

THE VOICE

OF CANADA'S OCEAN GAYGROUND

FIRST ISSUE JULY 1976

IT'S ABOUT TIME

IT'S ABOUT TIME the one hundred thousand or more gay people in the Maritimes had a voice to call their own . It'll be as much yours as you will contribute to it.

This first issue is by the GAE flock. Feature story is a report on the lesbian conference in Kingston, attended by Anne Fulton. Bob Stout has compiled a study of the Halifax media treatment of the GAE. Robin Metcalfe has rounded up the national news, including the Olympic clean-up, plus bits of GAE info. The editor put in a piece on how to get along with the Halifax police, and there's a list of what's available here in Halifax.

This first issue is going out R.S.V.P. which means respond on a silver platter or something. Comments will be duly recorded, analysed and maybe listened to. If there aren't any reactions, then we'll know we've managed to satisfy you on our very first attempt.

Here's to living proud,

The Editor

THE LESBIAN CONFERENCE

- ANNE FULTON

"WE REALIZE THE NEED"

On the Victoria Day weekend, I drove, in my gorgeous hunk of rotting metal, to a lesbian conference held by the Queen's Homophile Association in Kingston, Ontario. The conference was open to both women and men, and focused on the subject of the women's position in the Gay movement. The conference was not supported by various groups, including 'Long Time Coming', a lesbian feminist paper from Montreal, who condemned it as they felt that men had no place there, as this would merely perpetuate the male dominance of the Gay movement. In spite of the poor prognosis, the conference was attended by about fifty women and fifty men.

Initially, it had been planned that the various topics be primarily discussed in mixed groups. After the opening plenary session, (which, incidentally, I was late for, being somewhere between Kingston and Toronto at that particular moment), the women and men met in separate groups to discuss the agenda of the meeting. From the moment that we women were alone, we wanted the rest of the conference to be mostly segregated. We felt that we had a great many things to discuss which did not concern the men. A great and tremendous closeness grew amongst all the women in the group. I have never felt such a strong common bond with any group of people as I began to feel with those women. They are very proud, independent women, proud of the fact that they are DYKES. (This term is greatly used in Upper Canada, and areas where the women are more politically enlightened, and doesn't refer to a greasy haired, leather jacketed creature behind the wheel of a truck, but rather, a strong independent lesbian who is proud of what she is, and doesn't give a damn what anyone thinks.

So, the conference had an unexpected twist. The dykes took the conference into their own hands, and it began to focus seriously around the theory of dyke separatism, (See the article 'DYKES' by Marie Robertson in the May-June issue of Body Politic), and the need for an autonomous lesbian organization within the country. We'd all grown tired of working behind the shadow of the men, of fighting for their aims, and of not having the guts and self confidence to fight for, let alone recognize, what we've wanted.

The following is the official statement from the conference:

"We have decided that there exists a need for an autonomous lesbian movement in Canada to fulfil our needs, and have thus formed an informal coalition. Our fight for an autonomous organization of lesbians began at this conference on Saturday morning when we women took the weekend into our own hands. We made this conference our own. However, because of the fact that a number of lesbians are isolated in small communities and feel the need for support from mixed gay movements, this autonomy will in some cases manifest itself as an independent lesbian voice from within those movements.

We realize the need to build our power as lesbian women so that we need no longer subordinate our interests to those of the straight women or the men...straight or gay; and so that our lesbian sisters who are in the majority of cases still invisible to us, will have the possibility of coming out. With the awareness that many lesbians did not attend this conference for various personal and political reasons, we have postponed the formalization of strategy proposals until we have a larger, more representative voice. To this end, two lesbian conferences will be held. Wages Due Lesbians Toronto will sponsor one this summer on Lesbians and Wages for Housework, and one will take place in Ottawa next fall.

We welcome support from gay men who endorse our stand and believe that the efforts of our autonomous movement will be a positive move in strengthening the fight against oppression."

This statement was fully supported by all the men who attended the conference.

It was very strange to return to Halifax after all this. I was on the most incredible high as a result of the conference for a week afterward. Once I crossed the N.S. border, (and got a speeding ticket), I realized that I was home. I was back in a place where there is the most terrific contrast to what I saw in Upper Canada. There is no closeness, no common bond, no sisterhood amongst the lesbians here. And, there is really nothing here for lesbians. In spite of the fact that some lesbians go to 'Thee Klub', it is still basically male-oriented. GAE is all male, except for myself. I can't work as enthusiastically with the men in GAE as I could with women, as I have somewhat different objectives, and often

we are at cross purposes. But I can't say we women don't deserve what we've got. We've done nothing to justify having anything, if only a close friendship with the other lesbians in the community. Most of us don't look beyond our own little cliques.

