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MAINE GAY TASK FORCE NEWSLETTER

MAIL: BOX 4542, PORTLAND, ME. 04112 - OFFICE: 193 MIDDLE ST. PORTLAND

MGTF / WBLM GET IT TOGETHER

The media are getting the message: being Gay is where it's at. Gay people willing to be interviewed in the printed media and on radio and television are suddenly in great demand. Wendy Ashley, Deborah Johnsen, Stan Fortuna and Stephen Leo became the latest set of Task Force Coordinators to become radio celebrities. Needless to say, they are all Gay. On August 14 and 21 WBLM-FM aired a half-hour talk show entitled "Information," which dealt with various topics pertaining to Gay life and being Gay in Maine. The topics discussed included coming out, homophobia, labels, Gay suicides, stereotypes and "promiscuity."

"Speaking as a Gay man, what we represent is, to a great extent, what people fear in themselves and hate in themselves."

"It's really frustrating for all of us that a lot of people won't accept what we say we are."

"Since we didn't look (Gay), we might really not be; maybe it was just a phase we're going through."

"All of us were the children of heterosexuals."

The staff person doing the interviewing came across as having his head together enough to ask intelligent questions. As you can guess, this was a refreshing change from the standard "what do you do

in bed?" variety of cross-examination usually encountered. (Answer: Use your imagination; I do.)

"When we identify ourselves as homosexual, one of the most common responses is, 'Oh, you're not really like that!'"

"Some of us Gay people are quite happy, by the way. I have bad days, but it doesn't relate to my homosexuality. If I can't pay the phone bill, for example; or the kids use my toothbrush to polish their shoes, I tend to get really upset."

"I am basically happy, but I reserve the right to be unhappy, too. Yet, they seem to demand that, 'Well, as long as you're happy...' Maybe I'm not happy at a particular time. So what?"

"It takes an awful lot of understanding and education on the part of the heterosexual just to realize that it may not be a phase. And, if it's necessarily a phase for me to be involved in a homosexual relationship, it's also possible for it to be a phase for a heterosexual to be heterosexual for that time."

Why wasn't this program announced in the last issue of the Newsletter? Because our staff learned of the air date on August 12...only two days before the first broadcast. Our apologies, with the hope this gave you a rough idea of what went on.

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NOTICE

The next issue of the MGTF Newsletter will be in October.

VISITORS DESCRIBE GAY BRITAIN

Tom Hurley

The following article will appear in two parts, part two will be in our next issue (October.)

Gay women seem to be more "out" in America than in Great Britain and American Gay men seem to cultivate a "masculine image." That's what Dennis Carpenter and John Quinn, British Gay activists who recently visited Portland, told the MGTFF Newsletter. The interview also touched on other aspects of British and American Gay life.

Dennis, 25, a proofreader for Reader's Digest, and John, a 29 year old printer, are both members of the Wimbledon Area Gay Society (WAGS), a suburban London group. Dennis is WAGS' treasurer and John is a committeeperson. "WAGS happens to be a very middle-class and a bit sort of wishy-washy Gay group," John explained half-jokingly. "We try and run discos and we try to arrange some other things like car trips, to theater outings and lots of things like that, so people will be happy and also sometimes we have discos for the benefit of someone we know." One recent disco benefited Parents' Inquiry, a counselling service for Gay teenagers and their parents.

WAGS also participates in the London area Gay switchboard, a combination phone counselling and general information service. Said John, "You can phone up on a Saturday night and they can give you a party to go to. They also refer people to VD clinics and sympathetic doctors."

London area neighborhood Gay groups stem out of the Gay Liberation Front (GLF), started around 1969 to fight against police harassment in London. GLF letter writing and protests evicted the police decoys from the "cottages," or public toilets, but the organization had grown too big to serve all needs, so people formed smaller community groups. Each group seems to take its character from the character of the neighborhood. In suburban Wimbledon, Dennis said, "You mention politics and they'll scream and run in the opposite direction. That doesn't mean you don't try to raise the level of consciousness of the people. It's very difficult. I mean, you can't do it at the beginning, because you'll get nobody coming along."

The rise of the neighborhood societies, in John and Dennis' view, has meant the decline of the bar as the center of British Gay life. Said Dennis, "There's so many groups holding dances and events and things, you can always find a group and they're much nicer. I mean, I much prefer to go to a group's dance." At the same time many bars have been renovated in an effort to draw back clientele. "The old story that Gays will put up with anything -- it isn't true anymore," Dennis commented.

Tension Between Sexes

Britain seems to be experiencing much of the same tension between Gay women and Gay men that many American communities have felt. Groups that were originally sexually integrated have become predominantly one sex or the other, a development John regrets: "It's very hard to get Gay men to relate to Gay women as they should because they just aren't confronted with them. It would be a very good idea if women were more radical. Do the men a lot of good."

