

THE BEST OF

GAY

50¢

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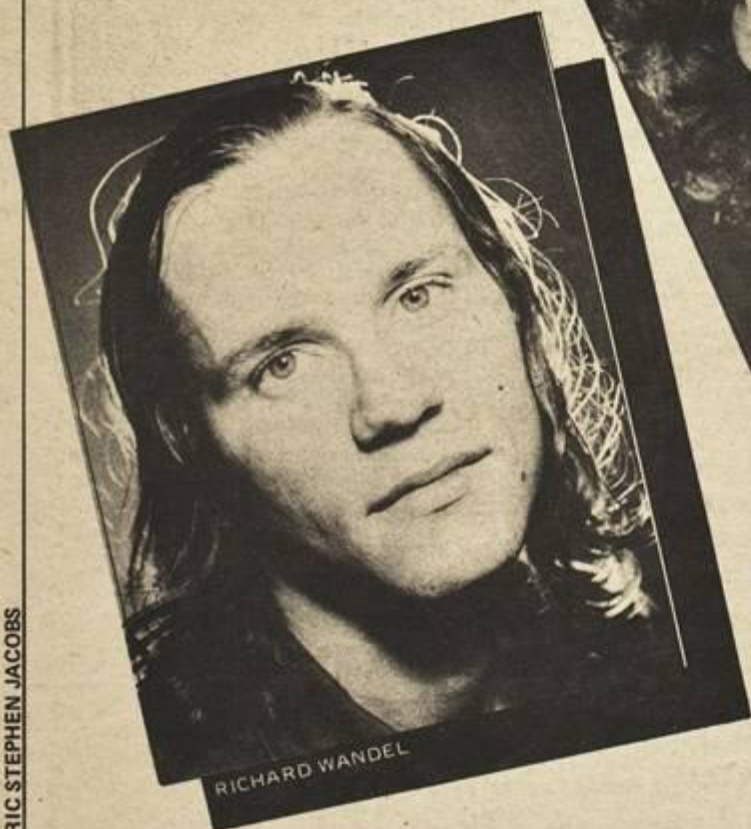
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ALL PHOTOS: ERIC STEPHEN JACOBS

SELECTIONS FROM PAST ISSUES

1972

WHERE WILL YOU GO TONIGHT?

A DIRECTORY FOR DISCRIMINATING DISPOSITIONS

CODE

GM—General Males
GF—General Females
TV—Transvestites
INT—Integrated, gay & straight
BY JERRY FITZPATRICK
Because many of your letters have asked how I rate the bars in this column, I shall attempt to tell you. I try to be objective, but let's face it, we are all human and have our own favorites. I realize that what turns me off or on may not do the same for somebody else. If I find a bar pulling any kind of rip-off, I'll let you know immediately. Otherwise, I'll attempt to give you as complete a listing as I possibly can.

WEST VILLAGE

Bon Seir, 40 W. 8th St. (473-9859). Cha-cha palace, mostly Latin. Bunny is on the bar during the day. GM & TV
Bonnie & Clyde's, 82 W. 3rd St. (GR 3-9304). Dancing, free buffet on Sundays. Elaine is serving the bar to make you feel at home. GF/wsome GM
Bunk House, 551 Hudson St. (989-8920). The default Casa. Good luck. GM
Carr's, 294 W. 10th St. (255-9742). Neighborhood bar and crowd. Alfie is the only lefty behind the stick. GM
Cave, Bank & Washington Sts. Young leather crowd. Cruisy. GM
Danny's Sheridan Square, 170 7th Ave. So. Young heads and dancing. Buddy the Body is on days, Marvin and Peter, nights. Jody will make sure that you enjoy. GM
Delaney's, 72 Grove St. Good food. Joey still behind the bar. Int.
Fedora's, 239 W. 4th St. (CH 2-9691). Jack and Larry on the floor to serve you. And Fedora herself making sure that you enjoy your meal. GM/some Int.
Finale, 48 Barrow St. (CH 3-7356). Been around a long time. Int.
Five Oaks, 49 Grove St. (675-9669). Village favorite off Sheridan Square. Int.
Four Eleven, 411 Bleecker St. (CH 2-2117). An old-time favorite. Int.
Frazzy's, 530 Hudson St. (255-9741). Intimate cocktail bar upstairs with a cozy dining room downstairs. My friend Teddy will see that you enjoy. Coverboy Tony Colatolo is on the stock. GM/GF
Gas Station, 70 Grove St. (242-1408). A big shakeup going on. If anybody knows what is going on they aren't talking.
Gay Switchboard (924-4036) Gays servicing gays. New to town? Want to meet? Call.
Goldbur, 83 W. 3rd St. (677-9874). Dancing to great sound. Shows during the week. Younger crowd. GM
Horn of Plenty, 353 Bleecker St. (242-0636). Delicious food and they have their liquor license. Int.
Julie Verne, W. 10th St. Jason's place and Jack is there. Fantastic time and food. Int.
Juliet, 159 W. 10th St. Hamburgers are great. Drinks are good. Hoo, Joey, et al will take care of your drinks. The crowd is pretty, but don't count on making out. They still stare off GM
Kallers, 264 West St. Granddad of the leather bars. Keeping up with the times. Pool and some humpy prosody. GM
Kookie's, 149 W. 14th St. (242-9226). The bar is clean but they don't encourage GMs. Kookie looks like a poor man's ZiaZia. GF
Limelight, 91 7th Ave. So. Another disco. Nice decor. GM
Meat Rack, 500 W. 14th St. (989-2649). Big, roomy leather bar. Interesting cruising and types. GM
Mattachine, 59 Christopher St. (691-1066). The new offices are fantastic. Stop in and get an education. Among other services (legal and social) it boasts apartment listings for gays.
Mona's Royal Room, 28 Cornelia St. (CH 3-9557). My Martyn has taken over in the kitchen and I suggest you call for a reservation. Joe and Bill still knocking them dead behind the bar with Ronnie White at the keyboard.
Ninth Circle, 139 W. 10th St. Turned disco. GM
One Petate, 518 Hudson St. (691-6260). Frank has been made mgr. Beautiful Nancy Haskell during afternoons and my Bill and Peter will be there nights. GM/GF
Paula's, Greenwich Ave. and 7th Ave. So. The food is very good. Chris and Elaine tend bar while Paula supervises. GF, GM
Peter Rabbit, 305 W. 10th St. (929-9279). Wild mixture of folks, cruisy. Sexy Jimmy and George to tend your needs.
Ramrod, W. 10th St. Leather & western a la S.F. Sexiest Joe along with Carl and Don will see to libations. Dino is host. GM
Roadhouse, 570 Hudson St. (CH 3-4214). The IN bar in the Village. Jammed any night of the week. Go and have a good time. GM
Sammy's Polly, E. 15th St. near 5th Ave. (675-9840). Opulent piano bar. Leah is your host. GM
Sugar's, W. 10th St. Stella by Starlight behind the bar. Say hello. GM
Ter, 21 Greenwich Ave. (255-1337). Snack shop, cruisy afternoons; find out what is happening all over the Village. GM/Int.
Ty's, 144 Christopher St. Right on bar. San Francisco decor. Humpy Jim and Ed are there nights. Brother Doric during the day. GM
West Beach, Christopher St. If you are like me and like saloons once in a while, this is it.

Wild assortment of people. Int
West Side Discussion Group, W. 14th St. (across from the old Triangle). For over a decade, helping gays. Free VD tests. Just started a theatre group. Interesting people. Try it. GM/GF

EAST VILLAGE, WASHINGTON AND UNION SQUARES

Club Baths, 24 1st Ave. (673-3283). Mr. Clean must work here. Dynamite people in an opulent setting. You'll find someone here. Confidential VD tests Thursdays, 5-9 p.m. Half price for students. GM
Eighty-Two Club, 82 E. 4th St. (GR 7-1046). Home of the female impersonators. Tourists. McSweeney's Ale House, 19 E. 7th St. (477-9363). Was very cruisy when we were kids; I doubt if it's changed all that much even though Women's Lib got there too. Int.
St. Mark's Baths, 6 St. Marks Place (473-7929). Low prices because they wouldn't dare charge any higher. Rush down. GM

GRAMERCY & MURRAY HILL

Bar, 232 York Ave. So. (191N St.) (473-9980). Bringing leather to the east side. Lots of room. Reminds me of L.A. Neffy is your host, with Steve, Tiger and Sky doing the honors behind the bar. GM
Beau Geis, 239 3rd Ave. (475-9724). Very good food, reasonably priced, served by some of the best looking waiters in the city. Romantic atmosphere. Cruisy bar. Say hello to Thom and Jack nights, and Chuck and Gene days. GM
Leo's Lion, 57 Lexington Ave. (686-9608). Nice, friendly atmosphere. Your host is David. Go and have a good time. GM
Our Place, 381 3rd Ave. (686-9726). Beautiful Bobby and my favorite Joe along with yours truly behind the bar. Joey Cord is here Sun. & Mon. Bobbie Layne Wed-Sat. GM/GF
Uncle Charlie's South, 581 3rd Ave. (684-2170). By gays for gays. Always jammed. Truly more of a club than a bar. Bob and Jerry deserve all the success they are attaining. GM

CHELSEA

Eagle's Nest, 11th Ave. & 21st St. If you're not into leather (black) and/or western, don't bother. You won't get in and why hassle the management or yourself. This is for leather people only. GM
Giant's, 53 W. 19th St. If the girls are anything like Holly, Dee and Maria—Go! GF
Nine Plus Social Club, 149 W. 21st St. Exclusive after-hours club for the leather set. You must be sponsored by a member. Nice place.
Spiks, 120 11th Ave. (20th St.) Humpy studs come here to relax and groove. GM

SOHO

Gay Activists Alliance Firehouse, 99 Wooster St. Get there early for the SAT. Slick, Marvel at the CABARET every other Fri. Lesbian dance last Fri. of the month. FANTASTIC!! 7th Ave. IRT to Houston; 8th Ave. IND (AA/E) to Spring; 6th Ave. IND (D/P/B) to Broadway/Lafayette; BMT (RR) to Prince; Lex. Ave. IRT to Spring. GO AND HAVE A BALL AND YOU MIGHT FIND A FEW OTHER THINGS OUT.

MIDTOWN & MIDDLE EAST SIDE

Beacon Baths, 227 E. 45th St. (687-0322). Take the elevator to the 11th floor. Fantastic for a matinee. Lots of humpy businessmen on the prowl. Free VD tests 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of the month—4pm to 8pm. GM
Candy Store, 44 W. 56th St. (581-4664). Spiral staircase that can turn you on. Some beauties. Jackets required. GM
Continental Sauna, 111 W. 56th St. Not as grand nor as expensive as the "Mother Church" on W. 74th St. Good for a businessman's lunch(?) GM.
Godmother, 309 E. 60th St. Sebastian has taken over.
Lil, 305 E. 45th St. (Ls 2-0290). The ensemble players, Jerry, Elia, Lois and Jim, along with Gretchen and Ken, will assure you of a good time. GM, GF
Mayfair, 964 1st Ave. (EL 5-9259). Good food at a good price. They're leaping out of their closets. Int.
Regent of Tokyo, 251 E. 53rd St. Japanese restaurant. Elegant. GM
Roundtable, 151 E. 50th St. One of the biggest discos in town, and the oldest, still drawing them, Mario and Bobby at the bar. Shows during the week. GM.
Sauna Baths, 300 W. 58th St. (PL 5-6880). A small place that closes at midnight. Busy during the late afternoons, tho. GM
Sebastian's, 1068 1st Ave. (355-8052). Zany Sebastian is your host. Bill provides the excellent food. John Weston will what your appetites. GM

Singles, 951 1st Ave. (486-9832). Johnny Vincent is your host. Fine food and a lot of fun. Say hello to Phyllis and Bobby. GM/GF
Waller's Apartment, 1068 2nd Ave. (213-3742). Wild situation of a semi-private overlooking NYC. The best manager in town, Tom, has added Bobby Marino to the staff. A definite winner. GM
Yukon 140 E. 53rd St. (421-8122). Roy has given it a new image. Young and vital. Dancing. GM

DANCE BELT & HELL'S KITCHEN

Better Days, 716 W. 49th St. Disco dancing. GM.
why. GM
Big Spender, 315 W. 48th St. (586-9882). Lots of gypsies from the nearby shows. Some beauties. Good time. Eric tends to the libations. Brothers and Sisters, 355 W. 46th St. (247-8840). Most of the sisters have left but some of the brothers are worth checking out. GM/some GF.
Dirty Edna's Scoreboard, 264 W. 46th St. (265-9077). Advertised as "The Home of the Midnight Cowboys." Some of them look as if they missed the last round-up. GM
Haymarket Pub, 772 8th Ave. (586-9360). They asked J.F.H. not to list them in "The Gay Insider U.S.A." But they are. Int.
Jimmy Ray's, 729 8th Ave. (582-9507). They won't admit to it either. But you might find what you're looking for here. Int.
Joe Allen, 326 W. 46th St. (581-6464). Gypsies, name-performers, etc. Gay is the word for the bar while the tables will be mixed. Int.
Leading Zone, 586 9th Ave. (563-8212). Some cowboys and lots of TV's. Would you believe GM(?)
Penny Lane, 220 W. 49th St. New. Don't know that much about it. GM
Tijana Cat, 350 W. 46th St. If your taste buds run Latin you're sure to find a tasty morsel here. Dawn Hampton's vocalizing a winner every time. GM.

Heights (429-8605). Friendly dance bar. It really hops on weekends. Beautiful Jimmy, Big Vinny and Bobby will tend to your needs. GM/GF
Sombroso, 253-32 Northern Blvd. Owned by the people who had Zero's. Haven't been here yet but it sounds nice if you're in the neighborhood. GM
Trytling Place, 120-31 83rd Ave., Kew Gardens (846-8922). Big and roomy. Lots of happy faces. Meatruck and balcony. Good snacks. GM/GF
What A Dump, 76-07 Roosevelt Ave. (429-8249). Despite what you may have read elsewhere, it's tres gay. Very cruisy. Chet manages things for Don and Vinnie. A hump named Steve is behind the bar. GM

WASHINGTONVILLE, N.Y.

Mister G's Round Hill Resort, Rt. 206, Washingtonville (914 496-9845). 25 acres of good times. They will be open all year round. GM
GAY CINEMA
David, 236 W. 55th St.
55th St. Playhouse, 55th St. between 6th & 7th Aves.
Jewel Theatre, 12th St. & 3rd Ave.
Park-Miller, 43rd St. betw. 6th Ave. & B'way (BR 9-3970)
Tomcat Theatre, 424 W. 42nd St.