Perhaps I am too quick to judge, and may be wrong. I was wrong about one thing. I did not expect the reception to all my new ideas which I got from the men in GAE. They are more ready to acknowledge the problems and the separate identity of lesbians in the gay community than I had expected. It's really a paradox, though, coming back with all these wild and wonderful ideas for the women here, this great, all-encompassing love of dykes, and I can hardly find anyone to tempt with candy and flowers, let alone find someone concerned about the state of the lesbian community in Halifax. But, I've found all these gay men who support the struggle of lesbians.....more men than I know what to do with.

WHAT'S AVAILABLE IN HALIFAX

THEE KLUB - disco open Thurs, Fri, Sat, and Sun evenings. 1585 Barrington Street, top floor. Cover charge \$2.00. Soft drinks which you'll need after you climb the 80 stairs to get there.

THE ALTERNATE BOOKSTORE - emphasis on liberation material for straight and gay men and women, plus the monthly's, etc. 1585 Barrington Street, suite 301, Halifax. Open Mon to Fri 7 p.m. til 10:p.m. plus during Thee Klub hours Fir & Sat. A booklist available by mail.

GAY ALLIANCE for EQUALITY INC. - Halifax' only homophile organization holds meetings biweekly on first and third Thursday of every month. Next meeting will be a supper business affair at a member's home, on July 22. Call the GAYline for more info. Everyone welcome.

GAYLINE - A counselling, information and referral service of the GAE. Lines are open Thurs, Fri, and Sat from 7 p.m. til 10 p.m. All calls confidential.

HALIFAX YOUTH CLINIC - A hassle free clinic where gays are welcome for medical advise/ referral or general counselling. Open 10 a.m. til 6 p.m. Monday to Friday, 1588 Barrington St. on second floor.

ENCOUNTER GROUP: A professional group leader has offered to lead a gay group, using Transactional Analysis and Gestalt. Group would meet for a Saturday marathon (9-5) and/or in weekly sessions. \$10 for a full Saturday. Contact Bob Isnor at 425-7303 or through GAE for more information.

G.A.E. NEWS

CIVIL RIGHTS COMMITTEE - The G.A.E. has formed a civil rights committee which will investigate and identify anti-gay discrimination in the public and private sectors and work for legislative change on the provincial and municipal levels. A first priority is to obtain the inclusion of the term "sexual orientation" in the N.S. Human Rights Act. At present, gay people have no protection from discrimination in such areas as housing and employment.

The Committee is also concerned with educating itself and the gay community about our legal rights and how to work with the political/bureaucratic system. To this end, the Committee invited Johanna Osterveldt, an experienced lobbyist with Halifax citizens' groups such as MOVE, to speak at the general meeting of the GAE on June 3. Her talk was informative and very well received, with members asking plenty of questions. More information talks will be arranged.

The Committee is trying to document any and all cases of harassment or discrimination suffered by gay people in the Maritimes. If you have experienced such problems or know of someone who has, please send us all the relevant information. (Withhold your name if you wish) Write to the Civil Rights Committee, c/o the GAE, P.O. Box 161 Armdale Station, Halifax, N.S., or call in to the GAYline, 902-429-6969.

ELECTIONS - Robin Metcalfe has resigned as treasurer of the GAE, retaining his position as secretary. Nils Clausson, the former chairperson, has moved to Ontario to pursue his academic career. At the general meeting of the GAE on May 20, Clyde Richardson was elected the new Treasurer and Bob Isnor was elected chairperson.

PENPALS - The GAE has started a pen-pal club to help gay people who are lonely and/or isolated to keep in contact with one another and the larger gay community. For more information, write to PENPAL, P.O.Box 161, Armdale Station, Halifax, Nova Scotia, B3L 4G9. (Not a dating service!)

CHRISTIAN & GAY? - Want to talk about it? Phone or write Fr. Mike McDonald C.S.C., 5561 Cogswell St., Halifax, 422-3508 (he keeps weird hours, be persistent!)

SOCCER: All dykes and fags interested in joining GAE's soccer league, contact Anne Fulton, 477-0435 or c/o GAE.

DANGEROUS SEXUAL OFFENDER LEGISLATION

On May 12 the National Gay Rights Coalition (NGRC) presented a brief to the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs concerning Bill C-83, the government's "peace and security" legislation. The brief called for an end to the concept of "dangerous (sexual) offender".