Part of the problem in John's eyes, is that only a small number of British women identify themselves as Gay. They may "never question if they don't enjoy having sexual contact with men, or a very deep emotional relationship with men. And they would have a very deep emotional relationship with women. But they wouldn't think of that as a Gay relationship. They'd just think of that as a very good friendship. So therefore they can repress themselves to such an extent that they didn't realize they're Gay. And I seem to find that women who talk to me, who have just come out, have never thought they were Gay until very late in life, unlike the men."

Because Gay men and Gay women in Britain have such little contact, John feels that Gay men tend to be hostile towards the women. John explained his feelings with this observation: "I went to Roland's last night, and the women there, I would say, are very straight Gay, to my liking. They're into bashing their beer glasses down on the table, being terribly like men. You know, that sort of thing. Like men are pretty obnoxious when they do that. And it sort of looks to me like it's taking the worst attributes of men and just sort of parodying men. And it's quite sad, really. Because men are pretty foul when they do that as well."

I recalled that Boston Lesbian-Feminists reported some very bad dealings with men at last December's International Gay Rights Congress in Edinburgh, Scotland. John and Dennis had heard similar stories: "There was a lot of bad feeling. I mean, a lot of people complained about that. The women weren't represented at all. The women were shouted down. They weren't given much of a chance. There were no facilities

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A Whiff of Lavender from Old Prussia

One of Yours Truly's hobbies is Frederick the Great of Prussia, as her friends have heard ad nauseam. Frederick is best known for being a general and ripping off his neighbors' territory. He is less wellknown as an excellent musician and composer and an amateur poet. Most of his biographers can't bear to admit that he was also an unrepentant faggot. Those three things are related, as we shall see.

A while ago, I came across a delightful mock-epic of Frederick's, "Le Palladion." In it, he had a friend of his tell the supposed story of his (the friend's) youth, and how he was seduced by the Jesuits at boarding school. The passage is one of the earliest defenses of Gay love I have seen. "Look at the example of the classics. Thus Alcibiades served Socrates and Euryalus served Nisus. And Caesar, who was said to be every woman's husband and every man's wife. And if the classics won't convince you, consult the Church fathers. What do you think Jesus and St. John were doing when they lay on the same couch." (Approximate translation) Needless to say, this was pretty irreverent stuff for the eighteenth century and, in fact, Frederick wrote it to mock the Jesuits (he couldn't stand organized religion). That says something sad about his own attitude toward being Gay, namely that he thought of it as a dirty joke.

It isn't surprising that Frederick had a negative attitude. Eighteenth century Europeans thought homosexuality was a dirty joke at best; a sin and a capital crime at worst. Frederick's father beheaded Frederick's best friend -- in his son's presence -- ostensibly because they had tried to run away from home. Since they were both army officers, that also made them deserters.

However, there is the suspicion that the old man's real reason was that he suspected his son and the friend of being lovers. Frederick's father was what we would call a macho pig, who labeled his son "effeminate" (sexist word if there ever was one) for liking poetry and music. Frederick became a general and a rip-off artist to prove that he was a "real man".

He kept on being Gay, but had mixed feelings about it. Anyone would who felt he or she had caused a lover's death! It is surprising that Frederick wasn't more closety than he was.

He was never blatant, but some of his writings were fairly open -- he came out and said he was Gay several times. He didn't use the word "homosexual" because there wasn't such a word in the eighteenth century. It must have been difficult to come to terms with being Gay when one didn't even have a concept of Gayness as an identity. The only concepts they had were "sodomy," which was supposed to be a kinky vice that one could turn to or not at will, and the example of the Greeks.

Frederick used both of them. Once, when he beat the French army in battle, he mocked them by writing a poem about how great their asses were. One Frenchman, Voltaire, had already done the same thing to Frederick. After he'd had a quarrel with Frederick and wanted to bad-mouth him, Voltaire published an anonymous book in which he implied very wittily that Frederick got laid by his pages, his valets, his officers, and every other presentable male who came down the pike.

On the other hand, there is that passage in "Le Palladion." I can't help wondering if Frederick, under the guise of a joke, was really defending himself. He may not have known about Gay pride, but he knew about Greek love, both from the classics and from personal experience, for he loved several men deeply and was loved in return. Even though he was a king with great power, he was oppressed by his society for his way of loving. However, he was able to love and be loved. Perhaps that shows the power of Gay love. After all, the classics also said that an army of lovers can't lose.

---DONATIONS NEEDED---

To keep the MGTFN in operation, we are requesting donations of the following: electric mimeograph, electric typewriters, stapler, 8" X 14" paper, stamps, time, energy, money. Sisters and brothers -- THANKS!

NEWS FLASH!!

The staff of the Newsletter badly need a vacation. NOW! As a result, there will be no September issue. Our next issue will be published during the first week of October. Everyone's subscription will be extended one month.

ARE YOU ALIVE OUT THERE?

