The Empty Closet

COMBINED FEBRUARY-MARCH 1971 ISSUE

Gay Liberation vs. the State Assembly (see inside)
Dear Marshall,

Obviously you do not read my column very often or you would not have written to me as you did. I have been in the forefront for 15 years fighting for acceptance and a better understanding of homosexuality. I was somewhat instrumental in getting some decent legislation on behalf of homosexuals here in Illinois.

Of course most of the laws in regard to homosexuality are archaic and wildly punitive. I shall continue to do what I can to make this world a more sane and livable place for everyone, including homosexuals.

Good luck and thank you for writing.

Sincerely,
Ann Landers

This seems to me and several of my friends to be an abrupt about-face from her public position. Your comments in this magazine, as well as other news or articles, are invited.

March 14th

State March of the Gay Unveiling

On March 13 and 14, gay people in New York state will march on the state capitol in Albany to demand changes in state laws. This will be our response to the introduction of a homosexual law reform bill by Franz Leichter. Demands will be repeal of the consensual sodomy, solicitation, loitering and impersonation laws, and enactment of a Fair Employment Act and Fair Housing Law for gays.

The specific events include:

SATURDAY, March 13: 7:30 pm rally; 10:30 dance with a rock band and Go-Go dancers.

SUNDAY, March 14: 12:30 pm Prayer-in, led by 50 area ministers and finally at 2:00 pm a one mile march ending with a rally on the Capitol steps.

Pardon Our Mistake...

In typesetting copy for Debbie Lestz's article on Allen Ginsberg in the January issue, we managed to spell his name wrong. Our sincere apologies to Mr. Ginsberg and Miss Lestz.

In the article "Gay Power" in the same issue, the note on the "Rochester Daily Planet" was premature. The article was supposed to be printed in the first issue of this new underground paper, but at the last minute, financial support for the newspaper was withdrawn, and it never got printed.

The "212" bar was inadvertently listed on York Street instead of Colvin Street.
The games people play go on and on and on. This is especially true of that cruelist of human games known as cruising. In cruising, the hunt is on and the hunter becomes the hunted. Eventually the tension becomes so high that the whole aspect of meeting someone with the prospect of an evening, a week, or even a lifetime of satisfaction, or even pleasure, becomes lost in this confrontation of wills. Cruising is one of the great male chauvinist games: I can be tougher than you can be. I can hold out longer than you can hold out. I don’t need you. I can’t open up to you until you open up to me. Whether the playing ground be some street in the Village, one of the Avenues, or any bar or beach there are always the same roles, often enough being played by the same men only wearing different faces. We could begin with the extreme caricature of masculinity who believes that it is below his masculine dignity to ever approach anyone else. He will usually stand like the steadfast tin soldier for hours on end, wondering why this isn’t his particular night.

Next to him is the aggressive animal, the tiger stalking his way through the situation, looking at everyone but not looking at anyone. He is really looking for that perfect fulfillment of some adolescent sex fantasy (referred to as his ‘type’) who was possibly his first love at the age of twelve (his first ‘type’) and whom he expects to walk by momentarily.

There are the ‘numbers’ guys who have to announce to you that you’re going to be their first of the evening or the week or whatever. They also have to constantly tell you what the cruising report is for every port between here, San Juan, and Dubrovnik. In other words, this is to make you feel like another swell number in his address book. If you’re lucky.

And the put-up artist who has to first off embarrass you with how you’re the most beautiful thing he’s ever seen since the last most beautiful thing he has ever seen.

Or the put-down artist who thinks he has to shake you up to get you out.

There are the fantasy creeps who stare at you all night until you walk over to them and then they walk away. They’d rather not know you, too well.

All of these men add up to a frightening lack of self-understanding and self-confidence. They can not face up to a situation without the roles pre-defined, the definitions roled out. We are all too afraid to find out that certain gorgeous ‘number’ over there is just like we are inside: afraid and alone. Trapped in the role that he has learned how to play very successfully, but has outgrown years ago, whether it be the gorgeous ‘number’ role or the twitting little boy of thirty.

Gay roles in the whole of society are designed by fear. Just as we act in straight society out of fear that they will discover us, we react with each other out of fear that we will discover ourselves also.

It is no small wonder that from out of this straight-jacketing, many gay men develop a real hatred for men, just as many straight men hate women because of the roles they must act out. Because we are forced to live in a society that condemns us as half-men, many of us feel that we must become men and a half. This means to shut out all of the real tenderness and sensitivities associated with femininity. Gay life is a gay drag when it forces a man to reject most of himself and only leaves him a shell or role he must show in order to live with the reality of our situation: that we are all outcasts.