Under present law, people classified as "dangerous sexual offenders" can be confined indefinitely. Bill C-83 changes the term to "dangerous offenders", but no other significant reforms are made. As at present, people could be confined indefinitely (possibly for life) for conviction of any one of several crimes. One such "crime" is "gross indecency", which includes only non-violent sexual acts where all parties are consenting, such as homosexual acts where one person is under 21, or sexual acts performed in a public place, such as a parked car or a public washroom or park.

Traditionally the power of indefinite confinement has been used principally against gay people. (Of 68 convictions of "gross indecency" in Metropolitan Toronto, for example, in 1964, 30 involved consenting homosexuals over 21 in "public places" and 22 involved consenting homosexuals between 14 and 21. Only ten convictions were against heterosexuals.) Those confined as "dangerous sexual offenders" have been subject to harassment, violence, rape and often murder in the hands of both prison guards and fellow prisoners.

There are currently 57 people in Canadian penitentiaries who are confined indefinitely as "dangerous sexual offenders". One example is John Roestad, currently indefinitely confined in Kingston Penitentiary for consenting sexual acts with men younger than 21.

Neither England nor the United States has legislation allowing indefinite confinement. This measure is one of the most harsh and unjust legal tools in the hands of the Canadian judicial system and has been used frequently in the past against Canada's gay minority. The NGRC, in the ten demands adopted at the 1975 National Gay Rights Conference in Ottawa by all 27 member organizations, including the Gay Alliance for Equality, has called for the repeal of the legislation which provides for indefinite confinement of "dangerous sexual offenders" and for an immediate review of all such cases.

Letters of concern should be sent to your local M.P., to the Hon. Warren Allmand, Solicitor-General and to the Hon. Ron Basford, Minister of Justice. For further information contact Robin Metcalfe, c/o the G.A.E.

-Robin Metcalfe

OUR HEROS THE HALIFAX POLICE

It's obvious from many encounters that gays have had with the Halifax Police Dept that the latter are not very friendly toward us. It appears there has been a recent directive from the upper echelons for a crackdown on street people, and this is made worse by the homophobia of the individual members. The one attempt by the G.A.E. to develop contact with the force was politely rejected, they have no wish for us to present talks to members or trainees.

However, nowhere is it written that homosexuality in itself is a crime. It's up to us to make the law work for us.

Harassment is often by intimidation of people on the triangle. Rude cops will drive up, bark out "c'mere", ask for identification, tell us to move on, etc. But we have rights. We do not have to show identification. We do not have to give our names and addresses. And there is no "going down to the station for questioning". A person must be arrested and informed of his crime before he may be ordered or forcibly taken to the police station. So, if you are approached by the police in a manner that is offensive, do not be intimidated into giving i.d. if you do not want to. If the policeman is rude, you can request, politely, an apology. Ask his badge number and name. He is obliged to give it. Even ask him to write it down if you don't have pen and paper on you! Then complain, and keep complaining until you get an answer, to the chief of police.

Several vague laws can be used against us, such as loitering and solicitation. So beware of being honest and saying "I'm out looking for a trick" or whatever you think will gross out the men in blue.

From experience, the police seem less rude to people in cars. Drivers are obliged to show driver's licence when requested, but still none of the 'taking you down for questioning' foolishness.

What you can do through the G.A.E.: Get that badge number. If you do not want to lodge a complaint yourself, send us the story, with or without your name. Minor cases not worth pursuing alone get important when we have several on the same cop. One gay has had a cop fired for rudeness. The G.A.E. will get answers to specific questions from our lawyers. Write us Box 161 Armdale.

Next time, what can be done with fagbeaters. (There's never a policeman when you need one.)

- R. Isnor

G.A.E. AND THE HALIFAX MEDIA

The Gay Alliance for Equality, in trying to advertise its counselling phoneline and its meetings, has found the majority of media outlets in the metro area discriminate against it.

The exceptions are the Fourth Estate, Bargain Hunter Press, Dartmouth Free Press, CJCH and Halifax Cablevision. Some put ads in for free, others charge. Hfx Cablevision have aired phoneline ads only twice out of six requests, citing lack of space.

The other media denied any access in advertising to the G.A.E.