The MGTFN has a need. A BIG need. Like, a 14-page need. It is the Newsletter. To be more explicit, there is a distinct lack of written input-articles, poetry, letters- coming in to the Newsletter. Currently there are a mere handful of people working on all aspects of putting together -and putting out- this rag every month. Which is one reason why the last issue was mailed during the final three days of July. Ever wonder why the publication is so irregular? Well, read on...

Our need is great. People to do the shitwork involved: typing stencils, operating the mimeo, collating and stapling the pages, addressing and stuffing envelopes. This would require appearing physically at our office to help out.

"But," you say, "I live 40 miles away and have no transportation." Or, "The thought of walking into that office frightens me." Or, "I can't type..." Etc. Never fear! In most instances, we can kidnap enough warm bodies for this.

However, our major need is material for the warm bodies to type. We're at the point where the same 2 or 3 people are doing all the writing as well as all the shitwork. Sooner or later (probably sooner) the Newsletter will seem really stale. And it will be stale if it lasts that long. Perhaps before that period is reached, the Newsletter will fold...for lack of "news fit to print".

You don't have to be in the center of Gay political action to write for MGTFN. All you have to be is alive. Just because 90% of the Newsletter is political, does

not mean it was intended as such. Or should be. Or will continue to be. Maybe- unless you're not interested enough in something else to let us know about it. If you are not into politics, write an article about why. If you're into something else, write about it. If you have "come out", do an article: why, your reactions, friends' and parents reactions and so on. If you haven't, explain why, your worries, the reactions you would expect from various friends and family. Possibilities are endless. Try an "open letter" format with any subject. Everything in the Newsletter doesn't have to deal with Gayness.

We are also trying to re-establish our beginning-of-the-month publication schedule. Articles (and letters) should be in by the 21st of each month for inclusion in the next month's issue. Our mailing and office addresses, and phone number are listed elsewhere in this issue.

You think you can't write? If you want to write an article, write one! We have one person (me) willing to edit material for grammar and spelling. If you wish, edited material can be sent back for your approval before being printed.

You don't want to sign your article? Well, a general rule of thumb: all material is signed; the exception is the lead article. However, you can use your initials. Or dream up a pseudonym! Or request us to sign it "Name Withheld." We are flexible. At the risk of sounding political, think about it. Then let us know what you've come up with; that you're still alive.

Karen Bye

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THE YORK COUNTY CORN MUFFIN

by S. G. Bull

Please be advised that the YCCM is a short-lived, fly-by-night column not to be confused with the more dependable contributions of the Cumberland County variety.

This column comes as a reaction to the deterioration of civilization in the York County area, where human rights are being trampled upon as the residents thereof march headlong into the 12th century B.M. (Before the Great Mother).

Homophobia I

Wells Selectperson Richard Rouleau has requested that the Stage Door Bar and Restaurant be demolished. Rouleau believes that the building, which was the target of arson last winter, is a hazard to public safety

(or is that a 'hazard to public heterosexuality?') and should be condemned unless repaired by the owner, Robert Boisvert.

This homophobic action by Rouleau is merely a continuation of the various oppressive policies followed by Wells town officials. Wells-Ogunquit is always willing to take Gay money, but will deny Gay existence in any open form.

Homophobia II

In addition to the plight of the Stage Door, please note that the Fan Club, a Gay-supported restaurant and bar in Ogunquit, is the subject of a petition drive by residents in its vicinity. The petition demands that this establishment be closed, citing similar complaints used by homophobes

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OURSTORY #4
by John Frank

Gays & Women Begin to Work Together

Kate Comes Out

In 1969-1970 when Sexual Politics became the bible of the Women's Liberation Movement, Kate Millett found herself in the public spotlight as a spokeswoman for the movement, a position she never sought but one which she managed to cope with for some time. The proverbial shit hit the fan in the fall of 1970 after she spoke at a NOW-sponsored symposium in New York on the topic "Is Lesbianism a Feminist Issue?"

As is reported in Donna Teal's The Gay Militants: "The panelists at the symposium voiced reasons why they thought NOW should come to grips with the issue of lesbianism.... Kate Millett reiterated a position she had been stating publicly since the Women's Strike on August 26 -- that women's lib should be supporting gay women. She urged that the women's liberation movement work for the repeal of anti-gay laws, and declared that the movement had been 'carried on the backs of lesbians for five or six years!'. Gay women had worked hard for child-care centers and abortion 'while trying not to look like dykes,' and now, she said, the movement should reciprocate."

"Millett emphasized that it was morally and humanly necessary for women's lib to come to terms with gay liberation. Not only was the gay life-style fraught with legal and psychic oppression -- which women's liberation should help fight -- but women's liberationists would continue to fear homosexuality until they faced it, she said, and would be insecure until they did. She again called herself bisexual, and spoke of the difficulties of being 'open.' 'I'm going to be dumped on all my life for being gay' -- but not for being straight, she reminded them."

