

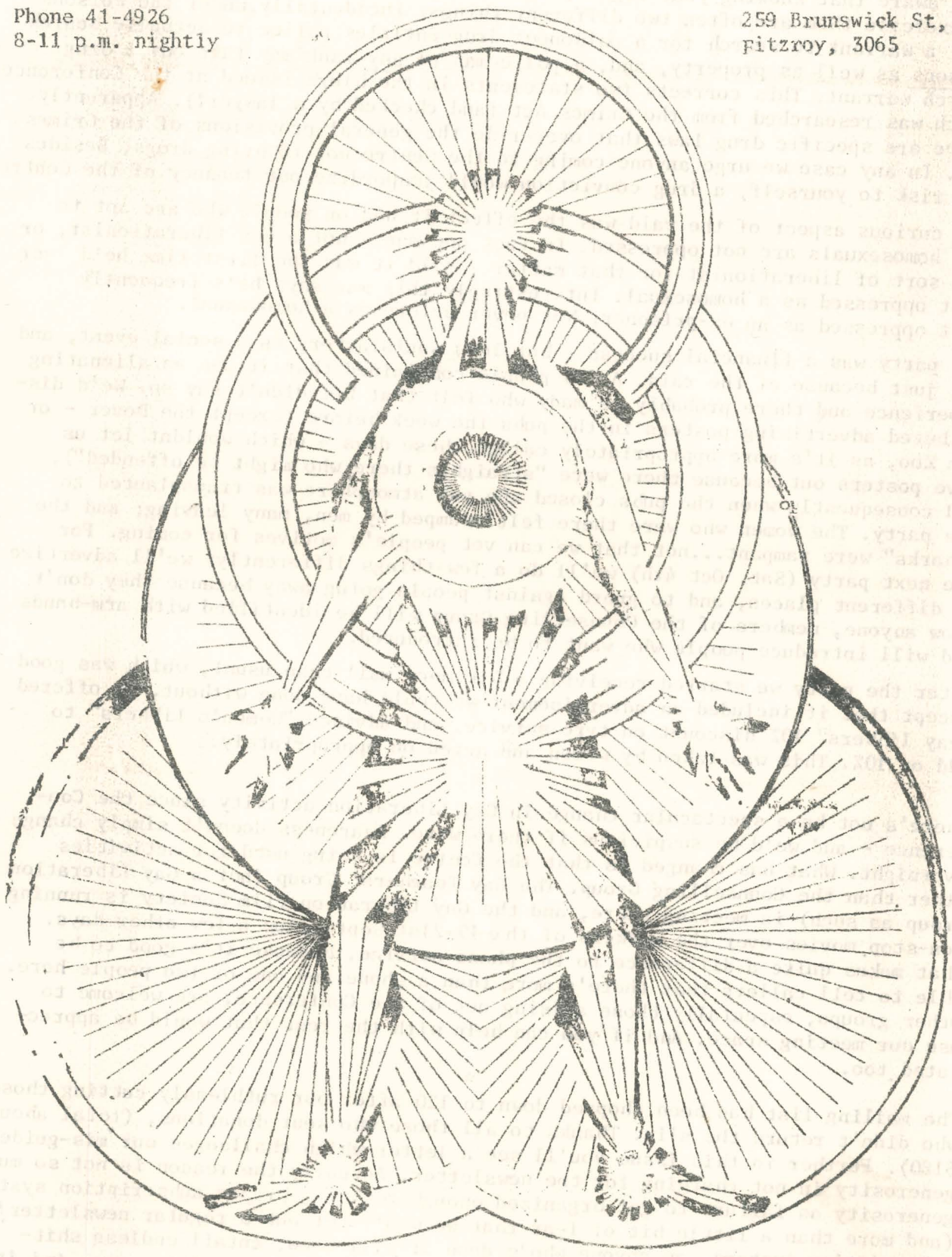
MELB. GAY LIBERATION

Aug. - Sept. Newsletter

1975

Phone 41-4926
8-11 p.m. nightly

259 Brunswick St,
Fitzroy, 3065



- THIS ISSUE: - Cops Raid Gay Liberation Party
 - Truth Rejects a Gay Liberation Advertisement
 - Conference Feedback
 - Private "Camp" Scenes.

HAVE YOU NOTIFIED US OF ANY CHANGE OF ADDRESS?