The CBC refused at first an ad for the phoneline, saying that it did not advertise phone numbers. When a numberless ad for the G.A.E. meeting was submitted, it was also refused. John McEwen, program director, finally said the ads were "offensive to CBC's general audience." From Mr. McEwen's comments, it was apparent that such policy was made from the head office of CBC in Ottawa or Toronto, and probably nationwide in scope. Head office in Ottawa will not reply to a request for clarification on this. One more case of gay people's tax money supporting an institution that will discriminate against them.

CFDR radio said that the ad for the phoneline was offensive to its family audience. CHNS at first accepted the public announcement for the phoneline but we cannot find that it was ever aired. The station manager, Hal Blackadar, finally said that CHNS would henceforth not accept any ads from the G.A.E. as it was believed they were offensive to CHNS's family audience.

The Halifax Herald Limited, of Chronicle Herald and Mail Star fame, refused to accept a paid ad for its classified column, and would not give any reason for the refusal. It also denied G.A.E. access to the management responsible for the policy.

When the G.A.E. took these cases of discrimination to the Human Rights Commission, they refused to help us have such policies of the media changed. The commission said it was clear to them that homosexuals were not protected by the N.S. Human Rights Act against discrimination. The commission said that it would help to document cases of discrimination against homosexuals to persuade legislators to change the Human Rights Code to protect homosexuals.

- Bob Stout

NATIONAL NEWS

MONTREAL - Montreal has a new Lesbian group, called the Montreal Lesbian Organization. Members are holding a regular Lesbian Drop-In every Thursday evening at 8 pm at 3595 St. Urbain, corner of Prince Arthur, and plan other activities, such as a Disco, film nights, consciousness-raising groups, special summer events and a monthly newsletter. To get more information or to receive the newsletter write the M.L.O. care of the Women's Information and Referral Centre at the above address or phone (514) 842-4781, Monday to Friday 9 am to 5 pm.

TORONTO - Gay Alliance Toward Equality (GATE) of Toronto has offered to host the 1976 National Gay Rights Conference, tentatively scheduled for the Labour Day weekend, September 4-6. There will be workshops on a broad range of issues of concern to gay people and the gay movement, as well as the first annual meeting of the member organizations of the National Gay Rights Coalition and a march.

MISSISSAUGA - A new organization for gay people has been formed in Mississauga, a suburb of Toronto. Tentatively called Gays of Mississauga, the group is co-ordinated by Elgin Blair, who is also active in the Gay Caucus of the Unitarian-Universalist Church. For further information write P. O. Box 193, Station A, Mississauga Ontario L5A 2Z7.

KINGSTON - On the Victoria Day weekend, May 22-24, Queen's Homophile Association of Kingston, Ontario sponsored a conference on "Gay Women - Problems and Perspectives." Anne Fulton, attending as the official delegate of the Gay Alliance for Equality, was one of only four delegates from outside Ontario (see Anne's article in this issue). As a result of the conference there will be two more national Lesbian conferences this year to establish a national strategy and an organization for Canadian gay women. The first conference, "Toward a Strategy for the Lesbian Movement", will be held in Toronto on July 24 and 25 by the Wages Due Lesbians. For further information write P. O. Box 38, Station E, Toronto, Ontario, phone (416) 466-7457/465-6822, or contact Anne Fulton c/o the G.A.E.

OTTAWA - On April 5 Ottawa became the second city in Canada to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in municipal employment. (The city of Toronto passed a

similar resolution in October 1973.) The decision was the result of more than a year of work by the Political Action Committee of Gays of Ottawa.

VICTORIA - Stefan Carson, a Lesbian mother living in Victoria B.C., is writing a book entitled "The Lesbian in Canada" and requests input from individual Lesbian women. The book will deal with the problems and experiences, legal, medical and personal, of Lesbians - in general, "What does it mean to be a Lesbian in Canada today?" Send correspondence to 2837 Shelbourne St., Victoria, B.C. All files are confidential, and people corresponding may withhold their names if they wish.

OLYMPIC CLEAN-UP CAMPAIGN - For some time it has been known that the Canadian police were planning a campaign to drive the gay community underground for the duration of the Olympic Games, in the corridor from Quebec City to Toronto. Dramatic proof of this came in late May in a series of spectacular raids in Montreal and Ottawa in which over 160 people were arrested and many more harassed by rifle-bearing police.