"Kate Millett's stand served as a rallying point at which lesbians and non-radical women's lib could at last unite publicly. An immediate occasion was the December article in TIME magazine which warned that Millett's disclosure that she was a bisexual 'is bound to discredit her as a spokeswoman for her cause, cast further doubt on her theories, and reinforce the views of those skeptics who routinely dismiss all liberationists as lesbians.'"

"On December 12 at a previously scheduled rally in midtown Manhattan to demand free abortion and child care, the Women's Strike Coalition handed out leaflets headlined 'NO MORE DYKE-BAITING!' Illustrated with cartoons showing a militant feminist brought to her knees when a man called her a dyke, the leaflet began:

See how it works?

You discredit a movement by calling a visible member a name designed to strike fear in the hearts of all respectable citizens. Joe McCarthy was an expert at this. So was Hitler. So is

Time magazine.

Now we're being dyke-baited. Not too many years ago, Jew-baiting was equally terrifying. One man, however, figured out a way to handle it. When the Nazis invaded Denmark and demanded that all Jews wear armbands with the Star of David, King Christian rode through Copenhagen displaying the armband on his own sleeve. Soon every Dane had marked herself or himself a Jew. They stood together so the Jews among them couldn't be singled out and picked off...

On Tuesday, December 8, Time magazine (December 14 issue) decided to try this time-honored method of intimidation on the Women's Liberation Movement by publicly attacking Kate Millett for her courageous statement that she is bisexual. It is not one woman's sexual preference that is under attack -- it is the freedom of all women to openly state values that fundamentally challenge the basic structure of patriarchy. If they succeed in scaring us with words like "dyke" and "lesbian" or "bisexual," they'll have won. AGAIN. They'll have divided us. AGAIN. Sexism will have triumphed. AGAIN.

But this time we will not be divided. Just as all Danes stood together so the Jews couldn't be picked off, we stand together so lesbians can't be picked off. Time magazine wants us to run scared, disown Kate and all our gay sisters. In essence, they're asking us to issue lavender armbands. That's why we're ALL wearing lavender armbands today -- to show that we stand together as women, regardless of sexual preference. They can call us all lesbians until such time as there is no stigma attached to women loving women.

SISTERHOOD IS POWERFUL!!

"The Women's Strike Coalition told the press: 'This action is a historic first. The first time Women's Liberation and Gay Liberation have joined forces. Freedom to control your own body and to live in human dignity and self-respect are key issues in both movements.' ...Virtually all of the three hundred women who braved a cold rain to demonstrate for the

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YCCM (con't)

AND MORE ABOUT PARENTS OF GAYS

in the Stage Door controversy (loud music from a juke box and screaming, obnoxious customers).

REMEMBER THE BOYCOTT. DO NOT SUPPORT THE OPPRESSION OF GAY PEOPLE IN WELLS-OGUNQUIT.

Homophobia III

Meanwhile on the beach, the Ogunquit Police Department is doing its bit for selective enforcement of the law. A new Beach Patrol vehicle has been purchased, specifically for "cruising" the Ogunquit Beach, formerly the dunes area. The "Cruise-mobile" (as affectionately dubbed by this writer) frequents the sandy retreats of Gay lovers during odd hours of the night in hopes of stopping the "abnormal sexual activity" which goes on there.

Dare I ask? Are heterosexual lovers' lanes patrolled so vigorously?

PARENTS OF GAYS SPEAK OUT

In America today, there are millions of parents with daughters and sons who are Gay and are therefore victims of social, political and economic oppression. Gay people are obstructed by prejudice in their pursuit of happiness and in striving to live their lives with openness and dignity. But Homosexuals are not the only victims of this aggression; it touches their friends, their sisters, their brothers and their cousins and their aunts, etc. We as parents of Gays feel that the time is ripe to join together to appeal to the public conscience in order to achieve equal opportunities for our daughters and sons.

While society has imbued all of us with misinformed attitudes about homosexuality, we must not allow these distorted attitudes to go unchallenged and interfere with the happiness of parent and child or their relationship to each other.

We should recognize that our daughters and sons as Gay people are healthy, normal, productive and loving human beings. And we are proud of them!

Parents of Gays groups meet in New York City, Passaic, N.J., Washington, D.C., Pittsburgh, Houston, San Francisco and Los Angeles. We will be happy to furnish you with information on how to form a group in your community.

(The above article has been reprinted from the Parents of Gays brochure.)

NOTE: Evelyn and Floyd Bull are representatives for Parents of Gays in Maine. They can be contacted at 207-967-4837 during the months of August and September.

As parents of a homosexual, we hope for an improved understanding between straight people and Gay people. This can only be achieved through communication. Knowledge and understanding cannot be "locked up" in closets.

It is difficult for straights to deviate from the rules that Society has set up for them, however there must be a change of the human heart and mind in order to erase the stigma Society has attached to homosexuals. As heterosexual parents, we refuse to be programmed by homophobic societal pressures.