We must reject what straight society has straight-jacketed us with and form our own life as real people not merely the old male chauvinist roles left over from a dodo society. It’s very simple, men. It’s just a matter of getting together or falling apart.
The G.L.F. Bookshelf

The Rochester Gay Liberation Front seeks to maintain a library of homophile literature at its office for public use, and invites your contribution of books, periodicals or subscription money. Here is the library contents so far:

# BOOKS
- The Homosexual Handbook by Angelo d'Arcangelo
- Homosexuality: Disease or Way of Life? by Edmund Bergler
- The Tortured Sex by Yankowski and Wolff
- The Gay World by Martin Hoffman
- Masculinity and Femininity by George W. Henry
- Human Behavior by Berelson and Steiner
- Tearoom Trade by Laud Humphreys
- Feminine Mystique by Betty Friedan
- The New People by Charles Winick
- Pre marital Sexual Standards in America by Ira Reiss
- Seventh Surrey by Hadron Keene

# MAGAZINES (sample copies only in most cases; starred items indicate we have copies for sale or free distribution)
- The Empty Closet *
- New York Hyrcnal
- Homophile Action League Newsletter
- New York Mattachine Times
- Cornell Gay Liberation Front News *
- The Fifth Freedom
- GAY
- Gay Sunshine
- COME OUT *
- Gay Flares
- Front Lines
- QQ (formerly Queen's Quarterly)
- The Advocate
- Lavendar Vision

# SPECIAL ISSUES OF STRAIGHT MAGAZINES
- UCLA Law Review, March 1966
- WIN Magazine, 15 November 1969
- Harper's, September and November 1970
- LIFE, Sept. 4, 1970
- LOOK, January 26, 1971
- The Cornell Daily Sun, Oct. 16, 1970

WHAT HAVE WE DONE?

On October 3, 1970 nearly 100 members of Rochester's gay community met in Todd Union at the University of Rochester to listen to invited speakers from the Cornell Gay Liberation Front (Ithaca) and the Mattachine Society of the Niagara Frontier (Buffalo) and to discuss the formation of a Rochester Gay Liberation Front.

The group has met regularly since, with alternate weeks given to discussion of specific topics from military service to women's liberation with outside speakers, and alternate weeks to discussion of projects. Some UR students got formal University recognition, an office and a small budget.

The group is composed of a wide variety of Rochester men and women and tries to be both a service and activist organization. Meetings and talks are open to the public. The group's monthly magazine "The Empty Closet" is available free, and other current gay publications are available at cost from the Gay Liberation office, Todd Union room 202-D. There is a speaker's bureau to furnish speakers for schools and community organizations. The G.L.F. has published one monograph "The Law and the Homosexual," and is planning others. Several projects, including production of a short movie, are in the works.

More than anything else, the existence of the organization has brought the gay community out and into an open discussion of the nature of its oppression and an awareness of its potential for unity. There is talk of establishing a gay community center in the city, and the community was together enough to present a statement to the Special Committee on Discrimination Against Homosexuals of the N.Y. State Assembly in its first (ever) public hearings January 7.

The Rochester Gay Liberation Front invites your interest and participation and financial contribution. The address is Gay Liberation, Todd Union, River Campus Station, Rochester, N.Y. 14627. Meetings are Saturday at 7:30 pm in Todd Union at the University of Rochester.

The Rochester Gay Liberation Front has opened an office in room 202-D of Todd Union (on the UR river campus) with telephone 275-6181. It features a library, copies of gay literature for sale, and a staff of people to rap with you about gay problems. Call or come in.
Gay People vs The State Ass.  
'They're Your Laws not Mine'  
by BOB OSBORN

Three members of the Rochester gay community (Bob Osborn, R.J. Yekel, and Marshall Goldman) addressed the Special Committee on Discrimination Against Homosexuals of the New York State Assembly in its first (ever) public hearings January 7 in New York City. Assemblymen present for the hearings were Stephen Solarz (Brooklyn) and Tony Olivieri (Manhattan).

In the invitation to present testimony the Assemblymen indicated an interest in determining the extent of the problem of discrimination and what if anything could be done about it, particularly emphasizing repeal of the consensual sodomy and solicitation statutes and barring employment discrimination.

Dignitaries dominated the morning session, and the CBS cameras, it seems, were for them only. Among those speaking was a New York City Councilman (Carter Burdlen) who had just introduced an anti-discriminatory ordinance at the city level. Also letters of support were read from U.S. Congressmen Abzug and Koch.

Speakers for the afternoon session included representatives from NYC Gay Liberation Front, Mattachine Society, NYC Mattachine Society, NYC Gay Liberation Front and NYC Radicalesbians, and Daughters of Bilitis. The Mattachine Society of the Niagara Frontier (Buffalo) sent a statement but no representative.

Many of the major points covered by the speakers are also in our statement (see below), but some other points are worth noting. The G.A.A. cited the effect of arrest records on employment, licensing, life insurance and bonding and worried that if a homosexual can't get a state hairdressing license, who can?