UPPER EAST SIDE

Aibi, 1546 2nd Ave. (249-7026). Show nights are Mon. & Wed. with the sparkling Ms. Saunders. Dancing. GM/GF
Cabaret, 1436 3rd Ave. (744-9873). Michael's cooking is unbelievable. Shows and dancing in the back room. GM/GF
Country Cousin, 1313 3rd Ave. (879-6614). Drop in during the day and say hello to Mother Rice. Crowded dinner hour. Billy and Harry are on the bar. Your hosts: Ralph and Lou. GM, some GF
Harry's Back East, 1422 3rd Ave. (249-6991). Always cruisy. My man Sam with George and Johnny are there nights. Grandma Lee is on days. Judy is your hostess. GM

Jack & Blue at Three, 314 E. 72nd St. (734-9303). New management has brought humpy Dennis back to take care of the bar. Dining in the rear, cruising in the front. GM, some GF
New Jimmy's, 1576 3rd Ave. (860-4509). Carl's food, fine drink and service and the entertainment of Savoy-Saxton-Sardo-Fleming make this place a sure bet. Joe and Don are the hosts. GM
Painted Pony, 1485 3rd Ave. (744-9580). What more can you say when you say GYPSY? An incredible talent. The beauty behind the bar is Eddie. GM
Piper's Lounge, 1201 Lexington Ave. (734-9305). Dancing & cruisy. Tony Black and Bill Laney are on the bar. Say hello to Micky. GM

Uncle Charlie's North, 1049 Lexington Ave. (861-6132). Cruisy help and cruisy patrons. Good crowds. GM

UPPER WEST SIDE

Chipp's, Columbus Ave. bet. 66th & 67th Sts. Popular with Lincoln Center audiences. Int.
Continental Baths, 230 W. 74th St., west of B'way. (799-2688). More than a bath-house, it's a totally gay environment even down to a weekend cabaret. Expensive, but worth it. Students 1/2-price with I.D. cards. GM
Picadilly Pub, 324 Amsterdam Ave. (874-8632). Good cruising and friendly. Try it. GM
Westside, 2160 Broadway (874-8013). Popular or with humpy help. Bryan Murphy and the Westsiders provide the entertainment. GM

UPTOWN

Charade, 1800 2nd Ave. at 93rd. Where Black is beautiful, the age is young, the food and music are soul and the dancing terrific. GM/GF
Gold Ball, 2850 Broadway (MO 2-4704). Restaurant and bar popular with uptown gays and Columbia students. Int.
Mt. Morris Baths, 1944 Madison Ave. (534-9904). This has a black majority. GM
Pashie's Interlude, 2257 7th Ave. at 135th St. A Harlem landmark since before most of us were born. Int.
BROOKLYN
Danny's Brooklyn Heights, 108 Montague St. (625-8844). Two floors of fun and frolic presided over by Paul. Sat is your daytime host behind the bar with "duzy" Duke and Bruce taking over at night. GM
Man's Country, 53 Prepoint, Brooklyn Heights (624-3623). Masculine atmosphere for masculine GMS. A bath in Brooklyn complete with gym and an enormous pool. I think you'll like this one. GM
Plane Bar, 103 Montague St. Just found this one. Kitty Kelly is M.C. during the day and Mike takes over at night. GM.

QUEENS

Betsy Ross Room, 73-13 37th Road, Jackson

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QUEENS

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GROSS IMMORALITY: Peter Brennan is Nixon's choice for Secretary of Labor. Here in New York, Brennan's policies of discrimination against blacks and Puerto Ricans are well known. How the hell does the righteous Mr. Nixon believe that such a man will uphold the anti-discrimination laws passed by the pre-Nixon courts? Or, does Mr. Nixon feel that since the majority of blacks and Puerto Ricans didn't vote for him, they are not yet ready to take their rightful places alongside his "children" who did vote for him? And, of course, Brennan's appointment had nothing to do with the fact that in 1970 he organized his hardhats to march in

(continued on page 16)



Photo by Eric Stephen Jacobs

*In reviews of centuries
Beyond the dawn of time
When charming seas
Washed you ashore
That moment you were mine*

*In lands that are forgotten now
Where history is mute
I chose you when
I heard you play
Love's hymn upon a flute*

*In Egypt, Greece and Persia's land
In kings' domains afar
Oh I was yours
When first you made
Love's wish upon a star*

*Tomorrow's bridge of years extends
To evolution's goal
In every age
You will remain
To wed my waiting soul*

*How would I marry you, my love?
With documents and ink?
With tests to check you for disease?
And many relatives to please?
Your sister wearing pink?*

*How would you marry me, my love?
In judge's chambers high?
With state's approval to declare
Or witness whose oath would bear
Our marriage is no lie?*

*How would we pledge our marriage vows?
In solemn churchly rites?
With clergyman whose voice intones
A prayer to long your nephew groans
Beneath a thousand lights?*

*Or would you rather we repair
to some green hill in Spring
And there repledge ourselves anew
For ever to our selves be true
And love's sweet song to sing?*

*You are my best
reflection
and I am yours,
you see,
you see,
My deepest
introspection
brings me love
to be
just standing here
before you,
your smile so tenderly
expressing clear
conviction
Your own best self
is me.*

Photo by Jack Nichols



THIS YEAR-END ISSUE WILL REMAIN ON THE STANDS FOR THREE WEEKS.

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Is There Life After Marriage?

BY THANE HAMPTEN

We've been together almost ten years now. And I want to go on record saying that it's been hell—and a hell of a lot of fun. Some of the good things and good times are gone, forever, others remain. We're no longer married; we no longer consider ourselves lovers. Certain couples (who still pretend exclusive devotion to one another) shake their heads sadly and say, "Same old story... it's New York, you know... this city does that to people... the temptations..." Tongues click.

Poor old New York gets blamed for everything. And it's misplaced blame, at least in this case. Of course the temptations are greater here! But if you're going to cheat, there's a will and a way in Watertown as well as Manhattan. Cheating is a symptom, not the disorder itself. Philandering gives the good ol' *coup de grace* to a marriage that was already dead at the roots.

Paul and I still live together and see no reason to not continue doing so. (Until?) The dissolution of our formal marriage was not a sad or angry one. (Nor was it one-sided, with great emotional damage being caused one party.) And we see little reason for the declaration of independence to alter or end the great enjoyment we still find in each other's company. Quite simply, we are both entirely too honorable to continue acting a farce. Deceit would have dictated an ugly end to our relationship; honesty saved it.

And what relationship is it now? Are we roommates? Brothers? Sisters? Close companions? Maybe some of these; maybe all. Do we still have affection for each other? Of course. What a silly question. We love each other entirely too much to lie about love.

You've all heard the weary dialogue: "Are they lovers?" "Yes!... But they like *threesome*." Charades. Is it so hard for us to relinquish these binding definitions? *Lovers... marriage...* in what neat little hermetically sealed coffins these terms place us. The blunder is that we conform far more to language than language conforms to us. Motto: "In labels we trust." Ergo, my distasteful/adapted gay marriages and ceremonies. But more about that later.

Why did I decide to Settle Down in the first place? Oh, for the same reasons most of us do, I suppose. Spent several years cruising aimlessly; unproductive one-night stands. The only thing I would have to show for my efforts was a little less vodka in the bottle, cum stains on the sheets, and a phone number I knew I'd never call. I was lonely: not lonely for flesh but for continuity.

Also, I had never had a real lover before and thought it was about time I did. A lot of my friends were fashionably involved. I didn't want to be the only one to end up... the old maid. And I didn't want people to think me too selfish/cowardly/promiscuous/neurotic to try the mating game. I wanted to conform. And, needless to say, I wanted to prove to the arrogant straight community that a queer could celebrate a Silver Wedding Anniversary just as inevitably as they.

A friend who is something of a compulsive yenta introduced us. Paul is Latin and hadn't been in this country long. I felt he was vulnerable and needed someone. I enjoyed instructing him in manners, morals and mores American. And teaching him English. In giving of my knowledge, in being his instructor, I often felt that he was my personal property. Gee, it's nice to own a human being. Con-

fidence!

I needed Paul, too. My father was dying of cancer. I needed someone I could depend upon; someone to grip when the panic and fear hit in the middle of the night. And this security, this strength convinced me even more that I needed a mate.

I haven't mentioned sexual attraction, have I? Yes, it was there. Neither of us was insanely driven toward the bed, but I was convinced that abstract values would make a much more lasting marriage than the length of a cock or the tilt of a nose. We functioned easily together, and that was that.

So after a few months (a sensible engagement as certified by the yenta) the roommate moved out and Paul moved in. He dropped many of his friends and I abandoned mine. For a long while we wrapped ourselves in a very private and intimate cocoon. There was so much to learn about each other! What a challenge—with a Spanish/English dictionary as our intermediary.

And how delicious the *testing of emotions*! How far could each of us go? I would have too lengthy a bull session with a friend, ignoring Paul (on purpose). He would lock himself in the bathroom, refusing to come out. Or Paul would anger me in a department store. I would call him an insensitive bastard and rush out, leaving him—hopefully—to face great embarrassment and shame. ("If I killed myself, he'd cry and miss me, by God. I'd like to do it just so I could see him fall on my body and say he's sorry! Spic bastard!")

Fight, separate, come together, fight, separate, come together. The pain was so sweet when it stopped. And with time, we tired of these games. Too much effort. We learned when, where and how to tread. We drifted into the simple comfort of being near each other and sharing ordinary pleasures. Ordinary.

We realized of course that we didn't have any great common interests. But this didn't worry us. We assumed the differences would add zest to the marriage. How dull to be with someone exactly like yourself. And yet... we really *did* feel that we should do absolutely everything together. Outside interests were *conflicts*. Jealousy and anger—and guilt—were the proper responses. "You don't give a damn about my ___." "Well, you've never even bothered to ask if I got my ___ finished!"

The longer we lived together, the more we wanted to make a go of it. Others did; why not us? (Pride goeth before a fall.) Compromises. You cut that out and I'll cut this out. You drop Sergio. All he does is use our place to make phone calls and take a crap. And I'll drop Ted—but he doesn't mean a thing when he grabs me that way. Oh, sure.

The simple pleasures: waking in the middle of the night, finding him always there and throwing your leg across his body. Snuggle. Anniversaries, birthdays, Christmas. How faithfully observed! Little gifts for no reason. Brunches, dinners, parties. Favorite female singer; collecting all her records. Happy Valentine's Day 1965. Taking sincere interest in each other's family. Shit, I think my mother likes you more than she does me! Private jokes. Pet names. Secrets shared. Coming home from work and recounting the day's activities. And gossiping. Guess who broke up? Knew it wouldn't last. (Feeling smug.)

Friends? After a while, all old marrieds, just like ourselves. Singles found us a drag. We didn't really think of them as a threat; nevertheless, they were a bit unsettling. Parties were dinner parties. Al-

ways for eight; never for nine. Jimmy and Hal want to show off the linen they got in Brussels last month... I like Garth and Steve... they wear well, know what I mean? Bill's losing his hair. Tee-hee.

Carlos and Ray split. Tremors of fear would run through the family circle. It could happen to us! (Don't think about it.) The divorced pair was immediately expelled. They had disgraced us. Divorce is always contagious. Monkey see; monkey do.

The years pass. We are inexorably joined. So many memories. Ten diaries of shared events. 3,650 days of togetherness. Remember when? Whatever happened to? Memories. Trips to Europe and Puerto Rico. Comfort. Security. Happiness shared. I got the raise! I just walked right in and said, look, Mr. Struthers, I think you know how hard I work around here and...

Buying things. Possessing. Sharing possessions. Building. Sharing tragedy. The



How far could each of us get?

night the telegram came. Oh my God. We'll work it out somehow. You'll see. Comfort. Security. Gentle routine. Like being lulled to sleep in a hammock. The contentment of routine. The neatness.

Routine? I never wanted routine. I never like getting in a rut! That's your bag. Oh, come on, Paul... you fell for it as much as I did. It's what... happens. Routine. It's not so bad. Routine is reality. Really? Have you looked at the reality of the mirror lately? You're getting fat. You are fat! Oh? Well, you might take a peek at yourself, now that you mention it.

I'm going to a gym. Fine, I've been thinking of taking Spanish lessons. Very interesting! Why didn't you do that six years ago? I was bored to tears at Frank and Jerry's last night. All those same old tired faces. Same old tired faces. Same old talk. Where did you go for vacation? Same place, as usual. London. It's cheap this time of year. How's your mother? About the same, thanks. Senile. Same old shit. Death.

Honey, would you mind very much if I went out tonight... alone?

Oh? (Three months pass.) Maybe we better sit down and... talk about it. Is it (go on—say it) someone? No! It's not that. It's just that... I'm bored.

Who's to blame? Neither. Both. Did we try too hard? Not enough? Sigh. Who knows? Should we have tried to save it? Save what? Where do we go from here? I don't know. We didn't build it in a day. Why end it in a day?

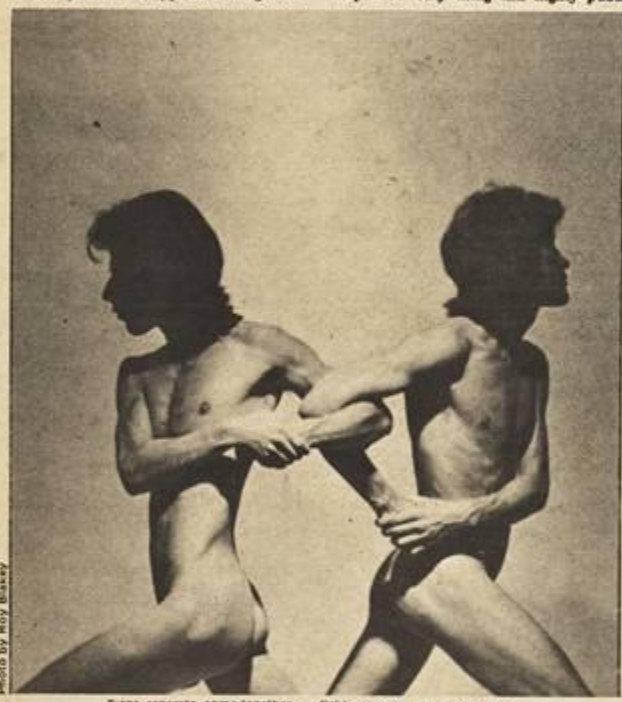
I might meet somebody and. So? But do you really want to go through this again? Well, it wouldn't be "again." I'd profit from our mistakes. Oh, thanks a lot. I was a guinea pig, huh? You know I didn't mean it like that, bitch. Laugh. Hug. Boy, did I ever get laid last night! Anybody I know? Uh-uh, but you'd like to. It's this big! You're awful... want to go to a movie? Yeah, let's go.

You mean you still sleep together? Sure, we're used to it.

asking a lot—to find continually fresh thrills each night of the year. Wanderlust.

When the passion dies, married straights (as we all know) stay together at best out of great affection, pride, common interest. Some because of contracts alone, or property or children. At worst they stay glued out of laziness, fear of stigma, neurotic interdependence—and many times simply because they can't relinquish their luscious hatred of each other.

Same reasons. (Parting is almost always a miserable feeling. Those fucking memories get in the way.) Show me a gay couple who has been together for a number of years and I'll show you a pair of loving roommates, not lovers. Am I exhibiting sour grapes? No, not at all. I have great admiration for loving roommates. (In fact, I think this type of arrangement



Fight, separate, come together... fight, separate, come together.

might be the solution for all of us.) But I loathe the hypocrisy of couples who are "Lovers," in name only.

Friend no. 1: He and lover know about each other's cheating. Neither cares as long as it's not brought out into the open. No talk. They have their own clearly defined "cruising turfs." Tricks are never taken to the apartment. That nasty stuff is done elsewhere. Friend no. 2 when questioned: "Oh, yes—we have an *Understanding*..." (Note: said "understanding" was made after joint wills had been legally filed...)

Friend no. 3: "I know he cheats. But he's still good to me. He takes care of the rent, you know. Anyway, I still love him. Maybe I like to suffer. Just call me Lana Turner." (Embarassed giggle.) Friend no. 4—all claws, Jungle Red: "Listen, I've worked hard on this marriage. We've been together since 1957, you know. We spent almost ten thousand on that frigging barn in the country. Every time we breed the dogs, I'm the one who has the be all-night midwife. Harry's a good soul but he wants everybody to love him. I'm not that romantic. I certainly don't need five blowjobs a day. He started bringing boys

in long before I did. I don't really give a damn. But the minute I see him bring the same dewy-eyed little mother in here twice, and getting serious, I manage to wheedle my way into that bed. I get the kid's prick in my mouth and I hang on for dear life! Nobody, but nobody is going to ruin my marriage!"