The stigma attached to homosexuality is slowly beginning to disappear. The American Psychiatric Association no longer considers homosexuality to be a sickness. Gay people are not helplessly neurotic human beings as some of Society would like us to believe. Quite to the contrary, they are often warm, understanding, bright and creative individuals who happen to feel the human emotions of sexual attraction and love for a member of their own sex.

Few, if any, straight people know what it is like to be a homosexual, but after many discussions with our son, his friends and a non-homophobic psychologist, I believe that the ignorance of straights concerning homosexuality can be greatly decreased if there is significant communication between the two cultures.

As parents, we are well aware of the "silence" which has been created by our friends since our son publicly announced that he was (is!) Gay. Fortunately we do not share the guilt which has been dictated to us by Society. To the contrary, we have opened our hearts and minds to a group of people from whom we have alot to learn.

I feel that Gays have struggled too long by themselves. It is time that parents and peers become actively supportive of the rights of Gay people.

One of the disheartening aspects for us as parents of an openly Gay son has been the immediate change in Steve's identity as viewed by Society. From Steve Bull, the person, to a label, complete with stereotypical assumptions, etc. Our greatest dream is that Steve be known by his own personhood and not by a preconceived image thrust upon him by an oppressive Society.

Evelyn and Floyd Bull

BOYCOTT WELLS/OGUNQUIT!!!!!!!

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MGTF MEETING MINUTES

August 3, 1975

Susan Breeding, Chairperson

Deborah Johnsen, Scribe

The meeting was convened at 1:20pm with 15 persons present. The next MGTF meeting will be September 7 at 1:00pm in the office at 193 Middle Street, Portland. Wendy Ashley will chair, and Tom Hurley will take notes.

Financial : Stan Fortuna reported that the MGTF account shows a balance of \$32.24; the pledge balance is \$21.77. The pledge system seems to be working fairly well, collecting \$60 - 70 monthly so far, although varied response makes the success hard to determine. Subscribers are reminded that August pledges will be due 2nd - 3rd week in August. If you can't pay right away, you can defer payments, but don't forget! The dance fund cleared \$20 from the last dance, plus \$10 from the previous dance. The next dance will be August 23.

Incorporation : Peter Prizer and Robert Calkins will get together to prepare papers such as a statement of purpose when the old information about incorporation has been located.

Rap Group : Because response during the summer has been poor for the Friday night rap groups, they have been cancelled until the Fall. Apologies to those of you who responded to the notice in the last Newsletter. The raps will be resumed sometime after Labor Day. Check the next Newsletter or call the MGTF office for the date.

Staffing : Stan reminded the meeting that there is a sign-up sheet for rotational office staffing. There is also a contact list of resource people available.

VD Clinic : The MGTF has been in contact with the Portland City Health Clinic about a free clinic for VD diagnosis and treatment among Gay people. The clinic is free, non-uptight and non-homophobic. Information posters will be put up at the office and at Roland's, or call the MGTF office for more information.

Maine Human Services Conference : The workshop to be presented at the MCHS by the MGTF in conjunction with Project Lambda, a Boston counselling service for Gay adolescents, will be discussed at counselling meetings. Look for a report of the workshop in the next Newsletter.

Newsletter : Stephen Leo commented on the problem of written contributions to the Newsletter. Recently only three people have been doing almost all of the writing and most of the shitwork for the Newsletter. Not only is it a real hassle

for them, but it limits the variety of style and content of the Newsletter. The MGTF desperately needs new contributors and articles, including personal interest articles. Deadline for articles is the fifteenth of the month. Something must be happening in your Gay life -- Share it with us and others !

Portland Dance/Party : Stan has been researching the possibility of holding a Gay dance/party in Portland. Look for details in the next issue if things can be worked out. Does anyone have a suggestion for places a dance could be held ?

Press Conference : Peter suggested that someone from MGTF acquire press credentials in order to attend Gerald Ford's press conference in Portland August 30, and bring up such subjects as "Gay Appreciation-76." Requirements for credentials will be explored.

Space Sharing : Stan proposed making the MGTF office available to other Gay groups for any reasonable purpose. Lesbian groups, older Gays, and other groups would be welcome to share office space as long as their activities did not conflict with already scheduled MGTF events. Anyone interested should come to an MGTF meeting with a proposal for discussion.

More Space : There was a suggestion to consider renting adjoining office space in order to give some privacy for talking with people who drop into the office. Susan Breeding pointed out, and others agreed, that although it's a fine idea, such space and expense would be a luxury at this point considering our limited staff and money.

Radio Show : Stan suggested that local radio stations be asked to donate time for a regular, weekly show. Objections about the usual problem of limited time and energy led to a discussion of how to involve new people in Gay activities. Michael Luisi pointed out that the local Gay talent could involve themselves if the show were set up as a real creative program rather than simply an educational talk show. Spotting Gay artists, writers, workers in unusual fields could give the struggling Gay community some needed public exposure. This project will be discussed further at future meetings.