Kohler of NYC Gay Liberation Front made a fiery speech condemning the assemblymen for their irrelevance. "OK, go ahead and change your laws, and say your laws because they're not my laws, but if you really want to do some good, come out in the streets with me and see for yourself what you can do for the people. Bella Abzug will walk the streets with me, will you?" He also commented that those present and testifying were all white males (why weren't the women, the transvestites, the third world people invited) and urged the Assembly to have as many hearings as necessary to hear all sides of the problem.

The following is the text of a statement prepared at a special meeting of the members of the Rochester gay community. Following the statement (but not printed here) were two appendices dealing with specific statutes and recommended action. Copies of the entire testimony are available from the G.L.F. office.

STATEMENT OF THE ROCHESTER GAY COMMUNITY
AT THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE OF THE N.Y. STATE ASSEMBLY
ON DISCRIMINATION AGAINST HOMOSEXUALS

In this testimony we intend to point out that upstate and small city homosexuals, although silent for a long time, are oppressed by New York State laws at least as much as those in New York City. We want to urge that all laws relating to sexual acts be revised, the Alcoholic Beverage Control Commission be restricted in its powers, and that the Civil Rights Commission and Human Rights Commission resolve to assure equal rights in employment and housing to all regardless of sex or sexual orientation.

This statement represents the views of a small number (10) of our group who were able to assemble on very short notice to prepare it, but it was a broad based group consisting of students and non-students, business and women, and a clergyman. Roughly half were male and half female.

It is worthwhile to point out that the Rochester Gay Liberation Front has no connection, official or otherwise, with any other group, although we applaud the efforts of other groups working for civil rights and an end to discrimination. The fear of coming into the open in Rochester is so great that we formed only last October, with an initial meeting of nearly 100 people, most of whom were surprised to see such a broad representation of Rochester society. We feel we have as much right as Vice-President Agnew to claim the backing of a large "silent majority" in our efforts to free our people.

Last year we published a 16-page compendium of statutes, ordinances, and regulations affecting the gay community of Rochester. Most of these statutes must be repealed or revised if our people are to enjoy the same civil rights and opportunities enjoyed by other segments of our society and if the state is to free itself from the burden of enforcing restrictive moral standards. A statement listing specific ordinances and recommendations appears as an appendix to this statement, as does the compendium.

We urge you to give it your thoughtful attention.

In particular, the circumstances surrounding the retention of consensual sodomy and adultery laws in the 1965 revision of the State penal code shows dramatically the strong influence of the church, particularly the Catholic church, in legislating its own brand of morality. We feel that in this day and age such laws, and the solicitation, conspiracy, and attempt ordinances that back them up, are both irresponsible and oppressive.

They are irresponsible because they do not require a complaining party. The acts between two consenting individuals are unenforceable except in a discriminatory way. They are used selectively against certain individuals for whom the state or local police have a grudge, they lead to surveillance of private acts, and if the state is to free itself from the burden of enforcing restrictive moral standards, a statement listing specific ordinances and recommendations appears as an appendix to this statement, as does the compendium. We urge you to give it your thoughtful attention.

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Secondly they constitute oppressive legislation. In a world of violence and hatred, love, including sexual love, is a precious and sacred thing. These laws make it possible for the state and bigoted individuals to condemn acts of love between consenting individuals comprising a large segment of society, forcing them to become criminals and live their lives in secrecy and hiding. This is not the role of the state. Aclass of people is oppressed when it is systematically denied the right to equal employment, job security, and freedom to engage in acts which harm no one else. The oppressive civil rights and regulations affecting the gay community of Rochester. Most of these statutes must be repealed or revised if our people are to enjoy the same civil rights and opportunities enjoyed by other segments of our society and if the state is to free itself from the burden of enforcing restrictive moral standards. A statement listing specific ordinances and recommendations appears as an appendix to this statement, as does the compendium. We urge you to give it your thoughtful attention.

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are unenforced or the discrimination is not necessarily overt does not mean that the oppression is not there, merely that the people have become skilled in the art of secrecy to avoid the ever-present threat of punishment.

If you believe the Kinsey report, the only national survey to date on sexual practices, you must believe that a third or more of our population have committed homosexual acts which make them criminals, that at least one out of every five do so for a period of at least three years. This is a large minority of our population and it will soon be impossible for candidates for election to ignore the votes of this class, just as it is getting hard to ignore the voting power of the Black community.

In summary, then, the Rochester Gay Liberation Front is attempting to express the feelings of a previously silent upstate community. We strongly support repeal of Sec. 130.38 (consensual sodomy). Sec. 255.17 subsections 3 and 4 (loitering and masquerading), Sec. 255.17 (adultery), and certain other restrictions on our freedom to commit acts in private which harm no one; addition of a phrase to Sec. 296 (1) of the New York Civil Service Law preventing discrimination based on sexual orientation; and legislation limiting powers of the Alcoholic Beverage Control Board or any other agency to harass gay bars or coffeehouses. Further we wish state legislation prohibiting the maintenance of files or lists of "suspected homosexuals" who have not committed a crime, and the required of any homosexual to register as such. We do so in the conviction that the state exists to assure equal rights to all of its people and that it must not, cannot, continue to neglect the rights of its largest minority—the homosexual.

