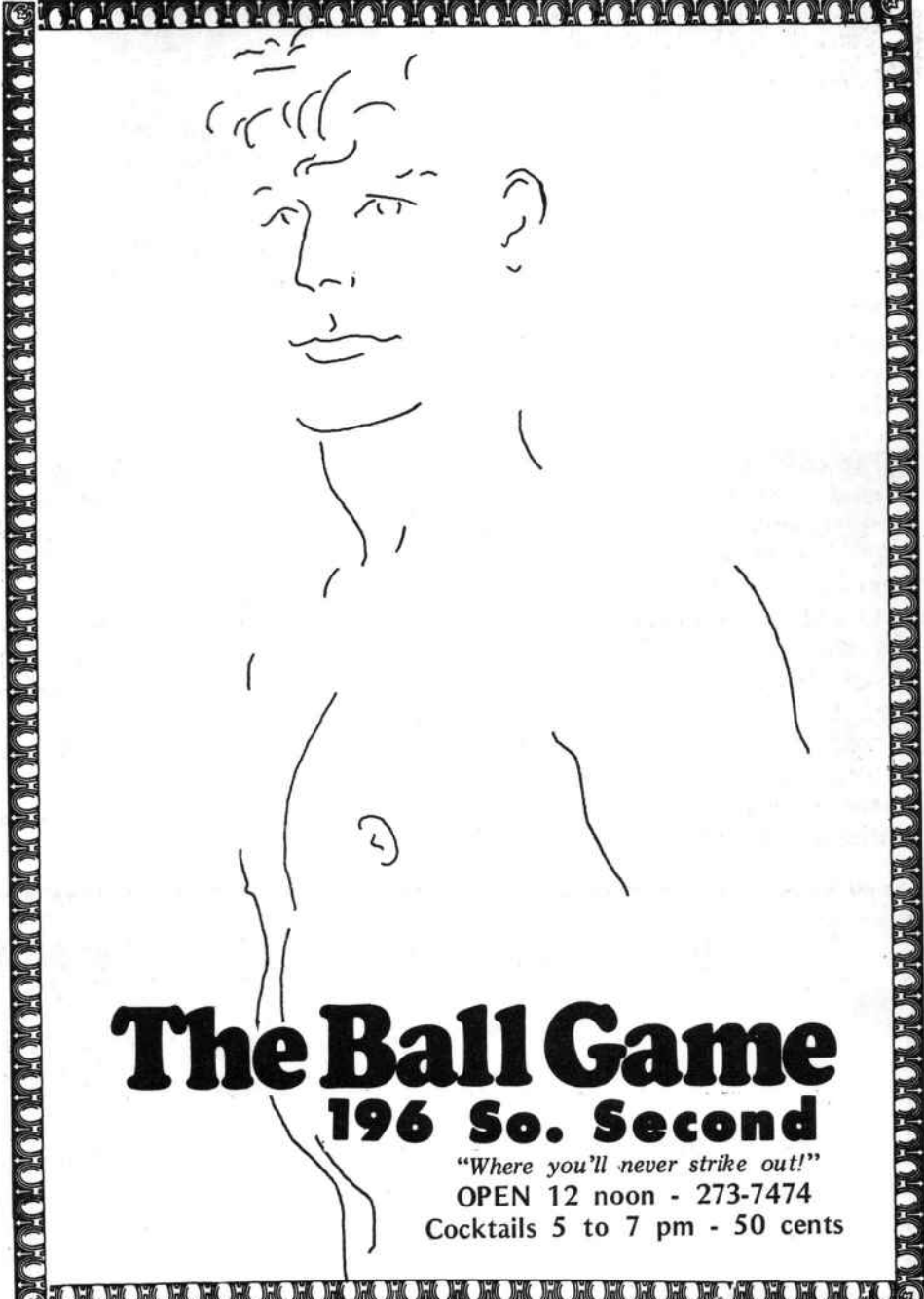
FEEDBACK (from page 4)

angers me when people label gays as sick, perverted, or, as you said, "homo-sexuals." It's time society quits labeling people and looks upon them as fellow human beings.

Although I'm not gay, I was guilty of being a closet case. Believing that gays weren't sick or perverted, but hiding my feelings and not expressing my opinions. But I've changed. I've come out in my own way and I'm willing to publicly voice my feelings now. Much of this change is due to a very special friend who was willing to take the time and effort to show me a bit of the gay world. I'm proud to say he's now working on the GPU hotline and like you, is not ashamed of the fact that he is gay.