Book Review:

CONSENTING ADULT

Laura Z. Hobson

Whenever I read a work of fiction with a homosexual theme, I tend to appraise it on two levels: literary merit and political content. I've read some of the old Gay classics (e.g., The Well of Loneliness, City of Night, Last Exit to Brooklyn), and found many to be well-written but quite negative in their treatment of the Gay experience. Now I certainly understand that in 1926, for example, the Western World was no Paradise for a homosexual and, consequently, our literature reflected this fact. It is furthermore evident that those few Gay authors who had the courage to write about homosexuality did not think too much of themselves as homosexuals. Again, this is understandable in the context of history's most homophobic culture.

Nevertheless, just as Gay people have begun to adopt a more positive attitude toward themselves, so have they come to yearn for a more wholesome treatment in fiction. This has finally begun to appear. Unfortunately, however, the most widely-read among this new breed of novels have been downright trash. The Lord Won't Mind series was supposed to be positive, but it's just so damned awful both as literature and as propaganda that one can scarcely consider it a step in the right direction.

More recently, Patricia Nell Warren's The Front Runner has found widespread favor within the Gay male community. Yet again the author, a heterosexual woman, has created a phony and (to my mind) unattractive counter-image of the Gay male as ultra-masculine clod. I would like to think that most Gay men are as turned-off by the John Wayne stereotype as they are by that of the limp-wristed fairy. But maybe I'm wrong.

At any rate, we are once again offered a novel by a straight woman who chose to deal with male homosexuality as her theme. This time, however, there is a twist. In Consenting Adult, Laura Z. Hobson manages to succeed where Warren failed, in part because she can write fairly well, but also because she seldom attempts to explore the emotional depths of its Gay male character, unfamiliar territory for a heterosexual woman. Instead, it focuses upon his mother and, to a lesser extent, his father. It's probably the first novel to concentrate on how the parents of a Gay person react to their child's homosexuality and for this reason alone, it is a valuable book.

Tessa Lynn, a successful New York publisher, receives a letter from Jeff, her 17-year-old son away at boarding school. He has come to realize that he is homosexual ('...I have fought it off for months and maybe years, but it just grows truer...'), and he has decided to tell her in hopes that she will provide a 'good' psychoanalyst to effect a 'cure.' The year is 1960, and Tessa's reaction is not surprisingly one of unmitigated horror. "Love for him, pity for his suffering, pride for his courage, horror at IT, at the monstrous IT." This

part really hit home to me, since her reaction was quite similar to that of my own mother when I came out to her nearly three years ago.

Fortunately for me, I was not seeking remedial therapy, but rather understanding and acceptance from my parents. Jeff Lynn, however, is terrified and willingly takes a ride on the psychoanalytic carousel trying to snatch that illusive little ring, a 'cure' for his homosexuality. For the middle class in the 1960's, psychoanalysis is a sort of cult, with a wise and mystical high priest (therapist) who tells Jeff and Tessa that 1 in 4 homosexuals can expect to be saved provided they make the proper offering (cash). For the best part of the next ten years, mother and son are sustained by a lingering hope that Jeff might indeed be one of the chosen few to find salvation.

Meanwhile, Tessa must somehow break the news to Jeff's father, Ken, who has a heart condition and who takes great pride in his son's athletic achievements and unquestionable manliness. Ken is no less horrified than Tessa, but his overriding emotion is shame. He is for a time unable to face his son. "But you can't imagine what it's like for a man to think his son might be a queer." Despite the fact that Ken is otherwise depicted as a gentle, civilized man, he seems to regard his son's homosexuality as a personal affront, presumably to his own masculinity. He is filled with revulsion and, unlike Tessa, is never really able to understand or accept this 'flaw' in a son for whom he once held such high paternal expectations.

Jeff, on the other hand, is not about to be either patronized or treated like a leper. He refuses to accept maternal concern or paternal rejection and reacts to both with a defensive anger. Tessa, starved for some word of progress toward a 'cure' for her son, begins to devour the available literature on homosexuality. As the years pass, she becomes confused in discovering that even among the 'authorities', opinion is divided about the supposed pathological nature of homosexuality. She becomes aware

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GAY BRITAIN (con't):

for women with children. They just didn't cope with women at all," said John. But he had some hope that the women and men organizing the big campaign for Homosexual Equality conference at Sheffield this year would avoid the mistakes of Edinburgh.

Dennis observed that British gay women tend to be non-political: "A gay woman in London said to us, 'gay women in England are very bad. They don't want to know about politics, far more so than the men. They have no wish to get involved with politics.' She said that she herself left the gay women's movement to join the actual women's movement, women's lib, because she said that her fight is primarily as a woman, because women are oppressed. And she said that being gay is secondary. First she's oppressed as a woman; then she's oppressed 'cause she's gay."