APPENDIX I (preface)

The accompanying text gives the background for our plea for reform of the state's sex laws; however, a few points might be added regarding crime and punishment. Repeal of consensual sodomy is not enough to eliminate oppression as was shown in the actions of a spiteful Chicago police force following the adoption of the Model Penal Code in Illinois. A large number of laws must be changed to eliminate this selective enforcement and, insofar as the constitution allows, prevent the passage of contradictory municipal ordinances.

We make the following changes under the assumptions that no state has the power to enforce legislation against personal acts in which there is no complaining party except in the case in which the victim is incapable of making a complaint. Further we believe that the human body in all of its conditions and forms is a thing of beauty—and is not offensive in and of itself. "Obscenity" is in the eye of the beholder. In particular, homosexual acts in whatever form and wherever depicted are not in and of themselves "obscene." It must be recognized that all individuals, of whatever age, are capable of loving, in the deepest meaning of the word, persons of the same sex. Finally, we offer the general comment that, no matter what sexual laws are retained, the last place on earth to reform a sex criminal is prison.

In the statutes enumerated below, the "age of consent" appears frequently. We were divided on this issue; the vast majority felt that age is irrelevant between consenting people, that it is not possible for the state to determine if a given individual is "mature enough"—certainly few parents think their offspring are ever "mature enough" to consent to a homosexual act. The minority felt that setting an age limit would be less likely to offend the voting public and that there may be valid psychological reasons for imposing an age limit, and suggested that the age 15 be substituted for 17 in all of the relevant statutes. The table below follows the majority views.

We were likewise divided on the question of pornography and obscenity for minors (assuming that no homosexual act is, in and of itself, obscene) and recommend that the legislature consult psychological studies on the effect of obscenity on minors. We suspect that there is only a beneficial effect.

The sections below are in order of section number, not order of importance. Most are "civil libertarian" issues and the reasons for change include issues unrelated to homosexuality. Most restrict our rights as sexual (not necessarily homosexual) persons. Since the laws are interrelated, the recommendations must be considered in toto.

(The complete text of specific changes is too lengthy to include here. Copies are available in the GLF office. It should be noted that the statement presented to the Committee was not intended to represent the views of the University of Rochester.)

Liberalization

by Marshall Goldman

On Thursday, January seventh, I attended a special public hearing on oppression of homosexuals. Bob Osborn, R.J. Alcala and I spoke before a small courtroom filled with about 30 gay people and two very receptive and sympathetic New York State assemblymen. We want it made clear that the material we presented to their consideration does not officially represent the University of Rochester or the Gay Liberation Front, but the opinions of a small committee which met on short notice to make out this statement. An exact copy of the statement we presented can be obtained along with the GLF pamphlet "The Law and the Homosexual" in the GLF office in Todd Union.

This hearing, which was held at the NY State office Building in Manhattan, was covered briefly by CBS television. There was a reporter from the New York Times sitting beside me, and I watched her take down the highlights of each of the speakers' messages. Not a bit of what she observed ever got into print; you see, the NY Times does not recognize the existence of gay people, GLF, Gay Activists Alliance or other gay organizations; therefore the hearings also did not exist, or so the NY Times would like the public to believe. But I know better. I was there, and it was beautiful.

Speakers from Tri-clites GLF (Albany, Schenectady and Troy) spoke of the problems of gay people which we know only too well—the fear of exposure, blackmail, police harassment, loss of love and human dignity, etc. These views were echoed by a straight lawyer who agrees that the NYS sodomy laws are outmoded and drastically cruel, and who mentioned an interesting fact about the masquerading laws. These laws can be traced back to ordinances against tenant farmers who often dressed as Indians to raid the patron's estate. Of course, now these laws are used to discriminate against drag queens and street transvestites. Eban Clark, a representative of GAA, came armed with documents of police brutality which occurs daily, wherein people are picked up on 42nd street and elsewhere, thrown into police
ONE SEGMENT OF WOMEN'S
LIBERATION IN ROCHESTER

by Susan Minor
Women's Center 244-6469

Women's liberation is a growing movement in Rochester. (In this paper I am not including the National Organization for Women or other women's social change groups.) This specific organization consists of about sixty women who range in occupations from secretaries to students to full-time mothers and from ages 18 to 37. They are primarily white, working class women. (Working class defined as people who are not the owners of the means of production or the products they create.)

Rochester Women's liberation consists of six small groups which meet one night a week at the homes of the women. These groups gather in a city-wide meeting once each month to exchange ideas and to build closer ties amongst all the women. The connecting thread in these groups is that in this male-defined culture it is necessary for women to share their views and feelings essential in developing respect for each other and to break the bonds of male dominance.