It's been an eventful past few months at Gay Lib. Things started hopping the week before the Conference, when a party at the Centre was visited by 6 men from Fitzroy C.I.B. with a warrant to search for drugs. (This is reported in more detail elsewhere in the newsletter). We decided against making a big deal out of the raid at the Conference, even though it was a thinly-disguised exercise in harassment. The blurb on "Your Rights at Large Indoor Gatherings" that was included in the package to all Conference participants was motivated by the raid the previous week. We considered not mentioning it in this newsletter because it would scare people away and exacerbate existing paranoia; but on reflection the consensus is that people on the mailing list have a right to know that in coming to the Centre they do risk harassment. We only hope that everyone is better educated in their rights for the future; though in saying that we're well aware that knowing your rights, and having the confidence/presence of mind to exercise them are often two different things. Incidentally, under the Poisons Act, a warrant to search for a poisonous drug entitles police to actually search persons as well as property, and, a policeman of any rank may take out a drug search warrant. This corrects two statements in the blurb issued at the Conference, which was researched from the Crimes Act (and checked by a lawyer!). Apparently there are specific drug laws that over-ride the general provisions of the Crimes Act. In any case we urge anyone coming to the Centre not to bring drugs. Besides the risk to yourself, a drug conviction would jeopardize our tenancy of the Centre.

One curious aspect of the raid was the effect it had on people who are apt to say homosexuals are not oppressed. In fact one man - not a Gay Liberationist, or any sort of liberationist for that matter - said it was the first time he'd ever felt oppressed as a homosexual. Interestingly this man says he's frequently felt oppressed as an ex-prisoner, but never before as a homosexual.

The party was a financial success - but less satisfactory as a social event, and not just because of the raid. A few people complained that it was an alienating experience and there probably as many who felt that but didn't say so. We'd distributed advertising posters in the pubs the week before (except the Dover - or the Zoo, as it's more appropriately called these days - which wouldn't let us give posters out because there were "straights there who might be offended"), and consequently when the pubs closed the pub atmosphere was transplanted to the party. The women who were there felt swamped by men, many leaving; and the "sharks" were rampant...not that we can vet people's motives for coming. For the next party (Sat. Oct 4th) we'll do a few things differently: we'll advertise in different places, and to guard against people going away because they don't know anyone, members of the Counselling Group will be identified with arm-bands and will introduce people who want to be introduced.

After the party we started receiving a bit more mail than usual, which was good except that it included an advertisement we could have done without. It offered "gay libbers" 10% discount on tyre service, and advised "Women's Libbers" to add on 10%. This was taken by women and acted on appropriately.

*

There's not be a spectacular change in Gay Liberation activity since the Conference - and we'd be suspicious if there were. Awareness doesn't simply change overnight. What has changed is that the Centre is being used for activities other than the Counselling Group. The Gay Teachers' Group (not a Gay Liberation Group as such) is meeting there, and the Gay Liberation Film Society is running non-stop movies over the weekend of the 19-21st Sept, plus a few other days. That makes quite a difference to the phone service, because it's good to be able to tell callers that there's more than a phone and one or two people here. Other groups, especially those arising out of the Conference, are welcome to use our meeting space. And if you can help with the rent that would be appreciated too.

*

The mailing list has been chopped down to 120 after our ruthlessly cutting those who didn't return the slip. Thanks to all those who sent donations, (total about \$180). Further in this issue you'll see a letter which challenges our "mis-guided generosity" in not charging for the newsletter. Actually the reason is not so much generosity as failure to get organized enough to run a proper subscription system (and more than a little bit of fear that we won't get out a regular newsletter!). Subscription systems, as anyone who's done it will know, entail endless shit-work, with renewal notices, final notices, cancellations, receipts, etc. And its work that can't really be shared. One person needs to do it - and so far no-one's volunteering.

NAME.....ADDRESS.....

ENCLOSED IS \$ DONATION TO GAY LIBERATION

HAVE YOU NOTIFIED US OF ANY CHANGE OF ADDRESS?

COPS RAID GAY LIBERATION PARTY

On Saturday August 9 a fund-raising party being held at the Gay Lib Center was raided by members of Fitzroy CIB on the pretext of looking for drags.

They had a warrant which Helen requested be read out loud - a point to note for further incidents. The police then carried out a token search for the dreaded weed, questioned some people and took names and addresses.

This was good old intimidation at work, since you are not required to answer questions if questioned at a party or dance (except if a warrant is directed at you).

We took action (largely ineffective as it turned out) over what we considered to be police harassment of gay people. We contacted Claudia Wright and Nancy Dexter (3AW and The Age respectively), hoping to get some media coverage. Claudia phoned the Fitzroy police and made a protest, and was willing to have one of us on her show to give our point of view. However, for job reasons (one up for the "system" again) no one was able to. Great disappointment. We heard nothing from Nancy Dexter and the Nation Review failed to publish an article sent in by us (altho it could have been lost in their transfer to Sydney - mustn't get too paranoid). A letter was also written to Chief Inspector Crowley and no answer was received.