TO BE CONTINUED IN NEXT ISSUE

OURSTORY (con't):

'straight' issues wore a lavender armband and heard Millett proclaim, 'They can no longer divide us by calling us queer.'

"The culmination of the issue came at a press conference called by nine movement leaders at Washington Square Methodist Church on December 17 to affirm their 'solidarity with the struggle of homosexuals to attain their liberation in a sexist society.' Millett read a statement prepared by members of NOW, Radicalesbians, Columbia (University) Women's Liberation and DOB which contended, 'Women's liberation and homosexual liberation are both struggling towards a common goal: A society free from defining and categorizing people by virtue of gender and/or sexual preference.' Journalist Gloria Steinem; Ruth Simpson; radical black lawyer Florynce Kennedy; Sally Kempton and Susan Brownmiller, journalists and radical feminists; New York NOW president Ivy Bottini; NOW member Dolores Alexander; and radical feminist Ti-Grace Atkinson all appeared in support at the conference, reported Judy Klemesrud for the New York Times. They were backed by statements from Congresswoman Bella Abzug and Caroline Byrd, author of Born Female... Such broad-based and high-level support uniting gay women's liberation with the women's movement gave new strength to gay women in both causes. An integral part of 'the 51 percent minority,' lesbians were able to affirm that, indeed, 'Sisterhood IS powerful.'"

From The Gay Militants, by Donn Teal; Stein and Day, New York, 1971; pp 192-194.

CONSENTING ADULT (con't):

of the new era of pride among Gay people. Gradually abandoning her long-cherished hope for a transformation in Jeff, she begins to accept him for what he is and is heartened by the growth of Gay Liberation, and the snowballing reports of a change in attitude within the medical profession. Tessa is a classic liberal, but her open-mindedness enables her to overcome the prejudices of forty years of homophobic indoctrination. She is the kind of person who makes change possible in this society, through her willingness to question and revise her own attitudes.

In the meantime, Jeff himself has undergone a transformation. Not from Gay to straight, but from shameful to proud. He will never be a really 'political' person, but he does come to make waves in his own life by living openly and without apology. The encouragement and support he receives from Tessa makes it that much easier for him to lead a healthy life in a very unhealthy society.

From a political viewpoint, Consenting Adult is a very good book. As literature, it is less satisfying. Though a polished writer who treats her subject with restraint, Hobson's writing rather lacks force. Her dialog is stilted and unpersuasive. I found the niceness and upper-middle class gentility of everyone to be a bit tedious. There are no villains, no hypocrites, no brutes. The plot is basically uneventful, but far more realistic than all that contrived nonsense that made The Front Runner read like the melodramatic potboiler it is.

--Stephen Leo

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Aug. 23 --	Dance; Brunswick
Aug. 25 --	MHSC; Biddeford
Sept. 6 --	Dance; Brunswick
Sept. 7 --	MGTF meeting; Portland
Sept. 20 --	Dance; Brunswick
Oct. 4 --	Dance; Brunswick

More information on all of the above is given elsewhere in this issue.

DANCES!!

We are planning on holding dances every two weeks, beginning with the August 23 one. The schedule for dances is: Sept. 6 and 20, and Oct. 4. All dances are from 9:00 pm to 1:00 am, at the U-U Church on Pleasant Street in Brunswick. The admission is a \$1 donation, if you have it; no one is turned away. BYOB as always.

MAINE GAY TASK FORCE
BOX 4542
PORTLAND, MAINE 04112

(207) 773-5530

The Maine Gay Task Force has selected the following books as a small sample of recommended reading for those who seriously wish to increase their knowledge and understanding of homosexuals and homosexuality. This listing is only partial, as a complete list would not be feasible.

The bases for selection were such considerations as content, positive approach to the subject matter, local availability and readability. Most are non-fiction; however, fiction and poetry are also included.