Marriage? I really feel quite sorry for the young gays who are rushing headlong into wholly unholy marriage. That insipidly insidious ceremony. What is the point? The Straight Almighty doesn't recognize it. The government thinks of it as low camp, and it doesn't decrease your taxes one iota. Heterosexuals in thousands are abandoning it—and gays jump in to fill the void, eager to embrace and utilize a dying social custom. All so the poodle won't be born out of wedlock. Frankly, I feel there must be a better way to compete. And for exhibitionism, you can always expose yourself in the subway. The only thing this highly publi-

New Life Style for Couples. I don't agree with all their theories and think them a bit too tentative and conservative with today's rapid social upheavals. But for those, straight or gay, who are freshly joined in this allegedly blissful state, the authors have some good advice about avoiding traditional pitfalls in marriage. Old-fashioned marriages are labeled "closed marriages." They are restrictive, confining, oppressive, and—worst of all—incapacitatingly dull.

However, to quote the O'Neills: "The basic premise of open marriage is the idea of writing your own contract so as to take into consideration the individual differences between marital partners, and the uniqueness of each mate, instead of submitting to the old, closed contract that requires every couple to be the same."

They contend that "... it is entirely possible to love your marital partner with an intensely rewarding and continually growing love and at the same time to love another or others with a deep and abiding affection. And this extra dimension of love feeds back into the love between the partners." Also: "The more of a whole person each one becomes, the more self-actualized, the more he has to offer his mate."

I can't really say if the authors are urging the partners to have actual physical contact with others but I do know they encourage the couple to have separate interests (and that includes intimate friendships) which are explored to the fullest. It is of prime importance to *preserve one's own very personal identity, to be independent*.

One of the gravest errors made by my lover and I was in slavishly imitating all of the worst in closed marriages. The desperation to conform. We felt it necessary to share exactly the same interests, the same friends, same hours, same trips. Siamese twins to the death. As I said, Paul is Latin. He is very possessive—and domineering. As I am much less so, I allowed a great deal of my personality to be absorbed into his. This may lessen friction but it doesn't engender respect.

As the years passed and the monotony began to settle like crippling rheumatism, we escaped by resuming interest in a lot of our original solitary pursuits, which we should never have relinquished. By this time they were of no aid in giving variety and stimulation to the marriage; they were shields and barriers. You go your way; I'll go mine. And so we did. Excitement returned. New experiences revived us. Sluggish blood began to flow. Ironically, as Paul has mentioned several times lately, "You know, we've got a much better relationship now that we're not married. We're closer, we love with each other, and we enjoy each other more." Is it any wonder?

It might be said that Paul and I matured—in totally different directions. If this is destined to happen, there is very little to be done about it. However, here is some ten years worth of advice I'd like to pass on to those thinking of marriage.

Many gays drift casually into a union with someone. This isn't really a bad idea. Except for one drawback. You are already living together before any thought is given to certain specific ground rules. (No, I don't mean those cold and calculating "50-50" deals.) It is at the beginning of a relationship that the protection of personal identities should be clearly defined. Alas, after that torrid combat known as courtship, we are interested only in relief from tension, and in absolute unification. We would gladly sacrifice our very souls.

It doesn't seem to matter if you marry someone entirely different from yourself or exactly the same. Both have advantages and drawbacks. However, you must have at least one or two profoundly common interests, even if it's only the same sexual fetishes. Otherwise, never the twain shall meet. (Don't hope to discover these interests during marriage. They never come. So you end up buying and managing a delicatessen together. Whoopee.)

Guard against any form of possessiveness. Neither of you is property. A possessive lover is a challenge to the other partner. ("I've never done anything to betray his trust, but if he feels that way let's just see how much I can get away with.")

Do anything and everything possible to avoid sinking into a mindlessly routine existence. At the beginning of a marriage it may seem fun to imitate the old folks next door. But it is the road to disaster. Especially in gay life.

Do not ever take each other for granted! This is the hardest of the pitfalls to avoid. It is almost impossible to keep a relationship fresh, but try. We always think of marriage as a "natural state" that can be ignored and it will rattle along of its own momentum. Preposterous, of course. There is nothing that requires more labor, inventiveness and diabolical ingenuity.

Paul and I have friends who have been lovers for quite a number of years. Due to widowed mothers, they can only see each other on weekends. Their Saturday-Sunday *piet-a-terre* is their oasis and they have never had the luxury of taking each other for granted. They will probably remain lovers for a century, or until the mamas blaze off to glory and the duo find themselves in entirely too convenient proximity.

Let me give a painfully good and impossibly vulgar illustration: An accurate indication of failure to sustain the essential charm and savor of a marriage occurs when you commence openly farting and belching in each other's presence. Something once lovely as a fragile blossom is in a frightening state of decomposition.

Be honest with each other. Too obvious a statement? Think about it. We are rarely honest even with ourselves. Prospective lovers always try to impress each other. This can make for a lot of sticky going later. Have enough confidence in yourself to be ruthlessly truthful—before, during (and after) the marriage. Paul and I have found out more about each other, especially sexually, in the one year of living as roommates than in all the other nine years together. Incredible. All the wild fun we might have had if we had been honest.

And once again I cannot overstate the importance of individual freedom and preservation of individual identities in marriage. As the O'Neills put it:

Knowing and fulfilling yourself along with your partner in open marriage instead of through your partner, as in closed marriage, becomes a voyage of discovery. Not only is it challenging, but it prepares us to flow with change. It offers you the possibility of election as opposed to mere contentment.

Maybe Montaigne was right when he said, "Marriage is like a cage; one sees the birds outside desperate to get in, and those inside equally desperate to get out." Maybe Byron was right when he wrote, "All tragedies are finish'd by a death! All comedies are ended by a marriage." But if we must indulge in tribal tomfoolery, pray let us remember to be loyal to ourselves as well as our mates, to be imaginatively, to be kind and amusing, to be ridiculously casual about the whole damn thing, and—be honest!

Nena and George O'Neill have written an interesting book, *Open Marriage: A*

The Stoned Apocalypse

BY JOHN P. LeROY

The Stoned Apocalypse by Marco Vassi. Trident Press. 250 pages, \$6.95.

What a trip this book is! Marco Vassi is a writer of exceptional acuity, gut honesty, deadly accuracy, and extraordinary courage who dares to experience life's potential and refuses to settle for its actuality. With an innate ability to see beyond the surface of things and go straight to the heart of a situation, Vassi takes us through the America of the mid-to-late sixties, stopping off at the Gurdjieff Foundation, Esalen Institute, Scientology, the hippie hobbitland of Haight-Ashbury, the Experimental College at San Francisco State, various communes and crash pads, a gay bath house, an insane asylum, and the New York scene, among other things.

Vassi seems incapable of writing a dull sentence. Reading *The Stoned Apocalypse* is not only sharing his personal odyssey in search of his own sense of being, but feeling with him the exhilaration, the depression, the desperation, the madness, and the sheer energy of his journey. He embarks in hope of finding refuge from the "flat, tedious round of meaningless daily existence" his New York job as editor of a house organ had brought him. The palliatives and diversions New York offers provide no genuine relief. Feeling certain that there must be "more," Vassi reads Ouspensky, realizes his psychology courses are meaningless, and is led by a female coworker he wanted to go to bed with to read Gurdjieff and join a quasi-religious order. The guru, a Mrs. R., meets him, asks him to talk about himself and, after listening to a few minutes of Vassi's hypnotic spiel, pronounces him an utter fool with a few redeeming qualities. She puts him through various psychic exercises, treats him like a slave, humiliates him before other students, and strips down all his inner defenses. In anger, Vassi drops acid, drops out of Mrs. R.'s group, drops out of his job, and investigates Scientology.

Its gimmick, dianetics, is the eradication of all childhood traumas with the aid of a confessor and a primitive lie detector until the subject is pronounced "clear." Its methods are akin to fascism as Vassi is deemed a "suppressive person" by the "ethics officer," the equivalent of gestapo. After a macabre session at which he discovers that a dossier has been kept on him all the while, he sees secret spies everywhere. The paranoia that ensues hastens his departure from New York to San Francisco.

There he is drawn to the Experimental College at San Francisco State, "a free-market of the mind." He signs up to teach a course in "Relaxation, Awareness and Breathing." He draws over a hundred students. It's a big success. He achieves a beautiful sense of group communion and inner harmony, but the situation gets out of hand. Moving on to Haight-Ashbury, he lives in various communes, balls all sorts of women, has a few short-lived affairs, all the while smoking grass, dropping acid, and posing as a self-styled guru, part-time orgy-master, and superhedonistic yogi. Amid the religious vibrations, political confusion and comic insecurity, Vassi's impersonations mask an ever-deepening desperation.

He tries another part of the San Francisco scene, this time as "psychic host" for the week-end gatherings of a commercial swingers club, where the sexually incompetent reach out to be discovered. A desultory affair with four of the em-



Marco Vassi, author of "The Stoned Apocalypse"

ployees, together with growing rancor, soon lead to the destruction of the club, but the Esalen Institute makes its appearance and leaves its own brand of phobias on Vassi's memory.

"As a mixture of therapeutic effectiveness and shallow hucksterism, of sincere humanism and power mania, it finds no equal on the social scene... [Traditional] Therapy had sunk to a level of pom-

posity and granite stupidity that no serious person could take seriously. And on its dead body, Esalen, like a great vulture, nourished itself... always in the background, the sound of cash registers clanging."

With his supply of cash dwindling, Vassi meets an old friend in a rundown hotel, which leads to the coming out of his homosexuality. "Once and for all the

taboo of homosexuality was broken, and I realized how natural, how easy, how rapturous it is to give oneself up to the sweet closeness between people, to taste the richness of sex with them, and not once care whether it is cock or cunt which is giving pleasure, whether it is a man or a woman who is the vehicle of such great transports of joy."

His further adventures include a dope smuggling operation, a hippie commune in Tucson, Arizona, and back to San Francisco where he takes various odd jobs. One of them is as an attendant in a gay bath house. Here, he realizes "that there is no difference between homosexuals and heterosexuals. They have the same range of problems, from impotence to promiscuity, struggles with fidelity, guilt. They have the same joys, the same fears. And they completely share the same sexual sickness of the nation."

How much it would have meant if a simple statement like that, with all its implications, had been echoed throughout the country only five years ago. Of psychology, Vassi says, "Any psychologist attempting to deal with homosexuality who has not himself sucked a cock is a hypocritical liar, and ought to be arrested for malpractice." Though he found that gay life "was in many ways more gentle and humane than that offered by the straight world," Vassi decided against it because "to make a choice that sexually rules out half the human race seemed idiotic."

The last forty or fifty pages are the most fascinating and the most harrowing of all. Vassi becomes involved in an experimental project in a mental institution whose purpose was to determine whether or not doping up the patients on thiorazine was more effective treatment than not administering the drug, and just helping them out through various radical and humane techniques. I will not detail the experience except to say that it is probably the best account of what it must be like to come to the edge of insanity I have ever seen in print. It is so powerful and so devastating an indictment on our whole concept of mental health that one can easily be led to believe that the medieval dungeons and the acute torture chambers that were rampant during the height of the Inquisition must have somehow been more humane, more enlightened, and more civil than what Vassi recounts here.

After the near destruction of his mind, Vassi manages to come back to New York, has an abortive business experience as a partner in a videotape concern, and winds up as a pornographer, his psyche worn, but transfused. Vassi's experiences probably made him no better or worse than he was before, except for his realization that our meager existence is a trip of its own toward a destination none of us can comprehend. He searches no more.

He will no doubt go on being himself, but in a state of alertness few of us know much about. Most of us pass our days in a state of waking sleep, going about our humdrum routines, unaware of the myriad wondrous richness of life that can only be perceived by seeing, hearing, feeling, touching, smelling and tasting as intensely as we can. Vassi has given us a valuable glimpse of what the world is like when you view it wide awake, without cant, and without bullshit. Even if he never set another word to paper, for this he would still deserve sainthood. By bringing us to the brink of madness, he has let us know how much we miss when we go through life without really living.

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The Fag Hag's Tenth Anniversary Prom

BY MICKIE BURNS

Lucas was not a reputable queen. Not of the fastidious variety, almost frightening up close, almost convincing of something at a distance, but oh my god the grease paint had run so grotesquely. Not that Lucas actually wore grease paint. He only infrequently toyed with little pots of "Glimmer Glisser Kissers" he lifted from drug stores on First Avenue.

His lifestyle was kept firmly but marginally away from that of your typical New York derelict by a regular stipend from his stolid churchgoing Mama in Mississippi which paid the rent in a completely renovated as opposed to the standard tenement buildings more indigenous to Fourth Street and First. Mother's allowance also covered the acting lessons at the Neighborhood Playpen, and would have been enough for groceries and laundry, but that wasn't Lucas's style.

Lucas had flunked out of Ole Miss in about the second semester (for public sodomy on a golf course but mostly for not studying at all) and although he had picked up enough on the alternate culture to sometimes fancy himself a social rebel, he was a lot closer to being plain Oldtime Seedy. His rather new and boxily architected apartment had the most suffocating stench, principally from dog shit with overtones of pot, garbage, and incense, almost a distillation or condensation of East Village essence. Lucas's little Yorkshire terrier never went out, except on those sporadic occasions when Lucas remembered he and the dog might make quite an effect on Greenwich Avenue both dressed as Apaches. Lucas would spend several hours tying bits of beading (his friend JoJo had stolen them for him from Bloomingdale's) on himself and the dog and then they would both go out as Apaches. It was a costume year.

How Lucas met Karen Ann was like this. Lucas had come screaming through the lobby of their apartment building as was his custom upon arriving from Fire Island where he had spent most of the week on an initial investment of thirty-five cents, flapping about the sand in a polyethylene Indian blanket and a bikini bottom from a girl's Courreges swimsuit, carrying on with everyone like a red-haired bat. (I believe he used Clairol's Forever Amber.) While this particular commotion was entering her foyer, Karen Ann was back from her dutiful little job at the bank wearing her dutiful little panty hose and her dutiful little miniskirt, opening her mailbox at an appropriate and routine hour. Lucas's mailbox had been by contrast broken into and off its hinges (he was always losing his key) for six weeks. All the same Lucas received letters from all over the world from "persons in all walks of life." Karen Ann fairly exactly resembled millions of the city's office-clericals that one sees on the subways except for one outstanding thing—her hair. It was long and parted in the middle or on the side just like all the other girls like her, but it was just so much more fantastic than the others' hair. Just so thick, just so blonde and gleaming. Just so luxuriant. It was the world's prize head of hair, a fragile ephemeral treasure, sungold in the East Village. Well Lucas saw beauty. "Aah've sailn you, whash did you get that hair," Lucas said to her in redneck. "Wah



you've got to come to mah party I'm a'avin' to-nayht and you must braang me a gorgeous present or I will hate you forever and ever. It's mah birthday!" he continued in both redneck and New York piss-elegant.