I think it's great that the GPU hotline exists, along with the newly opened GPU VD screening center. I'd like to make a small donation to the VD center, as a small part of what I can do to support you and as a special thanks to my gay friends who have shown me how beautiful life can be.

Sincerely, A gay supporter



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ANNOUNCEMENTS

GAY PEOPLES UNION, INC.

Until further notice, Gay Peoples Union, Inc., will hold their meetings at the GPU VD Examination Center, 225 E. St. Paul, at 7:30 p.m.

Topics for Upcoming Meetings

December 9	Drag and Transvestism
December 16	The Double Life
December 23	Chicken Hawks
December 30	Paul Mariah - poetry reading—see Special Announcement
January 6	Business Meeting - Election of Officers

The famous prison poet, Paul Mariah, will present a reading from his works as a benefit for GPU on Monday, December 30 at 8 p.m. at Theatre X, 1247 N. Water. Mr. Mariah is editor of *Manroot*, a gay poetry journal, and has just released eight new books of verse. He will be conducting a major poetry seminar at Kent State University in early January.

Chicago's Up North Restaurant and Bar, 6244 North Western Avenue, announces a special Christmas party to be held at the bar on the Saturday evening before Christmas. They will also have a gala party on New Year's eve. You can also pick up a copy of Chicago's 75 Gay Directory free at the bar.

The Milwaukee Feminist Visual Arts Collective, 2961 N. Newhall, Milwaukee, has announced publication of a 1975 Woman's Calendar featuring Milwaukee women. Send \$2.50 plus 10¢ tax for your copy.

The 1975 edition of Chicago Gay Listings will be off the press in early January. \$2.50 each before Christmas, \$3.00 thereafter. Send check or money order to: Box 1003, Chicago, 60690.

Bombing *(from page 2)*

and nongay alike—have overlapping ownership ties. Another theory revolves around a group of anti-porn religious fanatics who had picketed several of the establishments in the weeks prior to the bombings.

The police department continues to investigate and all of the theaters were back in operation the next day. One thing seems certain to gay leaders: the bombings were probably not aimed specifically at the gay community. Their reasoning: both gay and nongay places were hit and the devices were all placed outside the buildings evidently in order not to harm the patrons. The one person who was injured received only superficial wounds caused by flying debris.

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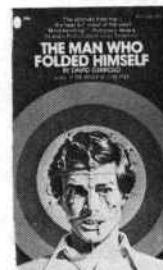
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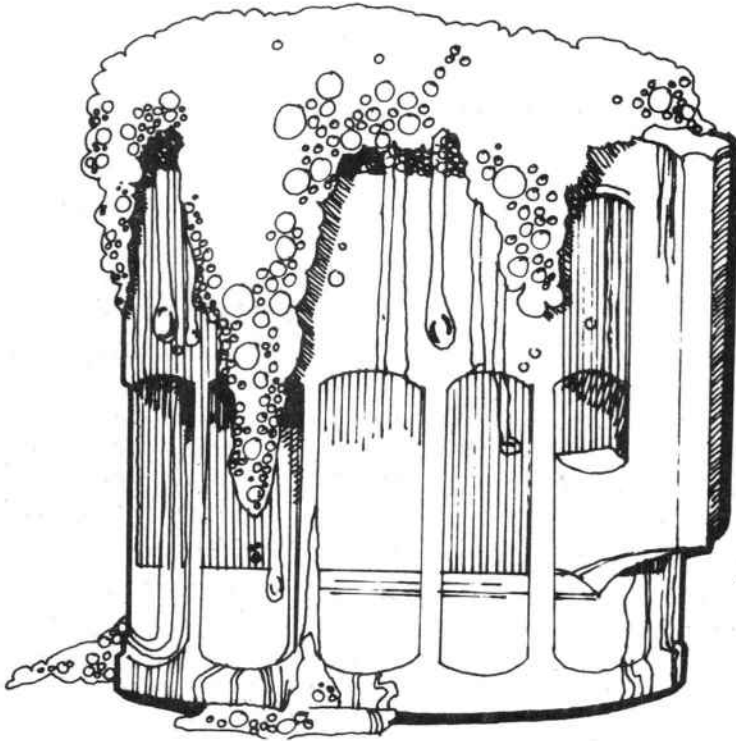
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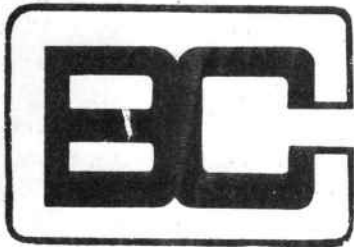


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