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|---|---|
| SAPPHO WAS A RIGHT-ON WOMAN \$1.95
Sidney Abbott & Barbara Love
(Excellent non-fiction on Lesbianism by two lovers) | MONSTER 1.95
Robin Morgan
(Mind-blowing poetry by an amazing Radical Lesbian Feminist) |
| TRYING HARD TO HEAR YOU 5.95
Sandra Scoppettone
(Novel about oppression of Gay male high school students; written for adolescents, but worthwhile for everyone) | THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD AND HE KNOWS I'M GAY 1.50
The Rev. Troy Perry
(Founder of the Gay Metropolitan Community Church relates his experiences) |
| PATIENCE AND SARAH .95
Isabel Miller
(Fictional, based-on-fact; Lesbian couple make it up as they go along in pioneer days) | RUBYFRUIT JUNGLE 2.95
Rita Mae Brown
(Hilarious and moving novel about a Lesbian growing up in America) |
| OUT OF THE CLOSETS: VOICES OF GAY LIBERATION 1.95
Ed. by Karla Jay & Allen Young
(Anthology covering the whole spectrum of homosexuality and Gay liberation) | HOMOSEXUAL: OPPRESSION AND LIBERATION 1.65
Dennis Altman
(Examines the Gay experience in our time from his own experiences) |
| THE MALE MUSE: A GAY ANTHOLOGY 3.95
Ed. by Ian Young
(Current poetry for Gay men) | THE GAY MYSTIQUE 1.95
Peter Fisher
(Superb book about male homosexuality) |
| THE COOK AND THE CARPENTER 3.00
A Novel by the Carpenter
(Great Lesbian novel; neuter pronouns) | RIVERFINGER WOMEN 3.50
Elana Nachman
(Interesting new Lesbian novel) |
| IS GAY GOOD? ETHICS, THEOLOGY AND HOMOSEXUALITY 3.50
Ed. by W. Dwight Oberholtzer
(Scholarly Christian anthology with a positive answer) | THE GAY INSIDER 3.95
John Francis Hunter
(Guide to bars, baths, restaurants, etc., in Gay America; many good articles, especially 'Finishing David Reuben'; male oriented) |
| GREAT GAY IN THE MORNING 1.75
(All about life in a Gay commune) | SOCIETY AND THE HEALTHY HOMOSEXUAL 1.95
Dr. George Weinberg
(This book is highly recommended for everyone. It is extremely well-written, simple and to-the-point. It has a great chapter for parents of Gays. We cannot say enough good things about this book) |
| THE GAY CRUSADERS 1.25
Kay Tobin & Randy Wicker
(Anthology about early Gay liberation; biographies) | |
| THE RIGHTS OF GAY PEOPLE 1.75
American Civil Liberties Union
(A comprehensive guide to the Constitutional rights of Gays) | |

Please keep this list for future reference. New books will be added.

"BITS"

THE MGTFN INVITES readers to use its pages for brief advertisements or notices. Ads are free and will be run for two issues unless you indicate otherwise. The Newsletter reserves the right to reject or edit ads and notices; the Newsletter does not accept sex ads.

ATTENTION: The following prisoners need outside support. Write to them with news and strength:

Jessie Anderson #30990
P.O. Box 747 12-3217
Starke, Fla. 32091

Glen Ratliff #139 469
P.O. Box 69
London, OH. 43140

Rudolph Robinson #030878
P.O. Box 747 P-2-N-2
Starke, Fla. 32091

George Ware #034451
P.O. Box 747 K-1-N-6
Starke, Fla. 32091

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LESBIAN POETS WANTED to contribute to a new anthology, Amazon Poetry: An Anthology, to be published in the fall of 1975. Poems should be sent typed on 8 1/2 by 11 paper to: Amazon Poetry, 196 Third Street, Brooklyn, NY 11215.

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I'm female, 27, have a dog and a cat. I'm looking for a person with whom to find and share a moderately-priced rental, rural or waterfront house. I'm reasonable, easy to live with, like close friends, and am looking for a long-term living arrangement. Gerri Merola, 865-3422

LIBOW POTTERY is willing to be a meeting place for Gay people on Saturday nights. The location is in the Old Schoolhouse in Harrisville, N.H., just 12 miles from Keene. Anyone interested should call: (603)827-3388

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JUST IN -- HOT OFF THE PRESSES!!!!

The Rights of Gay People: An American Civil Liberties Union Handbook

Order now! Only \$1.75 plus a 25¢ handling charge.

ATTENTION, LESBIAN SEPARATISTS! A Lesbian separatist quarterly, Dyke, will commence publication in the fall of this year. Charter subscriptions: \$5.00 until Nov. 30; \$8.00 thereafter. All topics of interest to Dykes will be covered. Everyone who works for Dyke will be paid; regular correspondents will receive free subs as payment. Contact: Tomato Publications, 70 Barrow St., NYC 10014, Room 1R.

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WOMEN'S COUNSELLING SERVICE

13 MAIN STREET
TOPSHAM, MAINE

TEL: 729-4561

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Portland Women's Center  
388 Fore Street  
Tel: 773-9864

MAINE FEMINIST HEALTH PROJECT, an open collective of women from around the state, is looking for new members. Slide shows and self-examination demonstrations are available to groups of interested women. Call: 772-7673 in Portland 926-4343 in New Gloucester

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THE MGTF OFFICE, on Middle Street, is available to other groups. Any group wishing to use the office should present their proposal at the monthly MGTF meeting.

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A man would like to correspond with Gay people in and around Maine. Write:

D. B. C.  
Box 213  
Dryden, ME 04225

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SUBSCRIBE

TO: THE MGTF NEWSLETTER  
Box 4542  
Portland, Maine 04112

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_

Town & State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

One Year -- 12 copies (+) -- \$4.00.  
Sent first class in plain envelope.

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This is Vol. 2, No. 8. (So we missed the front page....)