On Friday May 14 the Neptune Baths in Montreal were raided and 89 people arrested, most as "found-ins" in a "common bawdy house", in the largest raid of its kind in North America. The same weekend police raided five gay bars in Montreal. In two of the raids, including one on a Lesbian bar, the police brandished guns and rifles. Questioned later, a police spokesman said that they had had reason to believe that the patrons were "potentially dangerous". On Thursday May 20 the Club Baths of Montreal were raided and 26 arrested. On Saturday May 22, at 2:20 am, the police raided the Club Baths of Ottawa, arresting 27 people; 22 as "found-ins", 2 for gross indecency and 3 for running a "common bawdy house", and illegally seizing membership lists containing over three thousand names and addresses, including those of several prominent figures and a number of police officers.

Gays of Ottawa responded quickly by calling a meeting on Tuesday May 25, which was attended by over 70 people. This led to a successful picket of the Ottawa Police Station May 28. In Montreal the police attack startled the moribund gay organizations and led to the formation of GCAR/CHAR, the Gay Coalition Against Repression/Coalition Homosexuel Anti-Repression, which held the first gay demonstration in Quebec history in Montreal on June 19, with over 300 attending. GCAR can be contacted c/o the Androgyny Alternates Bookstore, 1217 Crescent St., Montreal, P.Q.

A PERSONAL REACTION TO THE CLEANUP

While sitting in a lecture theatre at Queen's University in Kingston, growing accustomed to many new faces, one of the men from Gays of Ottawa burst into the conference with the shocking announcement that they'd just heard on the car radio, on the way into Kingston, that a particular steam bath which many of the Ottawa men frequented, had been raided, and there had been some twenty arrests made. Half of the Ottawa delegates returned to Ottawa immediately to formulate some strategy. A great discussion of this matter ensued, and I shortly realized that this sort of thing had been happening all too frequently in the Montreal and Ottawa areas. Several clubs and baths had been raided within the last couple of months with people being arrested on various charges such as gross indecency, possession of some illegal drug, but in the majority of cases, have been charged with being 'found-ins' in a 'bawdy house'. What this last charge actually implies is that any two or more people in a so called business establishment are found committing gross or indecent acts, any of the other clientele found on these premises can be charged with being 'found-ins' in a bawdy house. Also, in Montreal, a lesbian bar was raided by police carrying rifles. The excuse for their being so armed was that they had reason to believe that the women were dangerous. Some of the women were held until such time as a friend could arrive and produce proper I.D. As if all this wasn't frightening enough, one fellow at the conference, who worked on the Olympics Security Committee, stated that it was indeed an official policy of the government to clean up Canada for the Olympics. This not only included gays, but winos, prostitutes, leftist groups, and anyone who might mar Canada's clean, healthy, normal image. It is a known fact that in Kingston, where the yachting races are to be held, that any winos and derelects picked up have been given much longer sentences than usual. As a matter of fact, most of the sentences will terminate just as the Olympics are finished.

Adolph Hitler is alive and living within the body of Jean Drapeau. I hope he is raped by twenty fags, and dies of hemorrhoids and an overdose of homosexuality. And his wife comes out.

Aside from the fact that this is a most horrible oppression which scares the shit out of me, I also find this a wretched hypocrisy on the part of both the Montreal

city government, and the federal government. Between the two of them, they have carried on this ridiculous oppression to whitewash Canada, when in actual fact, they have already destroyed her image by the foolishness which has gone on concerning the completion of the Olympic site, and by discouraging any potential Olympic athlete by not financially supporting amateur athletes.

To return to the subject of Gay oppression, I might add that, on the whole, the Ottawa news media is giving favourable coverage to the efforts of Gays of Ottawa to expose and attack this cleanup. A week after the conference, there was a demonstration in front of the Ottawa police station. This was my first demonstration, and I was truly afraid of ending up 'in' the police station, instead of in front of it. There was also a large demonstration organized to be held in Montreal on June 19, but we have not, as yet, heard anything concerning the outcome of this.

It's not an easy lot in life which we have, being one of the most despised minorities on the face of the earth. But our lot is certainly not going to the efforts of our heterosexual co-inhabitants of this planet. I'm certainly not going to sit on my ass 'til the end of my days and let them call me 'pervert'. They'll call me 'DYKE', and if they don't learn to love the word, I hope they choke on it.

Maybe some day a mild-mannered lesbian will walk into a phone booth, and there will be a great crash of thunder, a blinding flash of lightening, and a voice will say those somewhat familiar lines: 'Faster than a speeding bullet, more powerful than a diesel truck driver, able to leap oppression in a single bound, look, up in the sky, it's a bird, it's a plane, no, it's SUPERDYKE!' And she'll swoop down and rid the world of all corruption and oppression and bigotry, and make it safe for all good little dykes like me.

Jf only.

Anne Fulton

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