To accomplish this goal, the small groups are working on consciousness-raising. Contrary to traditional meetings, each woman in Women's liberation participates in the free flow of discussion and in the decision-making processes. Societally engrained competitiveness and distrust for one another are dealt with in these non-directed groups. Since men are not present, the women look to each other for approval and support; in contrast to our society which views a woman through the power, accomplishments, and ego of men.

Through consciousness-raising groups, women shift from self-hate that the male-defined culture has taught them to self-acceptance. Most women would deny this and would not recognize any of the symptoms: a feeling of emptiness, numbness, restlessness, a paralyzing anxiety, and restraining one's initiative.* If self-hate is not recognized, a woman continues to seek identification and approval from her oppressors. *Our energies must flow toward our sisters, not backwards to men.**

Another form of oppression that consciousness-raising groups focus on is sexual oppression. Women's liberation negates rigid sex roles that are part of the dehumanization process acting upon women. Sex roles subordinate women to men and forbid women the primacy of asserting their own needs.

* "To be called a lesbian is an insult inflicted by a male who feels threatened by a woman being his equal and is denied by a woman who refuses to challenge the basic heterosexual structures which bind us in a one-to-one relationship with our oppressors." Even more injurious is the term dyke which is applied to a woman who is self-assertive and does not orient her life around a man. Instead of reacting to this labelling, Women's liberation recites at women being taken as a sex object by men. *Straight women propagate this sexual objectification when they discover a sister is a lesbian by relating to her lesbian sister as a potential sex object thereby placing the latter in a surrogate male role.* Consciousness-raising meetings point out this scapegoating of female homosexuals and encourage people to understand all types of sexual behavior and to relate on the basis of feelings, not stereotypes. "It is the primacy of women relating to women, of women creating a new consciousness of and with each other which is at the heart of Women's liberation, and the basis for the cultural revolution."


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Ladies and Ladies,

In response to the millions of readers who devour the golden words of that grand dame of the typewriter, Ann Landers, who has often seemed anti-gay, I myself decided to get a response of the dear girl on my own. If you have seen the last issue of the CLOSET, you may have read Monday Tangen's article in which he gave an example of the way in which she makes gay people feel they ought to remain in their closets. I sent her a rather strong letter with most of the following:

DEAR ANN LANDERS,

I don't believe this letter will get published, both because of the conservative editors you work for and the Victorian readership you write for. I have seen in your column advice to gay people to go to psychiatrists, and that when you give other answers to people who write in with homosexual problems, the only letters we see are those in which the gay person is having a miserable time. Well, I'm gay and proud.

I wonder if you know that most of the psychiatrists you consult are giving you advice based on 1940-style theories that homosexual behavior is a disease pattern which must be cured. They based their theories on the cases who came to them for help; most of these people were sick or neurotic when they came in, and few were any better after going out. Therefore, these doctors decided that since the gay people who came to them were sick, that all gay people are sick; they published their findings, and, since they have an MD after their name, everyone who read their reports considered their gospel. These findings are statistically inaccurate. These psychiatrists failed to go out to the gay bars and interview people who were happy and well-adjusted, and who had enjoyed fulfilled lives as gay people. The Gay Liberation Front protests this theory that we are sick and I wish to hear your opinion after you consult with different "experts."

Sincerely...

Her reply, needless to say, was not published, but my stamped, self-addressed envelope was returned to me with the following confidential reply:

Continued

# PAMPHLETS (starred items indicate we have copies for sale or free distribution)

- The Law and the Homosexual (Rochester GLF)
- V.D. Information for Homosexuals (NYC Mattachine)
- Your Rights if Arrested (NY State Attorney General)
- Council on Religion and the Homosexual (CHH)
- Churchmen Speak Out on Homosexual Law Reform (CRH)
- Homosexuality and the Sickness Theory (Albany Trust)
- Homosexual Law Reform (CRH)
- Homosexuals & Employment (Corinthian Found.)
- Homosexuality and the Church (NYC Mattachine)
- Student Rights Handbook (ACLU)
- Homosexuality and the Draft (Cornell GLF)
- What Should I Do About the Draft? (S.I.R.)
- Revolutionary Homosexual Draft Resistance (LA GLF)
- The Armed Services & Homosexuality (S.I.R.)

Harassment in Hoeing Hall

By Marshall Goldman

I live in Hoeing, primarily a freshman dorm at the U. of K. I have made my activities in GLF and the fact that I am gay known to the denizens of my dorm, and got generally good to indifferent reactions. I feel that my relationship with my straight friends in the dorm is affected fairly little, and I haven't lost any valued relationships (as a matter of fact, I've had several good conversations) over the fact that I'm gay. However, the playful frat-type atmosphere can get out of hand, as you'll see.