Karen Ann said she would like very much to go Lucas's party, thank you. In her more conventional way Karen Ann was just as gone to pot somehow as Lucas. I think only in New York does one find people who have worked out for themselves such curious existences. One thinks with people like Lucas and Karen Ann, realizing the safety that spawned them, that if they had only by some small accident stayed near home, near some ordering restraint—but in the vacuum of New York they survive so oddly. The strange thing about Karen Ann was that she had after all turned out in so many ways so conventional. Why back in college she had been among the first of the hippies. Everyone assumed she would gravitate to New York, study modern dance, shoot speed, live with a man. But she did none of those things. No one in the building knew why, but there she was in the smallest studio apartment on the fourth floor with a tiny new blue-fixture bath. Just sitting there in her room. She was pretty enough in the face, had the Typical Chick Image like all similar office-clericals. And with the added attraction of that hair, she was—at times—gorgeous. Nonetheless all anyone ever saw her do was leave the building promptly mornings for work, where she was employed at a job that requires no fraternization except "It's time for my

lunch hour" or "Good night." A vast bank, trim, air-conditioned and quiet. Then Karen Ann would come back to her room and the neighbors said she had the television on a lot but that was all. The super Stanley, a stepinfetchit Negro who would delight any bigot and set the Black Nationalist movement back ten years, related to curious tenants that the girl with the long blonde hair was never seen leaving the building or receiving visitors in the five years she had lived there. Always paid her rent on time. "Yassum." Oh Karen Ann went two blocks to the A&P on First Avenue and Sixth, and two blocks in the other direction to the drug store and cleaners and then that fabulous hair and all the people in the building and down the block couldn't figure it out because it didn't fit. Then all of a sudden that disgusting Queen in the garden apartment on the second floor was screaming at the top of his lungs across the grimy courtyard to Karen Ann on the Fourth Floor, "Whaat are you a'goin' to braang me for mah birthday." Then Saturday night Karen Ann got all dressed up in her dutiful little silver minidress that was five years old and never worn once and walked across the courtyard, to that noisyy faggot's party.

JoJo had really outdone himself on the decorations. He had opened the windows, sprayed three cans of Lysol Room Deodorant, and then started creating a fairyland of stolen Bloomingdale's Hallmark party decorations. Some of the decorations were actually for Halloween and others for Christmas and Easter, but JoJo

made it all come together just right. Because JoJo was a window dresser at Bloomy's and that's also how come he was able to shoplift three whole wardrobes for each of his three teenage sisters every season. JoJo was rushing about the living room scolding Lucas for his really transcendental sloth and straightening the pictures of Lucas's mother and Marilyn Monroe Lucas kept hanging side by side over the sofa. "What would Father Flanagan say," JoJo inquired, "if he saw me in this lowlife apartment with these lowlife people? If Father Flanagan only knew the depths to which I have sunk." Lucas took offense. JoJo was young and chubby and there were still traces of the choir boy about him although JoJo was eclectically stuffed into brand-new (Bloomingdale's) versions of East Village tie-dye, 17th Century Militia Coat (with epaulets) and several wampum belts. Even Karen Ann was impressed.

Karen Ann sat down very quietly and prettily until about one hundred of Lucas's vast and motley array of male homosexual or just plain Male Outrageous acquaintances had arrived. Every once in a while someone would ask if she were a real girl or if she had real hair but mostly all the leather boys and all the window dressers and all the flower children types were too busy admiring each others' armloads of barbaric jewelry and no one paid very much notice to her.

JoJo brought out a great birthday cake at midnight and everyone said happy birthday to Lucas, in the candlelight of his cake, a gangly, dangly, lumpy, bumpy twenty-seven. Lucas still looked adolescent-awkward and ingeniously Western like a male Judy Canova.

By three o'clock everyone was dancing to Lucas's recherche collection of 45's. "It's only puppy love," a slow record came on. Lucas suddenly remembered he had invited Karen Ann and went over to ask her to dance. He made the most sweeping courtly bow to the daintily seated blonde girl, addressing Karen Ann in his most elegant MGM English. Karen Ann curtseied.

They did a two-step their mother had once taught them as mothers often do prior to an "unsocialized" small town child's first boy-girl party. Lucas and Karen Ann did the step together very carefully, remembering it.

Lucas smiled his illusion-handsome smile, looking at Karen Ann as "swains" were supposed to do in either Victorian or Elizabethan novels, whichever. Karen Ann smiled back as prettily, looking to be a Guinevere equal to his Lancelot, centuries beyond a steno-clerical.

Very seriously the outrageous queen said to Karen Ann, "You are from a small town, aren't you?" "Yes," she said.

"Did a boy ever ask you to your Senior Prom?"

"No," she said. Then she thought, and asked in turn, "Were you able to get a girl to accept your invitation to yours?"

"No," he said, in turn.

"Then let's pretend," he said, "that I am the most handsomest boy and you are the most beautifulst girl and we are at the prom together."

"Let's pretend," she said. And they pretended.

And sometimes he remembered her and sometimes he dressed her like a countess or an Apache and sometimes he took Karen Ann out for a walk.

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SHELLEY'S NEW LOOK!

BY VITO RUSSO

First of all, don't look at that picture. I'm really a dwarf with a long white beard and I live under the Triboro Bridge. Listen, I almost didn't make it this week. If I see one more film they'll have to treat me for night blindness. But I'll get to that in a minute. Let's just relax a while. This has been one hell of a Christmas week. First of all, let me tell you that they should definitely put rest stops on Fifth Avenue. Between the lights and the carols and the Salvation Army and the Santa Claus Army with their goddam bells and the Hari Krishnas and the Satan Cult ("Can I talk to you for a minute?") and the gypsy flower children (did you ever try to refuse a flower from a three-foot gypsy girl with brass knuckles under her little red mittens?) and the pickpockets and the drunks, to say nothing of the gorgeous numbers shopping their little fannies off. A person has just got to sit down once in a while. Anyway, I went home and played Judy Garland's "Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas" on the stereo and that helped. Sure, it's OK for her to talk; she's got Margaret O'Brien and the snow people, right? I've got an armful of packages on the subway and a drunk is pissing on my foot. You can't win. So—I've done my New York Commercial Spot for the week.



GAY'S VITO RUSSO

Al Carmine's last offering at the Judson, *The Making of Americans*, was like a burning light extinguished too soon. In all probability it has left us by now and that is certainly a pity. A show as good as that one needs time to settle in, to elicit a mass response and the respect it deserves. *The Making of Americans* is an opera in three acts based on the 900-page novel by Gertrude Stein. It chronicles the Stein family and serves as a departure point for her definitions and dissection of the nature of existence and the process of being. Gertrude Stein found a new way to use our language. Her repetitions in the interest of deeper understanding and clarity were themselves re-definitions in exploration of new ways to say newly found things. The joy of hearing those words, those wonderful words, is heightened by the way they are presented. Al Carmine, as the voice of Gertrude Stein, sits at his piano as the saga of the family unfolds, and probes, laughs, cajoles, cries, tries to understand, stretches to understand, does understand and for a few moments embodies her perceptions in the fulfillment of Gertrude Stein's labors. Al Carmine is truly one of the most endearing, beautiful, talented people of our age. Just to watch him, to watch his unending



The new Shelley Winters in "The Poseidon Adventure."

delight and hope as he plays and sings Gertrude Stein is to finally know enchantment. As the body of the play unfolds, we watch grandparents leave for the new land, children grow up in it and leave again, loves, hates, "the realizing of oldness," the process of being, continual reaching out for the understanding of that being. Carmine instills in the prose and in us a sense of loss and a sense of joy at once, making us both hurt and feel glad when we hear, "Our grandparents carried our parents to the new world inside them—old people in a new world; new people made out of the old."

The play is long but the spell never snaps. It's all so complicated and finally so simple. The words say it all—"married living going on—sometimes succeeding, sometimes failing," "constant being, always in process"—these are simple things; simple because Stein agonized over them to realize them fully. Also because Carmine and his company agonized over this production to make us realize them fully. The cast is superb. I especially loved David Cryer and Theo Barnes as Alfred and David Hersland. I loved the costumes which seemed to take on the personalities of their owners, and the simple sets which became all things for us. A long play which passes by in a moment—a beautiful moment.

Whispers and Cries is Ingmar Bergman's latest film, scheduled to open here in February. It opens in Sweden this month to qualify for the Cannes Film Festival. I don't really want to talk directly about the film but about some of the questions it raised in my mind. Questions which were, unfortunately, prompted by my impromptu introduction to the film. It was at a small party being given for John Simon by the publishers of his new book, *Ingmar Bergman Directs*. Mr. Simon was asked to say a few words before the film. Big mistake. Mr. Simon talked about he'd been thinking a lot lately about so-called "women's directors" and how he thinks that Bergman is the only true women's director in a heterosexual sense as opposed to the others who caress women as stars (like George Cukor and Mamoulian),

blood over her mouth. If Bergman's treatment of women's psyches is John Simon's idea of a heterosexual view of women, his view of heterosexuality is warped. If he is simply comparing it to the equally distorted visions of Cukor and Mamoulian, he is still wrong. There has got to be a view of women as human beings, not as something to be "treated" on film like the flu. Where's the director who treats them as female human beings?

The press release for *The Poseidon Adventure* announces that this is a film in the grand tradition of *Airport*. No argument. It stinks. It really stinks. But is it fun? Is it a scream? You bet it is. The S.S. *Poseidon* is sitting upside down in the middle of the ocean after being struck by a 90-foot tidal wave. The only survivors are the stars of the film (how does that always happen?) who include Stella Stevens as a former, shall we say, lady of the streets married to Ernest Borgnine (I am not joking) who plays the detective who married her because he got tired of pulling her in. Red Buttons plays a loner who spends his time jogging on the deck (didn't he get enough of that in *They Shoot Horses . . . ?*), Carol Lynley plays a rock singer, Gene Hackman a rebel priest (in his own words), Roddy McDowell a Scottish waiter complete with phony accent and if you haven't had enough, we have Shelley Winters weighing in at 200 pounds playing a Jewish housewife on her way to Israel to see her grandchild. Well, if they don't have you rolling in the aisles before the tidal wave, just wait until after it when they have to climb to the top of the ship, walking on the ceilings all the way. Believe me, it's not what you would call an uneventful trip. You know that poster in the subway that says "Will Shelley Winters Survive?" etc.? Well, you'd be surprised who doesn't survive in this film. If you ask me, nobody survives. The payoff is when Shelley Winters, in a chiffon cocktail dress (size 64) and pearls, swims underwater forty-five feet and saves Gene Hackman from certain death. Ronald Neame directed it and anybody who made *I Could Go On Singing* can't be all bad in my book, but don't expect anything in the way of, say, photography or editing. This one is strictly a hoot.

Speaking of hoots, you should have been at the press screening for a new porno film called *The Roundabouts*. Remember when I was talking about *Bijou* and said I wished they'd smile more at each other

(continued on page 21)



The Roundabouts: This kid is so dumb he's brilliant!

BY DICK LEITSCH

She's an incredible entertainer, Bette Midler is: Before I heard her, I was told she's "the new Judy Garland." Jack Nichols described her as "a Barbra Streisand on the way to becoming a Janis Joplin." Bette herself says "I'm afraid of labels," but she has nothing to fear from them. She's unique.

Not only is her singing original, but how many other girl singers have you heard of who became a smash hit singing in an all-male bath house? There Bette stood, every Friday and Saturday night at 1 a.m., facing an audience of five or six hundred men, all naked except for towels around the loins.

"I had the weirdest dream the other night," Bette said on a recent Saturday night. "I dreamed that, instead of applauding, you all threw your towels at me. Too much!" The towels flew like huge snowflakes, and Bette took her time about giving the towels back to the front-row patrons.

"As an audience, gay men are spectacular," Bette told me. "They're very warm, very responsive. They are the most marvelous audience I've ever had because they're not ashamed to show how they feel about you. They applaud like hell, they scream and carry on, stamp their feet and laugh. I love it. It's going to be very hard for me when I get back before a straight audience."

When Bette appeared on the Johnny Carson Show (one Mike Douglas, two Carson, and five David Frost shows are some of the nice things that have happened to her since she began to headline at Continental), they didn't believe her when she said she was singing in a Turkish bath. (Her friends also think she's putting them on.)

How does a nice little heterosexual girl from Honolulu become a headliner in a gay gentleman's club, which is what Continental has become?

"I studied on and off at Herbert Bergof's. One of my teachers there knows Stephen (Continental's owner) socially. Stephen asked Bob if he knew anybody who could sing and Bob remembered me. He called one morning when the sun was just coming up and I was just going to bed. He told me about the gig, and I said I would really dig that. Stephen came down and heard me, then signed me up for eight weeks, with an option for another eight weeks. None of my friends believe me when I tell them where I work!

My hairdresser went to the Continental as a customer. He saw the poster announcing my opening and called me right away. 'Bette,' he said, 'They've got a drag queen entertaining at the Baths, and she's using your name!' He was so thrilled when he found out it was really me who was going to work there that he sat down and wrote four pages of gag lines for me to use."

Somebody ought to discover the hairdresser and turn him into a professional gag writer, because the material is good. How good his hairdressing is, I can't say. Bette claims he's arthritic, and that she found him giving finger waves in the "saion" in the 34th Street subway stop at 75 cents a set. But that's not her opinion; he wrote the line.

Bette's cute, as opposed to beautiful, though she is very pretty, too. ("I'm a Hawaiian, but not a Hawaiian. I was born there. Very Jewish. My parents are from

**"The
Whole World's
A Bath!"
A Chat With BETTE MIDLER**



New Jersey. They migrated early in life to paradise.") On stage, singing "Forgotten Man," she looks like Ginger Rogers should have looked in "Goldiggers of 1933." Her velvet-trimmed gowns (very 1930s, very Depression) and Joaquin Crawford F.M. ankle-straps are perfect.

But before you know it, she has

loosened her hair and pulled it into a pony tail. As she belts out "Shake, Rattle and Roll" every trace of the 30s disappears, and she's Miss Bobbysocks of 1955. Other girls change costumes to change periods; Bette changes her posture and body movements.

"I'm very much into style," she says.

I'm fascinated by the changes that go on, year after year, decade after decade, and why; they can all be classified. In the late 20's and early 30's Society was the thing. The girls were encouraged to slouch, pull the shoulders down, to stand with their hands on their hips and be nonchalant and always very, very sophisticated. In the 40's—well, it must have been the Joan Crawford influence. It became very important to be a career woman. They got very butch and started wearing what was actually an exaggeration of the male suit. There's a way of walking there, too: very butch, very active, very—well, bright. In the 50's everything calmed down. Pony tails, lots of crinolines—Ann Southern with crinolines for days. She couldn't get through a doorway. Heavy on the tulle, lots of ruffles, sweetheart necklines . . . it was a move back to the Civil War period when everyone was very genteel and ladies very demure."

Bette's choice of songs is eclectic, jumping from period to period, from style to style. The bathos of "Forgotten Man" might be followed by the bawdy double entendres of a Mae West ballad, a raunchy rock and roll classic from the 50's, or a brilliantly sophisticated Cole Porter lyric. Whatever the song calls for, from raunchiness to sophistication, from demure to softness to what used to be called "coon shouting," Bette supplies. As they say of the Mets: "Amazin'!"

"I have a friend," she says. "Ben's an old-record freak. He turned me on to this music. When I first heard these women, these torch singers, I began to get high just listening to what they were singing. I understood all of those emotions, all the nuances, all the phrasing. If you start with the 20's and move to the late 40's, the torch singer's period, you find that the emotional content of the songs rarely changes. It's all the accompaniment."

"I've always understood suffering and I gravitate toward sad songs and torch songs. Everybody's loved, and either had it returned or had it unrequited. Some things are universal, and I hope I can communicate that to people. I always look forward to love affairs because I know I'm going to suffer and learn something. I don't look forward to suffering, but to growing, learning how it is to be with another person, what it's like to get through to another person, to love and fight, laugh and cry, and all that."

"I have a very heavy attachment to Helen Morgan, Dinah Washington, Edith Piaf, Billie Holiday and Judy Garland. My all-time favorite is Aretha Franklin. She's a genius. I don't think anyone knows her like I do, and I don't know her at all, really. I don't have any male favorites because male singers don't really show it to you like the women do. Joe Cocker does. He's brilliant. I love Otis Redding, Bobby Bluebland, Ray Charles—I guess that would be it with the males."

It's easy to see that the Continental isn't Bette's first exposure to gay life. Nobody can turn on an audience so well with a background only in extra work in films, a gig in the Catskills, ("I got a standing ovation in a showcase at Brickman's, but only one gig came out of it"), a week at Paul's Mall in Boston warming up audiences for David Frye, two months in the chorus of "Fiddler on the Roof" on Broadway and a three-year run as the oldest daughter in "Fiddler." ("Tzeitel is a good role. I loved it for two years, which is a long time for anybody

Continued on page 21

The Search For Holly Woodlawn



Holly doesn't put herself into categories.