And so folks, for your interest and information we now present.....

YOUR RIGHTS AT LARGE INDOOR GATHERINGS

Police may only enter these premises if they have a warrant. The only exception is if they've come to make a lawful arrest of someone, or to recapture an escapee. Ask to see the warrant, and read it slowly aloud.

Try to make a mental note of:

- * who the informant is
- * the date the warrant was taken out
- * what the warrant is for
- * who took the warrant out

This information may be valuable later.

Questioning

You may be asked your name, date of birth, address, occupation or next of kin. DONT GET SUCKED IN by any of these questions. Unless you are the target of a warrant, you dont even have to give your name (it's different if you're driving a motor vehicle). You're not obliged to

answer any of the police's questions at a dance or party. If there are a lot of us and a few of them you should be in a position to exercise that right. However if you're alone or badly outnumbered it may be wise to at least give your name and address.

What to say

Dont let a warrant confuse you. Police might say angrily "Listen we've got a warrant to search this place for cannabis, so answer these questions". The warrant is irrelevant. You must say "Am I being arrested?" - and keep saying it.

Arrest

If you are arrested, ask for what reason and listen to the answer carefully. They must be able to tell you in order to detain you. Even then they dont have the right to press you to answer their questions. And dont sign any statements under any circumstances. You should smell a rat if they say how signing a statement will make things easier for you.

Manner

Watch your manner of speaking to the police. You are often dealing with bullies. If you show weakness they'll grind you down. If you're belligerent you'll provoke them. Be calm, confident and courteous..... if you can manage it.

TOO HOT FOR GUTTER PRESS ??

On 5th August we wrote to The Truth with money enclosed for an advertisement. It was a very mildly-worded notice: "Gay Liberation Counselling & Information Service is staffed by homosexual men and women nightly, 8-11 p.m. Phone 41-4926". We'd checked it out with Mr Watts in their advertising department, and it seemed as good as in.

After two issues it hadn't appeared and we followed up with 2 phone calls that got us nowhere. Mr Watts wasn't in, and yes he'd call us back. Then on Sept. 11th we received a letter returning our cheque, and the explanation: "After consulting our Editorial Department we regret we were unable to publish your advertisement". The letter was signed by Richard Watts, assuring us of their "co-operation at all times"!

A phone call the next day only established that Mr Watts is no longer in the Advertising Department, and that the advertisement was taken to the Editor who refused to run it. We weren't allowed to speak to the editor.

A press release giving the facts and our interpretation of them - i.e. a blatant example of anti-homosexual discrimination by Truth's editor - has been prepared and will be sent to the National Times, Nation Review, Sunday Press, Herald and Observer.

We urge everyone to send letters of protest to both Truth and the other media - which we calculate would relish this opportunity to send-up Truth's playing the unaccustomed role of moral guardian. Truth's address is 402 La Trobe St, Melbourne.

WANTED ONE GAY DENTIST !

If you can help please contact the Centre, 41-4926.

THE invisible CAMP SCENE

If you're like us, you might have had vague inklings of a number of informal but closed groupings of homosexuals around Melbourne, without ever actually finding out who are the contacts, where are the meeting places, and what membership criteria.

In the May newsletter we said that many of the callers to the Counselling Group are new to the "scene", or unsatisfied with the part of it they know, and simply want to know what's around that they don't know about.

One response to that has opened our eyes to a proliferation of private social organizations around Melbourne. But if you think that's your scene we probably can't help you crack it, because our informant has confirmed at least one preconception about these groups: they only want you if they hand-choose you. Sometimes it's a case of your being nominated, with all the members voting on your "suitability"; while others are less formal about the selection process: you are accepted on the good word of a member, or you may be introduced to the group at a social function, after which, if you don't spit on the carpet, offend with an unwanted grope or shriek with surprise at seeing Important People, you'll be invited to join.

Only a few of the groups maintain premises. Most are small enough to keep in touch just by frequent personal contact, meeting regularly at bars or private homes. Some of them are no more than a name that takes out a liquor licence once or twice a year to organize a profitable Cup Eve Ball, Queen's Birthday Picnic or Mini-Arts Ball. Publicity is mainly word of mouth, and because of the "star" reputation of the occasion - or is there nowhere else to go? - people are clamouring to be part of it all. The profits may be spent as pocket money, accumulated for a club's benefit (one club is said to have at least \$8000 capital), or given to charity (generally not a homosexual one, though one long-standing group has thought about establishing accommodation for ageing homosexuals).

Our informant generalized about each group in terms of age, socio-economic class and sexual proclivity: lower middle-class, camp/drag, mixed but mainly women; middle-aged onwards, lower middle-class men; sado-masochistic men, etc etc. One actually advertised itself as being for "straight men with homosexual feelings" - and needless to say found itself with a very closeted clientele.