Last week a friend dropped in to see me in my dorm, he was spotted by a couple of the uptight types who infest Hoeing, and they quickly alerted other members of their crew. We were locked in my room by having pennies jammed in the door, firecrackers were set off on the windowsills, and pounding was done on my door. These activities, as well as squirt gun and shaving cream fights, are common in dorms. I finally had to call the head resident to have the pennies removed so that my friend, who needless to say, was frightened by the presence of these apes outside the door, could leave.

Although there have been apologies all around the dorm since that night's experience, and most are on good terms again, as far as that night is concerned, the following incidents happened: I was extremely upset and for some reason concerned, I would often cry in dorms. I finally had to call the head resident to have the pennies removed so that my friend, who needless to say, was frightened by the presence of these apes outside the door, could leave.

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....
Lovers and Beggars
by DAVID M. NIXON

NOW NOW NOW—now we do it.
We do the impossible thing—we suck our finger
Do you have one finger that is mine alone?
Do I have one shaft that you own?
Perhaps jointed?
What jointness hovers or darts
Above, between us?
Listen, the beggars are coming.
Their cold, white robes surround them.
Listen, you didn't guess--
For I am that one. who shivers in bare, white skin.
Listen, the beggars are coming.
I beg you to let me in.

me
by Paul Cranmer

Why do I feel this way...
We just met yesterday
But I'm so fully involved,
Though he isn't.
I feel so sick, so weak.
I understand, yet he is not who I wish he was...
He has his points of good and bad just as I do.
We're so alike, but so different.
I can love men and women, though he cannot.
I'm on a lonely ship
Letting life pass me by like the waves on the water.
The serpents come up to hurt me, over and over
Yet I keep inviting them back.
I think I have someone at one minute
Yet the next it disappears.
I'm so lonely here by myself--
I scare people away with my emotions.
How long will this go on? Will it stay
For the rest of my life?
If so, I wish I were dead.
I keep hoping that in a minute, hour, month or year
This will just disappear.
Though it seems that it will not.
Please understand me...
It's not what you think.
It's something far beyond sex...
It's just emotion, is how I feel.

Movement News...

Of the D.C. 12, twelve gay brothers arrested during the November People's Convention for sitting in a segregated (meaning anti-Gay) lunchroom, eight have had charges dropped. The remaining four are being defended by the George Stonewall Legal Interns and a G.I.F, lawyer from Chicago. The courtroom is really being opened up. Donations for legal expenses may be sent to D.C. 12 Defense, c/o D.C. Gay Liberation Front, 1620 9th Street N.W.,
Washington D.C. 20006.

Toronto will be the location of an "Anti-imperialistic Conference" March 29-31. Contact the Women's Center at 244-6469 for current info.

On Mar. 8 (International Women's Day) there will be a cultural festival in Rochester, sponsored by Women Slaging Against the Godawful Establishment. Contact the Women's Center (244-6469) for info.

Upper New York state radical movement groups will meet in Buffalo on February 28. The next convention will be in March. Contact the G.I.F. office for details.

The National Coalition Against War, Racism and Repression (successor to New Mobe) organized a conference January 8-10 in Chicago. They are planning three actions:

1. April 2-4 demonstrations for social justice, to be held locally on the anniversary of the death of Martin King. Local actions are being planned by Rochester Voters for Peace.

2. A "Joint Treaty of Peace" will be presented by the American people to the N.I.F. making the peace the government will not make. Copies and info are available from Jerry Coffin, War Resisters' League, 339 Lafayette St., NYC 10012.

3. National demonstrations in May. Probably May 5 to commemorate the Kent State and Jackson killings May 4-6, 1970.

The Rochester Free School (Genesee Street Corp.) was destroyed by fire January 30 causing one injury. The organization is looking for money and a new building. It is currently thought that if a suitable large building could be found, a Movement center could be created to house the Free School, Gay Community Center, a Women's Center, and any other radical groups interested. Contact Talva Jones at 482-3474.

There are pot luck suppers Sundays at irregular intervals at Calvary - St. Andrews Parish, 86 Ashland St., sponsored by the Friendly Vegetable Food Cooperative. For information on dates, contact Mary Peterson (473-8992).
I'm sorry for not writing sooner but I've been so busy lately that I've fallen way behind in my correspondence.

I thought you might be interested to know that we plan to introduce our legislative package on Homosexuality on Tuesday February 10 at 10:00 A.M., up here in Albany. At that time we plan to introduce bills to repeal the consensual sodomy statute as well as to prohibit discrimination against homosexuals in housing and employment.

If you can get in touch with me in about two weeks I can let you know the numbers of the bill and you and your organization can hopefully begin to mobilize public opinion on its behalf.

Sincerely,

Stephen J. Solarz
New York State Assembly

January 16

Thanks for good letter and booklet (The Closet) which I have just read from cover to cover. Congratulations! ....

Where does the word "Gay" come from? From my viewpoint the most powerful argument (besides the overriding and most obvious one of accepting differences between people with respect to no rigid, absurd, moral-churchy rules) is that propagating the race in now UNdesirable! You homosexuals are saving the world!