BY VICKI RICHMAN

Can I use your phone?" she asks with averted eyes, almost curtsying in deference to the favor she was presuming to beg of her hostess, as if there were a chance I might say no.

I toss a limp wrist toward a corner of the room and shrug generously. After all, when Holly Woodlawn's your guest, what's one message unit more or less?

She hangs up slowly after a few mumbling words, and studies the floor before looking up. "I can't get Frank," she finally tells us, believing we deserve an explanation. "There's no one to go ice-skating with me tonight."

The poor long-suffering dear retires to the jane (let's keep men, those brutes, from taking everything over), not forgetting, of course, to ask permission. Another time I might have refused, but this is an emergency. Then, silence. I wonder whether I should rush in to see if the poor thing needs help, but finally I hear the welcome staccato hiss of an excited stream disturbing a helpless pool. So she really did go in there to . . . and not to get her mascara all runny and her eyes red and bleary with nasty tears. In Manhattan apartments there's no such thing as a private life.

I avoid glancing in to see whether the toilet seat is raised or lowered; this was not going to be one of those interviews.

"So maybe you'll go to the screening tonight after all, huh?" Liz Lisboa, press agent and Holly-sitter supreme, finds the courage to ask. Liz is there to make sure Holly doesn't forget to tell me about her new flick, *Scarecrow in a Garden of Cucumbers*, at least once a minute. Isn't it just like a press agent to take advantage of a girl's moment of absolute disaster?

"No, I guess I'll just go skating alone," the little sweetheart heaves back, head high, eyes motionless and glazed. Can I believe it? Superstar Holly Woodlawn ice-skating by herself! In wrinkled chinos (chinos?) and a senior citizen's V-neck pullover! When she could be shaking the dust off those furs and diamonds (hot pants and platform boots?) to make a skirt-sweeping appearance at a glamorous gathering of film moguls! Well, who does she think she is now? Greta Garbo? And I always thought Stan Laurel was the more apt comparison. Rita Tushingham, at best.

I first met Holly quite by accident in the elevator of a modern midtown glass-and-steel combustion chamber. She was alone. (Maybe the Garbo bit is genuine.) I had been searching for her over a month, with the Warhol Factory, Liz, and Arthur Bell all on my side. In his book, *Dancing the Gay Lib Blues*, Arthur describes the bill-collector's barrage of phone calls he had to make to find her, and I guess I needed a man of his Holly-wisdom.

"I've been in Colorado," she opened up without ceremony, as if she had been the only person ever to do it. What's that, my dear? Hollywood? Cannes? Peking? "Aspen, Colorado. And would you believe it? I just came back today. Here . . ." and she shoves some yellow clippings into my hand. From the *Aspen Times* and *Silver-Sandaled Mercury*. Just what I needed for my story!

"This is an interview with me. See my picture there? And here—you'll be interested in this—the marriage announcement

of two dear friends of mine in Aspen."

Holly, Holly! You're a Warhol superstar, n'est-ce pas? So what're you doing to me, honey? I'm just an innocent GAY reporter. I was at the point of screaming for both Liz and Arthur together. They're Holly people; they'd know what to do.

And there they were when the elevator stopped. I was becoming convinced I had been shanghaied into some W.C. Fields interpretation of reality. But they were of no help. When Holly Woodlawn throws a people tantrum, no one can restore her to superstardom.

"You have to be careful with Holly," Arthur had told me. "She doesn't put herself into categories. She's just herself. Holly. A person."

"She doesn't have a phone," said General Liz, giving me the day's Holly-taking strategy. "I'll have to call the guy whose studio she sometimes stays at, and, if she happened to have slept over, we'll see if he can wake her up." If only I had been doing this thirty years ago when Garbo had been leading the basic training!

So Frank, the bum, is just the other man in Holly's life. "Then there's this little boy I just met uptown," she corrects the tally with a blush and a teenager's hungry gleam in her eye. Well, maybe she is a Warhol chick after all, and I blush more than she does.

"I don't know what I consider myself," she begins, confirming Arthur's prediction. "An actress? I could never be an actress. I'm just a person. Oppressed, liberated, straight, gay, bi, male, female—why does there have to be a term? My friends love me the way I am. I'm not at all political, though. Women's lib, gay lib—the only thing they have to offer me is . . . is . . . friends . . ." And her voice drifts off.

"Friends" is a word she depends on. She has a respect for it bred of her birth in the slums of Puerto Rico, her childhood in the slums of New York and Miami, her fight to support herself at the age of fifteen as a topless dancer and a streetwalker. But her background has deprived the word of rational meaning for her as much as it has given her the need to use it again and again. She avoids defining it as she does her identity—as any of us avoids defining God—and not even her discovery by Andy Warhol and her rise to superstardom has been able to fill the void. The Factory may, in fact, have frustrated her attempts at filling it.

"I enjoyed doing *Trash*, my first Warhol film, because we all had respect for each other. But I didn't care for *Women in Revolt* at all. There were undercurrents—everyone was smiling on top and bitchy underneath. I was happy to get off the set. I guess you just have to work with people who have respect for each other . . ."

Again she breaks off, unable or unwilling to approach too closely the definition of humanity she is reaching for. Obviously her search has not ended at the Factory. Whatever respite her Warhol fling may have given her from the hungry turmoil of stripping and hustling, it was no more than a false start at something new. She's still trying.

Meanwhile Liz is getting restless. "Now, doing *Scarecrow in a Garden of Cucumbers*," Holly resumes, and Liz calms down for the moment, "was magnificent. It was my first professional film; that is, the first film where I had to learn a script and follow direction. It took me a

week, and I knew everyone else's lines as well as my own. They were all professionals, but they were so patient with me. We filmed it in six weeks. I even do a song. I was unbelievably frightened, but when the time came, I did it in one take. I just told myself that once I get in front of that camera . . ."

Her chattering begins to lose me. I don't know whether this is a fresh try for what the world has denied her, or merely a demonstration that she can memorize a publicist's news release as well as the film script she referred to. I glance at Liz sitting there like a mother hen, and am silent. We all, after all, have our jobs to do.

"I relate to anyone I like—men, women, gay, straight. Why do there have to be limitations?" Why, indeed? "Categories are so misleading." Yes, but a lack of definition can be a dead end. Being misinterpreted is at least more likely to get you somewhere than not being able to move at all. How, for example, can the world find Holly when it wants her?

"I never go to bars or discotheques. I prefer staying by myself." New York gossip had placed Holly in such night spots as Max's and the Paradox, the original macrobiotic restaurant. She smiles at the exaggeration. "Oh yes, I guess I was at the Paradox once. But I like hamburgers too." Find a definition for that.

For someone who so extrovertedly needs unrestrained friendship, she has a rather curious tendency toward Garbo-like withdrawals into herself. Her unwanted ghetto childhood apparently left her with a holy reverence for mutual trust and affection that her endless fight against a world trying to starve her would nevertheless desecrate with a sacrilegious "I want to be alone." It's as if, in demanding that the world search for her, she is really asking us to find something more than her physical self. She hopes that our search might somehow lead her to that definition of herself that she steadfastly denies the existence of. This refusal to categorize herself, you begin to understand, as you try—and fail—to get to know her is derived not so much from a Whitmanesque unity with all humanity, as from a fear of learning just what her relation to the world really is.

"It never happens any more," she says, denying a suggestion that an ugly truth may underlie that relation. "I'm accepted wherever I go, now that I'm Holly Woodlawn!" Her name itself is the closest she comes to pinning herself down. It separates her as she is from what she was. What is she? She's a Holly. What was she?

"You're right," she finally concedes to me in husky stammers, and I sigh at last over my success in overcoming her struggle against the cruelty of my insight. "I guess I was . . . sort of pushed around . . . discriminated against for . . . what I was. Especially by gay people. But"—and now her eyes resume their light-reflecting games, and her voice, its scale-running flirtations—"I'm not a drag queen any more. I'm Holly Woodlawn."

You begin to understand what she means when she says she's liberated to the point that liberation groups have nothing to offer her. It's not vanity; it's self-preservation.

Perhaps feverish now from the tension of approaching too close to something I want too much, I let my mind wander to half-fancied, half-real remembrances, even as I maintain the pretense of remaining in the conversation. Struggling against the sensuousness of it, I nevertheless fall victim to the vague memory of reaching for a candle to light a friend's cigarette at Sylvia Rivera's home. Sylvia, who shares with ten others an excellent collection of roaches that only an absentee landlord could call a two-room apartment, is the unlikely founder of Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries and an unshoed activist who's led and been arrested for New York's most militant taps.

She's noted for throwing tantrums at GAA meetings, after everybody's tried so hard to understand her, and for fleeing back to the streets and alleys, which is where, we all agree, she belongs.

"I was born out of wedlock," Holly both shrieks and whispers with all the emotion and italic type that only a Hollywood scriptwriter of the thirties could have turned out. Incredulously I'm pushed back into the present, and Liz and I smile at each other. But our patronizing goes unnoticed by Holly. We're the representatives of white American hip, and our years of discotheques and swinging parties have made Holly's awe of her irregular beginnings a charming anachronism that not even her go-go gigs and superstardom have been able to erase.

"No, not that!" Sylvia confronted me that time, in much the same mixture of muted restraint and frenzy that I hear now in Holly, and I hover trance-like between the two worlds. "Don't take that," she repeated with less strength as she snatched the candle from my unoffending hand, leaving me gaping at my innocent friend's unlit cigarette. I thought of the temper she was so fond of displaying at public meetings. What was so special now about her stum attempt at interior decorating? That was what her candle was, wasn't it? I turned almost to challenge her, and saw for the first time—after having been at the place countless times—the

But she does. She impersonates a man in a few scenes of *Scarecrow*, and she certainly had me fooled. In fact, everyone was shocked. Liz nervously asks me if the idea didn't work. Let Holly and her public decide that for themselves; it's my time to be bitchy.

She turns aside, perhaps to give her profession some thought, and I'm treated for a moment to the Bob Hope nose, the buck teeth, and the chinless jaw that make her look like a Walt Disney chipmunk. Her reddish hair is frizzed out, and her expression is of bewildered piety; she does look a bit like Stanley Laurel in drag. But she's back with me in a moment, and I can again luxuriate on her moist, soft-brown doe's eyes, which bring tears to your own. In a full-front view, her nose and teeth recede, and with hair straight from George Masters, with pen-and-ink eyes and eyebrows, with lips and fingernails of glazed red ceramic, and with diaphanous lingerie, no one could better bring back the fabulous fraud of elegance and perpetual motion with which Garbo and Dietrich bilked an audience trapped by the static drabness of a Great Depression.

I looked again: Laurel or Garbo? Warhol's camera concentrates on her profile; in *Scarecrow*, her first "professional" venture, Holly is wigged, and her face is captured full on the screen.

"I get letters from kids wanting advice



The star of "Scarecrow in a Garden of Cucumbers" and "Trash" is now in box office demand.

cardboard-and-plywood altar painstakingly assembled with masking tape and glue, the torn newspaper clippings—streetwalkers can't afford to shop in galleries, you know—of Mother and Child, and the candle restored to its rightful place illuminating a selected page in a mouldy Bible, smelling like the cat just peed on it. And though her back was turned, I swear I saw the tears in Sylvia's eyes. I had never known her to go near a church; streetwalkers, as we all know, aren't welcome in churches.

I wondered where Holly's candle was, as I self-consciously floated back down to the present. I was sure she must have one, but she guards it so well from categories . . . from people. From people who'd light a cigarette with it.

Holly was brought up as a boy; Sylvia, as a girl. But both knew when they weren't wanted. Holly becomes testy as I ask about that time. "Why does anyone do anything?" she snaps, if it were none of my business. "To feel comfortable, to feel creative, to be myself. You should be able to be whatever you want to be." Yes, but what do you want to be? "There's no definition for anything," she repeats, throwing to me the responsibility for defining it. "No one really cares, except yourself. As long as you're a person, a human being, it doesn't matter."

She's calmer now, and she can shrug. "Anyway, I don't wear drag any more."

much of life looking through a Warhol camera or from the floor of the newest discotheque; perhaps Preston Sturges or D.W. Griffith or those back scriptwriters of the thirties (like William Faulkner) brought you closer to the truth after all.

"Colorado was such fun! I drove one of those uh, motorcycles—what do you call them?—on ice . . ." Snowmobiles, Holly? "Yeah, snowmobiles. I just zoomed over a hill like that"—she passes her hand through the air palm down—"the first time I tried. And those skating lessons! I'm on my way to Rockefeller Center to stay in practice."

Not Rockefeller Center, honey. Go to Wollman Memorial in Central Park. It's half the price, and the kids are young and groovy, and they aren't ashamed to fall on their asses. Rockefeller is strictly for the Jackie Onassis types and their Carolines. She listens indulgently, but doesn't ask where Wollman is. Well, if she'd rather skate with the tourists and pretend she's Sonja Henie in diamond-studded ice skates . . . ! Oh hell, don't pressure the little girl!

"I love living in New York. But I'm going to stay in Aspen too." Holly, you can't live in two places at once. By the way, are you going to make more films? "Yes, I love acting in films." Would you like to direct? "Oh, I'd love to!" What about working on the stage? "Yes, I love the theater." Would you like to do a book? "Yes, I'm writing my memoirs now." Is there anything you're not going to do? Not if you're a five-year-old girl seeing the world for the first time.

And off she goes, whether to Rockefeller or Wollman, I still don't know. And although she was delivered to me on a silver platter, I still don't know where Holly Woodlawn is. Perhaps if I try one more time . . .

"Do you tuck?" I ask her at the door, hiding my near-euphoria with an off-hand goodbye. She stops dead; it was cruel, I know, but I'm a reporter, not a shrink. Her eyes have betrayed pity for me, as if I were in fact the type to check the toilet seat after she used it. No matter how she answered, we both know, she'd be forced to name the category she had been resisting so valiantly.

"Yes . . . yes, I do." She says it quietly, almost smiling; she concedes defeat well. When I have to. Methodically I prepare to find out when that is, but without warning the onslaught comes: "Don't you?" she finishes.

Aghast, suddenly without recourse to pen and pad, I manage to stammer back. "Uh, no . . . why, no?" Who's the little girl now? But I'm a writer, I try to reassure myself, not a professional, uh, something-or-other. "I . . . well, I guess I . . . I don't know how." Now, what the hell did she have to go and bring that up for? Perhaps the search for Holly Woodlawn—or for anyone—might best begin with a search for myself. I blush and look down at my crotch.

"Oh, honey, there's nothing to it," she gashes, her hands flying over her own body, as if to teach me. She's up close to me for the first time, showing me in her way how unnecessary definitions of relationships really are. I glance at my typewriter. How often had my interest in what constitutes friendship for others kept me from finding it for myself?

We hug and kiss, and she's gone. I'm alone again with the damned typewriter, but I sink back into a soft chair to study the ceiling instead. I'd wait a day at least before trying to write a word. Let me enjoy for now the rush of loneliness her departure got me off on.

The telephone breaks into my self-indulgence. It's Frank looking for Holly. "I think she may have gone ice-skating," I tease him. "But I'm not sure."

Let Frank, the bum, search for Holly Woodlawn himself. I've got a story to write.

Notes From The Inside Jesus Takes A Shower



Everybody's heard of Bellevue, but few people know how much real sanity and how many muted sensitivities are alive in the hallowed halls of this famous hospital. We are pleased to introduce Kathy Braun, who occasionally makes Bellevue her home away from home.