Love,

(a "straight" grandmother)
What I need is a memory book to tell me when I'm not supposed to interrupt Him or when to stop standing by the chair afraid to interrupt Him or else when to do it without asking or else when not to do it at all.

At twenty-two, I'm almost over the hill and if soon I don't climb the mountain there will never lie before me the green valley of Peace, Harmony, and Matrimony.

Do I like turtles? I guess I do, but never thought much about it, but when I do think now, walking down the street with a turtle is more preferable.

Can one believe that when he looks at me he tries not to think about me and the truth of my life. This my reader (friend) is what a friend told me. Thus he spends life in the pursuit of stepping on warts. (You too, I presume?)

I suppose it's true when you grow a hairy cunt or a set of balls to find your correct place in the wall.

Medusa really had braids and Lucifer (her lover) was a god and these two were united, for all to mock with loose-set emerald eyes!
"SAY IT LOUD, GAY AND PROUD!" This was one of the chants of the 10,000 people marching down New York City's 6th Avenue last June, celebrating the first anniversary of an event significant in the gay liberation movement, the Christopher Street (Manhattan) confrontation between gays and police.

Of course the marchers were gay and proud, that wasn't the point. The slogan "I'm gay and I'm proud" is a fundamental appeal to rally the homophile community around the growing movement. It also has a positively beautiful sound when gay people link arms and say it loud together.

But what does the word "gay" mean? What does it mean to be proud?

Let's take a more usual question. *Are you a homosexual?* Sometimes it is asked this way, "What are you anyway, a HOMOSEXUAL (or *"queer* or *"faggot* depending on the speaker)?" *People involved in gay liberation and people coming out especially have to be ready for this question. If they answer apologetically, people think they have something to apologize for—and that gets into the question of pride. But let's consider the word homosexual. Too many people use it as a noun, a label to slap on the forehead which (delightfully enough in a conformist world) is not just like everybody else, who sometimes prefers sexual contact with persons of the same sex, an individual, with his own ideas and abilities, a sexual person like everybody else, who sometimes prefers sexual contact with persons of the same sex, (delightfully enough in a conformist world) is not just like everybody else. The word "gay" is a word originally describing the "gay" night life of promiscuous bar-hopping which has been given a new meaning by the liberation movement. The modern gay man or woman is proud to be an individual, with his own ideas and abilities, a sexual person like everybody else. The word "gay" also means happy or joyous, and in the world now, being different is not exactly fun and games, so why has this of all words come to mean a liberated *homosexual*? Perhaps it reflects the hope that somehow, someday, the joy of living a sexual life free of hangups in a liberated world of love will overcome all the hatred and fear of the new.

How does the world change like this? Funny as it sounds, it begins to change as you and I do. From an early age when we discovered we were different (and everybody, straight or gay is *different*) we began the journey of living a sexual life free of hangups in a liberated world of love. And that gets into the question of pride. But let's consider the word homosexual. Too many people use it as a noun, a label to slap on the forehead which (delightfully enough in a conformist world) is not just like everybody else, who sometimes prefers sexual contact with persons of the same sex, an individual, with his own ideas and abilities, a sexual person like everybody else. The word "gay" also means happy or joyous, and in the world now, being different is not exactly fun and games, so why has this of all words come to mean a liberated *homosexual*? Perhaps it reflects the hope that somehow, someday, the joy of living a sexual life free of hangups in a liberated world of love will overcome all the hatred and fear of the new.

The word "gay" on the other hand is a word originally describing the "gay" night life of promiscuous bar-hopping which has been given a new meaning by the liberation movement. The modern gay man or woman is proud to be an individual, with his own ideas and abilities, a sexual person like everybody else, who sometimes prefers sexual contact with persons of the same sex, (delightfully enough in a conformist world) is not just like everybody else. The word "gay" also means happy or joyous, and in the world now, being different is not exactly fun and games, so why has this of all words come to mean a liberated *homosexual*? Perhaps it reflects the hope that somehow, someday, the joy of living a sexual life free of hangups in a liberated world of love will overcome all the hatred and fear of the new.

How does the world change like this? Funny as it sounds, it begins to change as you and I do. From an early age when we discovered we were different (and everybody, straight or gay is *different*) we began the struggle to conform— to hide the differences. So now you don't walk hand in hand with your lover in public—not because it's illegal (and it's not), but because it just *isn't done.* There can be no gay liberation until the gay community has enough pride to stare back with defiance at the "old ladies" (of any age or sex) who are so shocked. I am shocked at the war crimes and brutality and imperialism that those people support; if my world of love is shocking to them, then so be it. I will only be alive a few decades, and in that short time I may not be able to change their minds or even overthrow the system they support, but at least I can put my own head in the right place and be free.

Living an open life is a sign of pride, a visible sign that you no longer secretly believe that you are "sick" or in need of punishment. Just remember the only last punishment you will ever receive is that which you give yourself. Do yourself a favor. Right now. Stand up and say it loud, "I'm gay and I'm proud." Then start showing it.