—The Editors

BY KATHY BRAUN

"As long as there is one man behind bars, we are all imprisoned." —George Bernard Shaw

Well folks, here I am again. In the bin, for the fourth time and this time it looks like I'm in for a long sentence. Got my guitar, my music and that collection of Brecht plays I've been meaning to read for so long. It was kinda nice going back to Bellevue, all the aides saying hello. Miss Williams: "Oh no Braun, you here again." Miss Johnson: "This gettin' to be your home, chile." Miss Brown with a big hello, she's a nurse now, come up from side. The same old jokes: "What are you, crazy?" "You belong in Bellevue." "I may be crazy but I'm not stupid."

The same old routine—walking, walking up and down the hall—not halls, only one hall, every bad thing you've read about in the *Voice*. And yet that old camaraderie is still there, that feeling that we're the sane ones, we're right, that implicit knowledge that the world is so crazy that us nuts gotta know where it's at. I remember the last trip to Bellevue—Richard coming back from a pass, talking about the streets: "Wicked out there. People running, staring, fighting. Glad to be back."

I count four times at the funny farm. But actually I guess it's four and a half. The half is when I came back from England and my roommate had painted everything brown, including the \$75 scuffed-to-the-wood floors. Mark, who was supposed to have stayed only for a few weeks while I was away, had dumped everything out of the closet room into the living room, installed herself in the closet and painted all the furniture that I had sweated to strip down, flat black. I went to Bellevue to get some peace and quiet.

They wouldn't take me at first. I told them that I had no place to go. They didn't give a damn. I kept insisting. They got a cleaning man to forcibly throw me out. He was the only one who showed me any kindness, he told me about the women's shelter. I went back the next day, saw a different doctor, told him I was hearing voices and I got in. Back up to PQ5, my old ward. "Home again!" I shouted as I walked in. Stayed a week and went out on pass, but they musta got my game because when I came back they wouldn't let me in.

Funny, how once again I discover that the kindness and caring on the part of the staff progresses downwards from the bottom up. Like the cleaning man who told me about the women's shelter, the most human caring people on the staff are invariably the men, usually Puerto Rican, who come around every day to mop the floors. They smile and say hello and treat you like a person, not a crazy person. Then the aides, mostly black, they treat you like you're crazy, but they joke with you and can be sweet and motherly. The nurses, again mostly black, are all business, careful to always mark their distinction above the aides. They're not interested in the patients, but they care a lot about their papers and reports.

There are exceptions of course. I remember Miss Pinkhard who I thought was Nina Simone when I was in my bag. I was crying to beat the band and she sat next to me and said: "What's the matter, do you like ladies? Don't worry, a lot of people do." That wasn't why I was crying. God alone knows why I was, but it was sweet.

And the social workers, all white, all Jewish, couldn't give a shit less. Money is tight and they're glad they got a job even though it has to be at that hellhole Bellevue. They're much too busy having coffee with their co-workers and talking to their friends on the phone to see anything around them.

The doctors, ah the doctors, we never see them, except to grab them in the hall where literally they make a daily ten minute appearance and beg them for our date

of release. On my second visit one doctor took 30 seconds to tell me to breathe through my mouth. I was still deluding somewhat so of course I avidly followed his suggestion, but when I came down I realized once again how nutty these doctors are.

And then the 3rd time—Dr. Green, my God. I mention his name in hopes of his suing me. While I was still deluding he would talk to me, asking me what I did in bed with Dorothy, wanting more and more detail. Slowly, as I came down, the light dawned. He called my neighbor subsequently looking for me, talking a couple of minutes before he announced that he was from Bellevue when June wouldn't lead him to me so fast. "I knew he was a creep," she said. New York lady, she always knows.

It's quite incredible and always always true that in any given situation a lesbian finds herself in where there are more than 5 men present, one of these men will get off on her lesbianism and let her know it. Be sure and let her know it.

The third time round—that was the gay one. Oh boy, was I gay. They took me to Payne-Whitney first but it was full and probably a good thing too because that blond sweet-smelling nurse who waited with me drove me crazy girls and I was already crazy. I lay there terrified that I would be unable to keep from attacking her, jumping all over her, kissing and hugging like a madwoman. Ah, the wonders of insanity—lying there afraid to kiss and hug, knowing that if I did, they'd call it mad.

Anyone remember the book, *Keep The River On Your Right*—written by Tobias Schneeman, a nice Jewish gay boy from New York who went down to the South American jungle? He went to visit a tribe of cannibals and when they saw him approach, they stopped and looked at him for a long terrifying minute and then they surrounded him, took off all his clothes and kissed and touched and licked and smelled him. The mad fool.

God, I remember the third time when I was here for two months, a long time, sitting in group therapy, all the patients

in their Bellevue blues bored out of their minds and the nurse, a busy cheerful type, trying to get something going. Extended silence. Then a funny wonderful little black lady Mildred got up and executed a 60-second song and dance and sat down. We patients liked that a lot, the nurse searched for something to say, found nothing. It was a hard act to follow. Extended silence. Feeling it was my turn, I reached into my pajamas with a big gesture and started to masturbate. Again the nurse could find nothing to say. But the next week she told me I was inappropriate. "That was inappropriate behavior Kathy," she said. "Oh," I said. "Right. I got it. Inappropriate."

The nut house is a lot like the rest of all this nonsense we find ourselves hanging around in—got its ups and downs. I ain't minimizing the downs, but let me tell you the ups can be fun. Imagine all the crazy people you've known: "Oh, that's crazy Jane." "Oh yeah, Bob, he's crazy."—imagine all them kids together. And in Bellevue it's *The Village Voice* dream—a wonderful ethnic mixture of New York types including a lot of Chinese—since Bellevue's mainly for the downtown folks. Imagine all of them, all finally in a place where they can just let go. At least half of craziness is extended baroque kidding around and what makes it even funnier is that the doctors never know you're kidding.

The second time round they had me up on violent (I always start off up there, so happy they can't keep me down) where I met Barbara and Hazel. Barbara was a tough Harlem butch and we used to run up and down the hall scuffling and carrying on stinking. Hazel was a 50-year-old lawyer from Paramus. We had it all figured out. I was Jesus and Hazel was God and Barbara was the Holy Ghost and we all looked after each other.

One morning the aides must have been coming to put me in isolation for not taking a shower and Hazel must have heard what they were saying. Quickly, she shouted down the hall to me: "Jesus this is God. Get your ass into the shower." I got.

Love Story

BY SOREL DAVID

When I first met Billie I wasn't impressed too much with her looks. Oh, I thought she was pretty and all but her type didn't really appeal to me. There was a certain delicacy, a certain placid blond delicacy of feature I didn't go for too much. Generally I like a wilder rose, but I liked her right away. There was something there, an immediate kinship and her looks became, almost at once, inseparable from her person, like the appearance of an old dear friend which is neither good nor bad looking in itself, but simply that look which separates him or her from the rest of humanity. We went out. In the beginning it was nice and easy, a comfortable kind of thing. The weeks stretched into months and we stayed together. We had good times, it was good in bed, there was no one else, we stayed together. The first time I told her I loved her was making up after a big fight. After that the subject was not mentioned again for some months. Then somehow it came up, at Billie's place, we were lying there in bed, side by side, talking in the morning, light flooding in through the window when it came up again. It was early, early in the morning when I am at my crackling sarcastic best. I'm one of those people who gets up fully awake, full of vim and vigor and glad to be alive in the morning. Whatever else I might need, I don't need love in the morning. I have too much energy, I'm too pre-occupied with myself and anxious to get on with the day. Who said anything about love, I said to her. You did, remember, you said you loved me that time—a little shyly, a little quietly towards the end of the phrase. I forgot, I almost forgot. I thought I was cool, had succeeded in being the Silva Thins man, but she was right. I did remember, I had committed that error, that one fatal slip. So I did, my dear, sooooo I did—a sly smile breaking over my face as I tried to cover up, as I tried to keep on top of the thing, maintaining that precious cool distance between self-image and total disarmament. I leaned over to look at her. There was a slight, hesitant pressure on my arm, eager eyes looked up at me, a hopeful smile, but slightly tremulous, anxious but willing, oh so willing, so ready to accept my answer. *Do you take it back? do you take it back, Sorel? is what she wanted to know. Now she is completely beautiful to me, the fragile tenderness of a dew-covered orchid, newly opening, unfolding on the vine.*

Sing me not of other towns, of towns that twinkle and shine. Forgive me, but there's no village like mine. Dressed up in her browns and greens, she is a beauty divine. Forgive me, but there's no village like mine. That's a song taught to me by my friend Denise Inkeles who I haven't seen since age fourteen. Oh, fifteen at best. Just loved the song, Denise, wherever you are. Just loved the song.

I was in the bathtub when I discovered it, a tiny roll, an imperceptibly small, but a jelly roll of fat, nevertheless, around my perfect, my smooth brown belly. Aailllee! Aailllee! Two days of intensive regimentation, exercises, the well-disciplined life, sit-ups, leg lifts, jumping jacks and on the third day I fell prey to a miserable cold and all resolve collapsed. Ah, me, it's happening. Youth fades. I grow old. I grow old. I can feel it happening now, it's all over, the body, a slow, sad decline. The muscle tone going, every-



thing. All going now. Yes, yes, I too will turn middle-aged, but never mind. I mean where have my good looks got me so far? Never mind, never mind. I have other charms. When I first started writing this, in the bathtub I was, I had it in my mind to write about Warren Beatty, his mouth, something about his being warm and sensuous, a big, soft, wide and wanton mouth, but now for the life of me I can't remember what it was I was thinking about.

Something to do with jumping out of the bathtub, which I've done on occasion, and running around town feeling like Warren Beatty, I think. It was jumping out of the tub all fresh and clean, feeling good, jelly roll and all, walking across town, shirt pressed back, wind whipping my throat, clean brown hair flying all around feeling like I was Warren Beatty. Only not—just feeling like I had that kind of wild Warren Beatty mouth. After it was there was going to be some rap about how I fantasize in the male persona

a lot. Aside from Bella Abzug, Mariene Dietrich and Lois Pashalinski, though not necessarily in that order, there never seemed to be too terribly much of interest going down in the time-honored traditions of the extant female schtick. All the rest is just a lot of nurturing, and nurturing. Now where in the hell is that at?

And speaking of women's lib (you got to pick up, you got to pick up every stitch), one thing I've noticed going around town lately is that women are beginning to look at each other. When I hop around the city, looking at women as is my wont, as they say, lately they're starting to look right back and smile, sometimes even say hello which is really quite nice, if a bit disarming at first. Like everyone else raised in the world, I am accustomed to women who demur instantly, automatically on being looked at or looked over as the case may be and usually is. Used to be when two women, strangers, would look at each other, whenever their eyes would chance to

meet somewhere on the street, say, they would immediately become uptight with all sorts of competitive, comparison paranoia, start fixing their hair and walk along with vaguely discomfited, dissatisfied expressions. But it's changing, a lot of heads are starting to turn around now, particularly young ones. You can see the cut-off point pretty clearly around age thirty or so, a thirty-year-old woman, even the hippest, most together-looking one, will still lower her eyes and passively allow herself to be visually raped when someone looks at her. It's an entirely unconscious reaction, something which can't be helped, almost, it's been bred into us for so long. But chalk it up to the new emergent women's consciousness. Many younger, less processed minds aren't succumbing to the old bullshit quite so much.

Maybe there's hope for the world—too bad civilization is slated to end in another hundred years or so. Well, you didn't think I was going to end on a positive note—did you?

JERRY'S SPHERE

(continued from page 2)

sympathy with his WAR policies. Those big brave men, armed with clubs, beat the hell out of kids and women demonstrating against the WAR. What a show of mach! I guess Adolf had his S.S. troops so Richard will have his H.H. troops.

THE MANDATE, WHAT PRICE SUCCESS? An interesting story was told to me recently. We know Mr. Nixon is the paragon of virtue we all long to be. (Millionaire Billy Graham has told us this.) I was enthralled with this example of virtue. It seems that when the then Vice President Nixon toured Russia in '57 he met a man who was foreign sales manager for a well known soft drink firm. Said sales manager asked the veeep if it wouldn't be possible to put one of the dispensing machines in the exhibit of American kitchens. Why not? Of course, when Nixon ran for the presidency in 1960, the man remembered the kindness. Nixon lost and moved back to California where he prepared to run for governor. He lost again and made his now-famous pronouncement "You won't have Richard Nixon to kick around anymore." (Wish that he'd been a man of his word.) During this time the soft drink company expanded and Richard's friend became president of the larger firm. Still loyal to the man who'd helped him in Moscow, a short phone call was all it took to convince Nixon to move to the Wall St. law firm which suddenly found itself with the corporation account. Surprise, surprise! Never one to allow any grass to grow under his feet, Nixon used a quite handsome salary to travel the country, just to keep his hand in, you might say. Nixon ran and won in '69. (Yes, I voted for him too.) Now it seems that his once cooperative Secretary of H.E.W. found that cyclamates were dangerous and was going to blow the whistle. Another short phone call, this time from the White House to a board meeting at the company, and his old friend had an 18-hour jump on his competitors. The machines were stopped all over the world and millions were saved. Mr. Nixon ran again and has won. So, it is not too surprising to find that his old friend has exclusive rights to the lucrative soft drink market in the Soviet Socialist Republic. He also has exclusive rights to the import of Russian vodka. After all, what are old friends for? Mr. President, you have received a mandate. But, what was the price you paid? Will it truly be Richard Nixon governing this country or will it be the giant corporations that throw so much money into your campaign coffers? Will you end the war that still rages in Indo-China, or are your allies in big business afraid to take the chance on a peace-time economy? These are questions that are burning in my heart. It has been said that you want a memorable place in history. Do you really? Why not take all of the resources at hand and stop the WAR? Use your energies and backing to find a cure for cancer and all the other ills that plague mankind. How about healing people instead of bombing them. You surely cannot believe that the Vietnam war will end in anything but the fiasco it is. You cannot believe that even your "children" will not grow up some day. You above all should realize the fickleness of the American public. Your predecessor received a mandate also, and four years later was booted out of office. America fought for her freedom two hundred years ago. She is not afraid to do so again. Please, don't make the mistake of thinking that the people of this country are ALL asleep. There are a lot of politicians who would love to "kick" Richard Nixon once again.

You keep talking about a generation of peace. This generation is the most peace loving I could imagine. They are also the most freedom loving. Please, don't try to take their new-found freedoms away from them. It won't work.

AT THE YEAR'S END most papers and magazines give some sort of awards. I'm going to indulge myself and give a few.



Joey Cord

MALE ENTERTAINER OF THE YEAR: Joey Cord and I first met about two years ago. Joey is an ultimate showman. He sets the pace and takes you with him. He'll rock you heavy and turn around and hit you with his special arrangement of "Maybe This Time" in the middle of which he hits "This Time We Almost Made It." J.F.H. once asked why, since he was working a gay gig at the time, he used the female pronoun in his love song. Joey turned around and made it the male pronoun and took the audience to the roof. (You have to hear "One Less Bell.") It took BALLS and TALENT. Joey is blessed with both. Joey will be going on a concert tour soon. Watch this column for his schedule and, if he's out your way, run, don't walk. I promise you an evening of song that you won't forget.

FEMALE ENTERTAINER OF THE YEAR: Who else but Judy Sexton could it be? I've written so much about this talented songbird that it must seem redundant. I have received a lot of flak because I've written so much. Then I take the unbeliever up to listen to her. Everyone agrees with me and becomes a devoted fan. Whether Judy is camping with "Rum and Coca Cola," belting out Bacharach or tearing you apart with "Without You," you know that you are listening to an artist. You cannot but believe her lyricism. You know that she's been there. You know that she has felt the joy, the fear, the love and the pain. Judy's record will soon be released and all of you will be able to enjoy this fabulous talent.

MUSICIAN OF THE YEAR: An old saying goes for this man. For Johnny Savoy is, indeed, a musician's musician. He can take an old favorite, give it his own treatment and it sounds brand new without losing its originality. His singing can be big and brassy or soft and tender. John ta's great pride in his music. It is much more than a job to him and it shows. Anybody who knows anything about music agrees that he's tops. And, if you're like me and don't really know that much but enjoy listening to good sounds, you'll appreciate Johnny Savoy.

POLITICAL POWER OF THE YEAR: GAY POWER came out so completely that we were even given a chance to address a major political convention for the first time in history. No matter how you felt about some of the tactics used by gay activists, you have to give credit where credit is due. If it were not for those men and women out in the streets, there would not be the awareness by the general public on the subject of gay human rights. There have always been a few brave human beings in the forefront of every political struggle. And it is these people whom I salute for bringing the

issue of gay rights to the public.

A PLEA FOR A SHOW OF UNITY: As you have all read, John Francis Hunter is fighting the publication of his book, *Gay Insider, U.S.A.* John spent over a year of his life compiling the data contained in his book. The publisher made arbitrary deletions throughout the text. They went to far as to edit quotes! John was verbally abused when he fought for the changes he knew had to be made. At one point, the homophobic editor exclaimed, "We better watch out, Jeff (the publisher), Gay Lib is going to get us." Well, brothers and sisters, if you see the book in any store near you, PLEASE BOYCOTT THAT STORE AND CERTAINLY THE BOOK. John Francis will not see a dime in royalties. It is just another case of gay exploitation. Please, please, help a brother who spent so much loving time, energy and money to bring you a complete guide and, almost, an almanac on gay lifestyle. Let's show these homophobes that we can stick together. When one of us is exploited all of us are. AND WE WILL NO LONGER BE EXPLOITED!

MORE ON EXPLOITATION: There are posters going around advertising a "Gay Talk Show." Its front man is an exploiter. He has 5,000 copies of John's book in his warehouse. "It's saleable and I'll sell it." To publicize the book, he is putting the homophobic publisher on the talk show!!! What's gay about that? NOTHING!!! It makes my skin crawl. This same man is backing a thing called Gay Media Advertising. In an ad for this "gay owned" company he claims to be selling ads for DAVID. To any would-be advertisers: I am the only DAVID representa-

tive in New York. A note or call to Jacksonville will confirm this. WHEN THE HELL ARE GAYS GOING TO STOP FRONTING FOR SOMEONE ELSE??? SOON, I HOPE!!!

Well, I guess that's all for this year. I hope that I haven't made too many enemies. The few that I know about I wouldn't have any other way. To those of you who have been so kind with your letters voicing concern for me and mine, MANY MANY THANKS. Should some sort of "accident" befall me, I have taken the precaution of listing those who would see me done harm, and why. That list is in safe-keeping and would open some can of worms. I hope that the next year sees us truly liberated. I hope that the next year sees all of your hopes and dreams come true. I hope that we shall all experience the PEACE and LOVE for which we yearn so much. And, God willing, I hope that I shall be able to serve you in some way.

LOVE & PEACE, Je

P.S. OOPS! For any of you going down to Puerto Rico, there is a bar down there called Rudy's. It advertises as gay but I've received complaints from readers of this column that it isn't. It's on the beach and it seems that during the summer they did some gay business. But with the season "on," they fired the gay bartender. One man said he went in for a drink and was told by the owner that he was having "trouble with these damn queers. I sell them a drink but they have to take it onto the beach." The man walked out with his drink over the owner's protest. "I didn't mean you." The man is a big spender. Fuck off, Rudy.

A NEW CLUB IN GREENWICH VILLAGE! WHEN WE WIN

BY JOHN FRANCIS HUNTER

Via Galactica Fizzle Blew 860G into Orbit" headlined the New York Post on December 1. The musical, set a thousand years from now, concerned "a garbageman from earth who finds happiness and heroism on an asteroid after he throws off the bonds of the regimented earth tyranny," noted the accompanying article. Some details of the complex technical effects that were the underpinnings of the show at the new Uris Theatre were given, and they suggested that more attention was paid to futuristic spectacle than to character development. One can make the logical conclusion that the trouble with *Via Galactica* was that, for all its space-age pretensions, it was simply old hat. Human relationships in, and in response to, technologically advanced civilizations are what should be existentially explored in the arts and semi-arts of today if anything "new" is to be turned out.

If it's possible to have anything new under the sun, it's the gay liberation movement, the New Free Gays, the emerging gay culture and/or the gay community that will come up with it. What do I mean, "if"? We've already done it, and it takes no long look at the events of the past three and a half years to prove it. In politics mark the '72 Democratic Convention and the militant visibility there of our people, with some, albeit begrudging, recognition of our inalienable right to be, on the part of straight pols.

Ann Arbor and San Francisco's rulings against sex discrimination in city hiring, the emergence of the gay press and the gay church, founding of the Gay Community Services Center in Los Angeles, Jack Baker's victories at the University of Minnesota, a gradual bending on the part of the psychiatric racket toward the realization that it is not homosexuality which is wrong but society's condemnation of it—signify sweeping and subtle changes! New words have appeared in our vocabulary, such as George Weinberg's homophobe and homophobia. Also *Gay Is Good*. Add *Gay Pride*. Reassessments and reappraisals on all sides signal we are on our way, not only just our behavioral minority, but also the species, toward a precedent-shattering *aggiornamento* and, ultimately, great leap ahead in the matter of human inter-relating. What a glorious time to be alive!

HOORAY FOR SHOW BIZ

Instead of leading the way, the arts, however, have been mostly lagging behind, content with mis-copying nature. So it is with excitement and some awe that the sociologists among us should herald the beginning of a little venture that presupposes the triumph of the New Conscience in one pop art form, which during the past decade has eclipsed the fine arts in giving people a hand up: *show business*. Rock and the Beatles, show business phenomena, with their expression of plangent sexuality, the meta-spiritual, protest and unabashed romanticism, gave more impetus to the aspiration of our times than all the novels, operas, plays and poetry produced during the same period—with cinema and visual arts, such as pop painting and sculpture, closing in. But show business and the pragmatic-yet-visionary folk it produces out of its tawdry



Billy Solly, author of "Boy Meets Boy."

gin mills and uninspiring concert halls and other Old Order-competitive training grounds such as the recording studios, have heard the message that people want to be entertained and moved without phony idealizing and political stereotyping. Perhaps show business has heeded nothing more than the jangle of a cash register, but it has heard—and show business folk are clambering over each other to get their first with something that will grab the people and oftentimes influence them toward voicing desires heretofore repressed and softly just a-forming.

So it happens that a small night club/cabaret/social center alternative—actually a synthesis and fusion of old and untried, where a choice is hardly possible and therefore where "alternative" itself is an



Steve Krotz, director of When We Win

inappropriate term—has come about, created by six gays for everybody. Several of these gays have been political activists.

DON'T HAVE TO TELL

When We Win, making its debut Friday, January 5, will provide a unique opportunity for gays, straights, and non-homosexuals who may inadvertently live the New Free Gay lifestyle, to entertain and be entertained side-by-side, to coexist self-consciously and without having to declare their orientation—unless they choose to for reasons of integrity, as a political statement, for catharsis, or in the futuristic spirit of adventure.

In its Description of Activities accompanying its Business Operation Outline, WWW asserts that, just as it is first to

combine theatre, cabaret/night club and cinema all under one roof, it is furthermore "a new and exciting concept of the emerging liberation culture." WWW proposes:

"It is in the spirit of the newly developing liberation concept and towards creating a truly viable Liberation Culture that would, itself, lead to valid alternate lifestyles for all people regardless of their sexual orientation, that this establishment is operating with the express purposes

"Of providing an alternative to exploitive and/or strictly heterosexual bars, night clubs, plays and talent showcases;

"Of providing an opportunity for talented artists to exhibit and develop their talents within an atmosphere conducive to a freedom of expression not available elsewhere, and

"Of providing a forum for the expression of valid human experiences regardless of sexual orientations."

Steve Krotz, WWW's president, treasurer, director and chairman of the Board of Directors, a one-time secretary of the Gay Activists Alliance, adds, "We believe if the movement is going to be successful it must break away from the limitations of gay chauvinism and separatism. To achieve equality, a right to our own lives, we must depend on the understanding and good will of straights—since numerically they are in the vast majority."

But it is a spirit of magnanimity, and not just a rational resignation to being outnumbered, that motivates WWW. Having been oppressed and fully recognizing their oppression, the WWW founders don't countenance counter-oppression as a solution to society's ills. The new way is to welcome, not to keep out or circumscribe or proscribe.

NOT STRICTLY GAY

"If our purpose is to foster understanding," Krotz stresses, "we can't have a strictly gay-oriented club. We want a 'meeting ground' so gays and straights can communicate with each other."

The hope of the world in theatrical microcosm here at the spacious club at One Sheridan Square, Greenwich Village, U.S.A.? Apparently so, if you have faith in the power of show business and idealism in tandem, and in integration.

Krotz refers to the statement of pur-

pose which spells out that the era WWW hopes to help usher in in Manhattan night life, for openers, will be "a time of exploration, birth and rebirth tinged with the expectant excitement only the unknown can offer."

Asserting further that WWW has come about because "the straight world has never provided an opportunity for gays to relate freely," Krotz, who is also in charge of public relations, explains that WWW will be "an early evening entertainment spot for the gay community that is separate from and totally different from gay bars, where they can come with or without a date, lover or friend to relax and enjoy themselves."

And show affection? Definitely. "Just as straights do in their bars, but where it is forbidden even for gays to dance." (See GAY No 91, on zap of singles bars by activists.)

That WWW is designed not to compete with gay bars is evident from a glance at their time schedule. All activities are scheduled so that patrons can be out by the latest at 11:30, just when gay bars in particular "begin to pick up."

"Even though we're inviting a mixed clientele, ninety per cent of what we're doing is built around the gay community lifestyle," he acknowledges.

IT'S NON-EXPLOITIVE

Bearing in mind that the ideal gay lifestyle, as described by many avant garde philosophers, emphasizes sharing, this means, for instance, that prices will not be exploitive. Minimums of \$.250 per person per cabaret show or showcase theatre production and \$1.50 per film will entitle a patron to two soft drinks or coffee and sandwiches. There will be no booze served.

There will be no charge for the Sunday afternoon forums, and coffee will be free between the hours of 1-6:00. This was decided in order to offer some entertainment especially for those persons who cannot afford the minimums for evening events.

When asked what provision would otherwise be made for those counter-culture persons who do not have the admission price, who hold to the flower children precepts of producing and creating for love alone and who are opposed to all forms of capitalism, including gay capitalism, calling it hetero-imitative, Krotz responded:

"Our main concern in the beginning is that WWW should succeed not only for business reasons but, more importantly, to guarantee the maintenance of the underlying concept and the doors of opportunity WWW will open for individuals of the gay community, helping them to branch out in other areas. It cannot succeed if weekly expenses aren't met. These are considerable due to the many and varied activities planned."

THREE OPENING NIGHTS

WWW has a very ambitious program being initiated the first week in January. Grand opening fare on the fifth will be a cabaret featuring several entertainers who have already earned a gay following via the GAA Firehouse Friday Cabarets (see my article in GAY No. 90). Two different shows, at 8:00 and 10:00, will present such favorites as singer Anthony Santelmo, comedi-

enne Nancy Jo Parker and "slick" folk guitarists/singers Bob and Allan. Also the contemporary soul stylist Alana Reed.

Referring to Ms. Parker as "one of the paramount attractions down in Soho," I called her in No. 91 "an incandescent comedienne of rare physical beauty... a past mistress of vocal mimicry (particularly in her *Wizard of Oz* take-off) and a peerless comedy writer..."

On Saturday the sixth, those on hand will be Larry Paulette, recently touted in these pages by Vito Russo as one of the best singers he's heard, which is something, comedienne Donnybrook, Merle Sheppard and Enrique. Merle was singled out in my GAA Cabaret article for her "moving vocal solos reminiscent of Janis Joplin," and of Enrique I said, "... I've been particularly excited by a stunning Argentinian folk singer in his forties who makes fools of age-ists and fans of chicken hawks."

THREE KNOWN GAYS

Of all these performers, only three are known to be gay, while the others "we haven't inquired about," comments Krotz, remaining true to WWW's "non-discriminatory" policy.

"We shall never bar a talented performer because he or she has a different orientation from ours," Krotz makes it clear. He speaks for the other officers and directors of the corporation, who are Lonnie J. Lowry, Phillip Eberle, William J. Thom, Mark E.B. Pinney and Blake Berggen. Krotz has been an actor, art director, production stage manager and assistant in family enterprises back home in Illinois and Minnesota. Lowry is a registered nurse and has been a dancer, choreographer and dancing teacher. A theatre major, Eberle has toured as an actor, been an office manager and assistant manager of a Village restaurant. He succeeded Krotz as GAA secretary last year, quitting to devote himself to WWW. Thom is an attorney, Pinney is currently vice-president of Audience Studies, Inc., which was until recently a subsidiary of Columbia Pictures, and Berggen is at present sponsoring editor for McGraw-Hill, Inc. Berggen and Krotz were in the original cast of *Coming Out*, a homosexual documentary which premiered at the Firehouse during Gay Pride Week '72 and later ran at the Washington Square Methodist Church.

Krotz, Lowry and Eberle, who are now working full-time with WWW, will be salaried after opening, and about a dozen others will be employed to assist in the operation of the business as it grows.

NO MAFIA FUNDS

Although the group has raised sufficient capital in the six months of preparation to get underway, the financial problem has by no means been solved, according to Krotz. "Our trouble in raising the money is that we insist it be 'clean.' No underworld connections will be tolerated, which already has limited our source of income. All our investors must believe in our approach. So far, investments range from \$20 a quarter share to \$2500, representing two and a half full shares."

The company has been especially scrupulous about letting the neighborhood know that WWW has no truck with organized crime, since the premises on Sheridan Square have had some fairly recent notoriety. As the Haven, a "unisex" discotheque of '70-'71, the property became a focal point of resident protest, heavy drug traffic was alleged, and a police raid leading to its closing brought a great deal of negative publicity. The block association rose up in arms. Since the fall of 1971, the doors have been closed, though the interior was partially restored, after alleged police "trashing," by a concern that then failed to get a license.

Thorough renovation has been necessary, consisting of re-carpeting, painting and installation of theatrical lighting as well as the new sound system. The arena

stage with its encircling Florentine ballustrades has been retained, with rising tiers of bleacher seats and tables. The color scheme is burgundy with black and navy. Candlelight will add a touch of traditional Village glamor.

PRE-HAVEN DISTINCTION

"We'd like to minimize reference to the recent past and emphasize that the plant once housed the famed Cafe Society—which is the club Billie Holiday yearned to play and finally did," Krotz muses. "Also, there was a theatre here where *The Hostage* had a distinguished run. The tradition is really a rich one, encompassing theatre and night club, and we're going to bring it all back together, plus more."

WWW is outstripping the past with its programming, indeed. On Sunday the seventh the first in an ongoing series of community service forums will be initiated, from 1-6:00 p.m., and at 7:30 that same night two films will be shown as the first part of a proposed month-long "Martha Raye Retrospect."

Vito Russo will be in charge of the film program and has arranged for Ms. Raye, now starring in *No, No, Nanette* on Broadway, to make an appearance at one of the screenings of her celebrated movies, such as *Boys From Syracuse*, *Big Broadcasts of 1937 and '38*, *Four Jills in a Jeep* and *Jumbo*.