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Rochester Gay Liberation Front

Schedule 1970-71

**OCTOBER 3:** GAY LIBERATION--remarks on the gay liberation movement by members of Rochester, Ithaca, and Buffalo homophile groups.

**OCTOBER 17:** MILITARY SERVICE & THE HOMOSEXUAL--talk on legal rights and remedies in Selective Service and military law, especially as pertains to the homosexual.

**NOVEMBER 7:** HOMOSEXUALS AND THE LAW--talk by a lawyer on municipal, state and federal statutes that pertain to the gay world, and on your rights if arrested. Discussion of repression and oppression in practice.

**NOVEMBER 21:** WOMEN'S LIBERATION--talk and discussion of the general women's liberation movement locally and worldwide, and its relation to gay liberation.

**DECEMBER 5:** GAY LIBERATION NOW--talk on the Movement by members of the New York City and the Philadelphia Gay Liberation Front.

**DECEMBER 12:** RAF SECTION--Whither gay liberation in Rochester; in the world? What can we do? What must we do?

**JANUARY 9:** VENEREAL DISEASE--a doctor talks on the problem in upstate New York, and some solutions.

**JANUARY 23:** PSYCHOLOGY OF HOMOSEXUALITY--a psychologist attempts to bridge the communications gap between the clinic and the real world.

**FEBRUARY 6:** GAY LITERATURE--group discussion of the books and magazines produced and about the gay world.

**FEBRUARY 20:** DIALOGUE WITH THE CHURCH--a panel of clergymen (not all pro!) discuss the church's views on sexuality and human rights.

**MARCH 6:** HOMOSEXUALITY IN SEGREGATED INSTITUTIONS--a study of one or more of the following: men's or women's prisons, reformatories, boy's or girl's schools, mental institutions, religious orders.

All meetings are 7:30 pm in Upper Todd on the University of Rochester river campus. On alternate weeks there are group discussions and committee meetings same time and place.
ROCHESTER GAY LIBERATION FRONT

Saturday, Dec. 5

A discussion:

"GAY LIBERATION NOW"

with speakers from Philadelphia + New York City

7:30

U. of R. TODD HALL

2nd floor

followed by a

LIBERATION DANCE

Live band .... beer, free cokes

9:30

U. of R.

FREDERICK DOUGLAS

BLDG.

to 2AM

The public is invited

ROCHESTER GAY LIBERATION FRONT SCHEDULE

The Rochester Gay Liberation Front meets WEEKLY on Saturdays at 7:30 pm in Todd Union second floor on the University of Rochester river campus. Normally alternate weeks are given to outside speakers and discussion of topics of general interest, and alternate weeks to planning activities of interest to the Rochester gay community. Below is a partial list of special events. Call 275-6161 for up-to-date information on other talks, movies, dances, etc. to be scheduled.

OCTOBER:
- October 3: GAY LIBERATION--remarks on the gay liberation movement by members of Rochester, Ithaca, and Buffalo homophile groups.
- October 17: MILITARY SERVICE & THE HOMOSEXUAL--talk on legal rights and remedies in Selective Service and military law.
- November 7: HOMOSEXUALS AND THE LAW--talk by a lawyer on municipal, state and federal statutes that pertain to the gay world, and on your rights if arrested. Discussion of repression and oppression in practice.
- November 21: WOMEN'S LIBERATION--talk and discussion of the general women's liberation movement locally and widely, and its relation to gay liberation.
- December 5: GAY LIBERATION NOW--talk on the Movement by members of the New York City Gay Liberation Front. Public dance.
- December 12: HAB MEETING--discussion of tactics, with special guest speakers from New York City Gay Activist Alliance.

DECEMBER:
- December 6: GAY LITERATURE--group discussion of the books and magazines produced by and about the gay world.
- December 13: Second public dance, in PUB Lounge
- December 20: DIALOGUE WITH THE CHURCH--a panel of clergymen (not all prof!) discuss the church's view on homosexuality and human rights.
- December 27 and 28: The CRT documentary "Homosexuality" and discussion.
- March 6: HOMOSEXUALITY IN INSTITUTIONS--a study of one or more of the following: prisons, reformatories, mental institutions, private schools, religious orders.
- March 20: COKING OUT--personal testimony and discussion on the problem of living openly and finding a place in the world.
- April 17: THE POLICE--a meeting with representatives of Rochester's police department concerning harassment and public policy.
- May 1: THE GENERATION GAP--a discussion of the over-30 gay community and its relationship with the "new generation."
- May 15: PSYCHOLOGY II--an in-depth discussion, led by a psychologist, of human sexuality, including bisexuality.
The Five Freedoms:

1. Freedom of speech and expression.

2. Freedom of every person to worship God in his own way.

3. Freedom from want.

4. Freedom from fear.

5. Freedom to love.

POWER TO THE PEOPLE