Though she has been a heroine of the hawks and made many hawkish p.a.s in Vietnam, Ms. Raye also endeared herself to the gay community when she stood up before the Laguna Beach, California city council last summer and reminded them how important gays are to the cultural and economic life of that affluent beach city. It was in Laguna that the clipping of the corners of paper currency by gays supposedly began, to demonstrate the enormous buying power of the gay community. Many gays now write "Gay \$" on bills they are putting back into circulation. Harassment of gays and discrimination against gay enterprise in Laguna has reportedly abated dramatically.

NEW MAN ON BEAT

Captain William Kelly of the Sixth Pre-



Lonnie Lowry and Phil Eberle on their way to When We Win

cinct has been invited to conduct an early Sunday forum, leading a discussion on crime problems within the West Village area and some gay issues related to it. This presents quite an irony, considering that it was the Sixth Precinct police, under the notorious Lt. Seymour Pine, who were involved with the harassment of gays that led to the frustration over alleged police-syndicate SLA collusion culminating in the Stonewall Uprisings of June, 1969.

Capt. Kelly has lately been demonstrating a more civil, if not enlightened, attitude toward security in his domain by meeting with representatives of the Matachine Society and encouraging dialogue with all segments of the population of what is known as the world's largest gay ghetto. His men have also shown uncommon restraint in dealing with the brouhaha over the Trucks, internationally known cruising area over in the Casbah of the far West Village (GAY No. 90).

Children's events are scheduled to alternate with the Sunday afternoon forums. Krotz did not elaborate on the intriguing possibilities for New Order educating via such "events," which breakthrough is sorely needed in a world where few educational institutions deal with the existence, let alone desirability, of alternate lifestyles.

AN INTEGRATED MUSICAL

Last but not least on the opening week agenda is the premiere at 7:30 Monday, January 8, of a musical, *Boy Meets Boy*. This first showcase theatre presentation, written by an Englishman, Bill Solly, with the book co-authored by Donald Ward, "takes for granted that gay and straight are equal," advises Krotz.

"Equal to the extent of having the lead, a classical musical comedy type—vibrant, urbane, all that, you know—a gay. His best buddy is straight, though equally attractive."

Krotz goes on to enthuse about the parity of the two lifestyles in this small-cast import from London, mentioning the Boston Society wedding between two males and an elaborate dance routine a la Astaire and Rogers, also between two males. At one point, the two leads com-

miserate with each other over their romantic ups and downs in a lively song called "Would You Give It All Up For Love?"

Solly has flown over to direct the show, which Brian MacDonald, formerly of the Harkness, is choreographing. Regular WWW pianist Norman Linscheid, who has performed at such celebrated gay bistros as Mona's Royal Roost on Cornelia St. and the Sea Shack in Cherry Grove, will provide the "eighty-eight piece accompaniment." The musical is set in the Forties, incidentally, a period not fabled for its permissiveness regarding exceptional sexual orientation. Nevertheless, there is to be one scene in which a male appears totally nude.

"Of course, nudity is acceptable at WWW, if it's appropriate," Krotz assures.

NEW MATERIAL NEEDED

He mentions frequently that to survive WWW must have a continual infusion of new scripts and ideas for forums, as well as fresh entertainers. Performers will be auditioned every Thursday for appearance in the cabaret the following week. No one will be paid, but Krotz and company believe that theirs will soon become a "must stop" for producers and agents, so people will want to showcase their talents. As they expect to maintain a high professional standard on and off stage, he feels that some "conditioned" reluctance among gays as well as straights to work in a sexually integrated constellation will soon disappear.

When asked how he predicts gay performers, specifically, will react to the opportunity to sing same-sex lyrics and express themselves honestly before a mixed audience, Krotz replies, "Most of the gay entertainers will be hesitant, particularly those who are concerned about their careers. We shall encourage gay entertainers to use pronouns applicable to their sexual orientation and experience," but, once again, "there are no rules except that no one use discriminatory material."

Thus, here within shouting distance of the Stonewall, itself but a seedy, exploitive dance bar with indifferent, gyrating go-gos and surly strongmen at the door, the rings on the tree trunk of the New Order display the rapid evolution of the strictly gay liberation movement to one already accommodating community outreach. The MS/NY is ensconced in new quarters at 59 Christopher Street, holding open houses and circulating New Order information to all and sundry. Gays and straights in the neighborhood marched together toward the Christopher Street docks in the summer protesting the presence of the methadone boat on the Hudson and accompanying problems with drug-induced crime and still have the remnants of an association at work where both are pulling for community betterment. Separatists might observe that an evolutionary stage—that of full equality everywhere—has been bypassed, that it has not existed in Greenwich Village beyond a tolerance level, and that in the arts there can be no idealistic, futuristic utopia until an ethnic gay theatre has been independently developed to build on and from, but WWW is based on the principle that skipping can be done and that it is a good thing. Gays in their infinite generosity and capacity for overlooking, if not forgiving, social inequities, are surely the only ones who can bring it off. They have always specialized in the new, and now they seem to be making show business an adjunct of their human politics. WWW may soon come to mean more than When We Win (having also bypassed *We Will Win*) and become, before *Variety*, *Time*, *The Wall Street Journal* and *Women's Wear Daily* have even taken note, **WHY WE'VE WON!**

January 5, 6, 7 and 8 are opening dates to be entered into a 1973 calendar that will most certainly be like none other in history. **HAPPY NEW YEAR indeed.**

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SHELLEY

(continued from page 10)
and show some human emotion besides wild passion? Well, in this film they smile. Unfortunately, they smile because they can't talk. Or read. Or write. Or even read cue cards two feet away. There is a man in this film who is so stupid that the audience was helping him with his dialogue. *The Roundabouts* was written and directed (written and directed!!!) by Dick Martin. He has assembled a cast which defies description. Better you should hear some of the press release: "Still unfulfilled, Darryl drives to the service station and picks up Mark, and a breathtakingly beautiful male-to-male version of the famous beach scene from *From Here To Eternity* unfolds before the camera which never cuts away." Now, I ask you . . . Anyway, at the end of the film Mark finds a letter from another man written to his lover. After looking at the pictures for a while, he gets the message that he's being cheated on and throws his fists to his temples and whispers, "Gary, Gary" (six syllables each) and falls to the floor. Then the audience falls to the floor clutching their sides. Just for the record, this one has a happy ending. I'll take suicide any day of the week.

ent versions. By the way, Sally Struthers is the best thing in the film. She's almost worth the trip. All McGraw should be shot with the same bullet they use on Stella Stevens. Oh, and I also hated Quincy Jones' music—it always makes me feel like I'm in the Stonewall during a raid.
Elaine May's second directorial effort, *The Heartbreak Kid*, is really a very interesting film. Ten years ago it was very funny. It's not funny any more the way it was in *Goodbye Columbus* or *The Graduate* but I think its message might still be necessary even though nobody seems to

cuses herself to go pee-pee in the middle of the night. She talks constantly while they make love and keeps referring to the next "forty or fifty years" together. In Florida he meets a girl (Cybill Shepherd), falls in love with her on the third day of his honeymoon, decides that this is what he really wants, breaks poor Lila's heart by having the marriage annulled and follows Kelly, his new love, to Minnesota against the wishes of her father (Eddie Albert) and of Kelly herself, but he's too blind to see it. In Minneapolis, he overcomes sub-freezing temperatures, a football player, Kelly's father and finally Kelly herself and marries her. Guess

they're in tear gas or something and the wedding conversations are all the same. Nobody gets on a bus in a wedding gown and runs away because you've got to get off sometime and start living and the reality of the situation is that Lenny will someday be Kelly's father with the same house and the same values. He won't understand it all, though, because it really wasn't like that in all those *Playboy* articles and on all those billboards across the country. Poor Lenny. Poor fucked-up world that teaches us something is desirable and then lets us find out the truth.



Al Carmine at the piano

care. Not even the people who made the film, obviously, because they sacrifice the message more than once for some cheap one-liners (Neil Simon wrote the screenplay). The story concerns Lenny (beautifully played by a newcomer named Charles Grodin). He marries Lila Kolodny, the girl he met in a singles bar on Third Avenue. We get treated to the whole Jewish wedding and the honeymoon trip to Florida. In Virginia on their wedding night after they have sex Lila says, "Aren't you glad we waited?" You can see by the look on his face that if they hadn't waited he probably wouldn't have married her. By Georgia, he's already not too pleased with her. By Florida, she's a regular pain in the ass. She eats Milky Ways in bed, has sloppy egg salad sandwiches for breakfast and ex-

what? You guessed it. It's really no different than getting Lila Kolodny.
The film says a lot of important things. Throughout the action we hear snatches of commercial messages like, "I'd like to buy the world a Coke . . ." and the wedding song both times is "Close To You" by Bert Bacharach. Commercial messages have defined this country's concept of love and marriage. The reality of the situation, however, is quite a different thing. We advertise one thing and sell another. The American dream is to marry someone like Kelly and a man will surmount all odds to achieve it, but after it's over he finds that he married Lila Kolodny again. People are dull and full of shit whether they're from New York or Minneapolis. They all play the same games; if they're not in insurance,

I see that I really can't go on forever because they give you just so much space to screw around with in this paper, but a few unkind words about *Man Of La Mancha* will be sufficient. The music is still lovely because what can you do to that music, but Arthur Hiller has done it again in the great tradition of *Hospital* and *Love Story*. Pure bullshit. Peter O'Toole shamelessly overacts, James Coco is simply miscast and the wide screen has all but destroyed the intimacy achieved in the play that made it work so well as a personal dream for everyone. The photography is stunning, however, and Sophia Loren, who can do no wrong as far as I'm concerned, carries the whole film. When she's on screen everything is alright. Go—you'll love looking at her. I suppose I'll have to save *Sleuth* and *Child's Play* until next issue.

Still Shots: John Springer is holding a series of lectures at Town Hall in the near future. The lecturers? Bette Davis, Joan Crawford, Myrna Loy, Sylvia Sidney and Jean Arthur . . . GAA had its 3rd Anniversary Party last week and it was like old times . . . Bruce Voeller is the new President of GAA; wish him luck, there's a lot of work to be done . . . There will be another All-Night Film Festival at the Firehouse on Friday night, January 16th. This one will be devoted to films about homosexuality . . . They've stopped production on the Diana Sands version of the Billy Holiday story and the Barbra Streisand film on Sarah Bernhardt . . . Don't miss the Diane Arbus show at the Museum of Modern Art; it closes January 16th and it's a knockout . . . Please be careful travelling on New Year's Eve and have a small one for me (if they're real small, have two). I hope your dreams come true in 1973. Be happy.

BETTE

(Continued from page 11)
to love it. Another two years and I'd have been the Mother—or Yenta."
"Being in the theatre, one is pretty much surrounded by homosexuality," Bette said. "I really dig it. I laugh and carry on and have a good time. I understand gay guys, I really do. Half the time I think I am one, and I think gay men understand me, too. That's not to say straight people don't understand me, or I don't understand them."
Some single girls get uptight because every available bachelor in New York seems to be gay. "That's something I don't think I've been willing to face," Bette says. "I may complain occasionally—particularly when I'm not getting any."
On politics: "I'm what you might call a Conservative Liberal. I like peace, and don't like violence. I like to be left alone and not called names. I sympathize with all sorts of radical things, but when it comes to violence, you know, picking up the brick and throwing it, I call a taxi, ask for the check and remember a hot date somewhere."
On gay liberation: "I dig it. Open your mouths, for Christ's sake. Don't you get tired of being stepped on?"
On bigotry: "I don't like bigotry in any form. I don't like gay men who are

violently anti-straight, and I don't like straight people who are violently anti-gay. Any kind of prejudice frightens me."
On women's lib: "The trouble with woman's lib, I think, is that they don't reach out to the people who really need to be reached. The vocal women are those who are already liberated. They should worry about those poor housewives who really have no idea of where they are or why they are the way they are, and are stuck. There are some women who really like that, and that's cool, but those who are struggling to get out, they're the ones woman's lib should help."
"I am much more liberated than the average woman. I make as much, or more, than most men my age. I don't have children, and I am for abortions. I do find role playing a problem sometimes. I like being a woman, but don't like being a stereotype of a woman. I have my diaphragm, and I do what I can do."
On the theatre: "I'd rather sing than act. I enjoy being a solo performer because it's a one-to-one contact, just you and the audience. I can get near the audience, even touch them if I want. It's immediate. Being in "Fiddler" killed my ambition for the stage. It has nothing to do with what's happening. The whole world is falling apart and Lauren Bacall is up there singing about applause."
On escape: "Escape is necessary sometimes, but always escape heavy."

Don't escape into bullshit, get stoned and listen to Santana. Come to the baths—the whole world's a bath."
The singles scene: "I was in an East Side singles bar once. It turned my head completely around. I couldn't cope with that panic—the same sort of panic I sometimes see in the gay world, the 'I've gotta get laid' panic. It's so sad, man. I'm a sad lady, and I don't need that."
If you missed this "sad lady" at the Baths, you're going to have to wait awhile. "I'm taking a break now to get my head together," she said. "I haven't been able to focus for about four months

and I don't like that feeling. I like being busy, but I don't like being panicked. When I'm together again, I'll start singing again. My manager has plans for me, but hasn't told me about them yet. Stephen has an option on me for another eight weeks at Continental, four weeks at one point and another four later, all within the next six months.
Watch Continental's ads in this paper for Bette Midler's return. You'll be seeing a lot of this girl in the future, but only at Continental will she be surveying the room with that marvelous eyebrow arched and commenting, "I feel like I just got lost in an old Victor Mature movie!"

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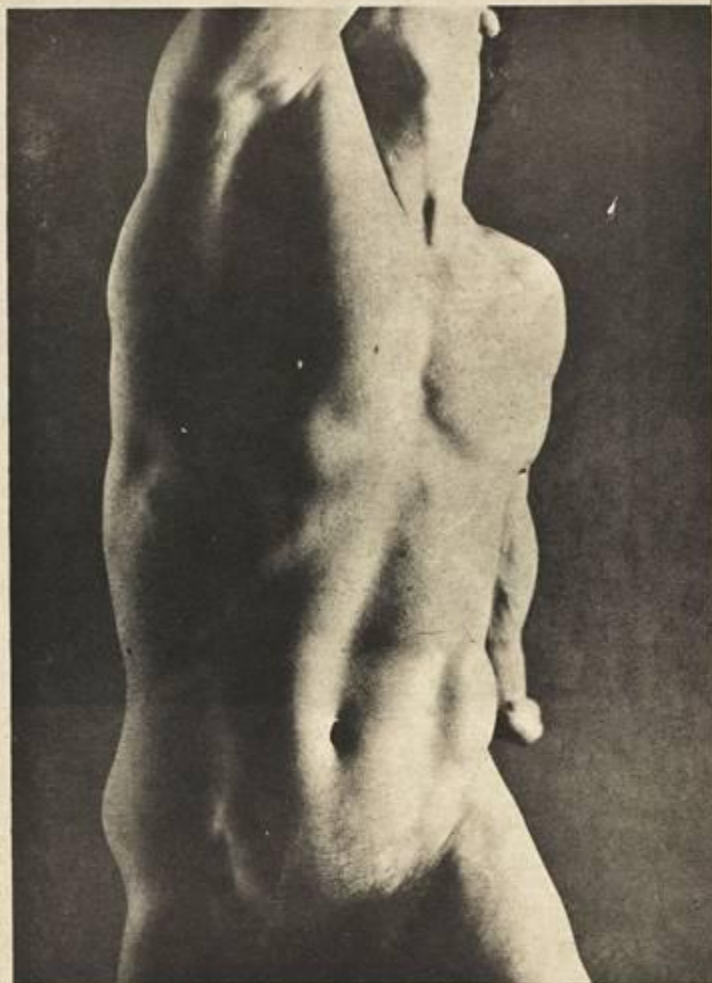


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