"AMIGO"

As an example of the sorts of principles these organizations work on we present here some facts and opinions about one of them, which we will call "Amigo". Bear in mind however that it may be atypical in some respects. For example no other group has made its selection criteria so explicit - and certainly none has "come out" to the extent Amigo has.

Amigo is "non-profit-making, non-denominational, all male" and purports to be non-political. It is organized to provide "personal service and monthly accounts", but that needs some explaining. "Personal service" might mean, for example, that you would be greeted by name and with a warm smile at an Amigo function, or that if you were ill, you would receive a sympathy card. The "monthly accounts" means that you are trusted to tick up your bills for monthly payment. If you had the energy, interest and time to go to all the restaurant dinners, champagne parties and other social gatherings arranged by Amigo in one year, paying your way would cost nearly \$1000. If you went to nothing, it would probably cost you \$60 for the privilege of knowing what's on. So you can see that non-profit-making does not mean cheap.

WHO GETS IN AND HOW

Amigo makes no pretense about its selectivity; in fact, it is avowedly elitist. Membership is by invitation only, and invitations are only issued to people after they have attended at least one Amigo function for members' scrutiny. You can be black-balled, either on the basis of your reputation or your behaviour at the function, but if you shape up OK, and two members nominate you, a membership invitation will be issued. According Amigo's full-time organizer (to our knowledge the only full-time organizer of non-commercial gay activities in Melbourne), they have set out to recruit people who possess what they call the "best qualities" - and at present have found 60 such people. The best qualities, in case you didn't know, are:

1. financial integrity
2. civility
3. other suitable personal qualities.

There is, you'll see, a certain ambiguity about (3), but in discussion it was revealed that "verbal fluency" or "good looks" - not even necessarily both - would win you an invitation for membership, provided your credit was good, and, of course, provided you behaved "proper". The ambiguity in (3) serves a useful purpose. Taken with the other two criteria, it means that any person an Amigo member happens to fancy may be invited to join. It's just that Amigo members don't fancy the company of women, low-income earners (though one could envisage exceptions here), or people who might (like to?) embarrass Important People.

WHAT DO WE THINK OF AMIGO?

When we first heard about Amigo, the question arose whether the Gay Liberation Counselling Group should, if it ever had the opportunity, arrange an introduction for a suitably qualified person. The consensus was that we shouldn't, and the reasoning went like this: In spite of the scarcity of meeting places for gays in Melbourne, and even though we frequently give information about social activities we don't like, referring someone to Amigo would "do nothing for that person's political consciousness", and in fact would be antithetical to Gay Liberation's aims. On further enquiry this judgement seems more than ever warranted. With due respect for the competence of Amigo's organizer (we've no doubt its members are provided with good service, and maybe even give genuine support to one another), it's clear that his interest is not in the liberation of homosexuals. Contrary to what they say, Amigo does have its politics, and they are not in the interests of all homosexuals, not even most homosexual men. Of course Amigo may be non-party-political (too many pretty or clever ones vote Labor?), and individual Amigo members are technically free to be active in Gay Liberation, Right to Life or whatever. But basically Amigo exists to provide social opportunities and a comfortable retreat for certain privileged homosexual men - any benefits to non-privileged men being merely incidental.

You might ask whether it is fair to pass a blanket judgement on a place like Amigo, implying criticism of all its members. Shouldn't one confine criticism to its organizers? It seems both unfair and pointless to criticize people for being counter-liberation (or reactionary if you like) if they don't understand why Gay Liberation puts such importance on coming out, and publicly agitating for an end to anti-homosexual policies and practices. By this criterion, criticism of Amigo's organizers does seem valid, for unlike most organizers of gay social activities in Melbourne (commercial or private), they do claim a "cognitive awareness" of homosexual oppression; but are quick to point out that whether or not they "subjectively acknowledge/feel oppression" is another matter. In other words, they know what Gay Liberation is on about, but because they and their friends have the means to buy themselves a private solution, they want nothing to do with consciousness-raising of the clientele, much less anything to do with drawing public attention to the politically powerless position of homosexuals. Why should they, they're not powerless! One member expressed the conflict of interest very frankly in a parting remark, "It's good to know who the enemy is". Who are we to argue!

GARY JAYNES

P.S. "Amigo" is not its real name. We agreed to conceal its real name for much the same reason most of us wouldn't expose our worst enemy to the cops.

GEELONG GAY LIB is on the PHONE

Believe it or not there has been a Gay Lib movement in Geelong for a year now. There were times when we thought there would never be one as we beat our heads against the incredibly hostile reaction from the established "camp scene".

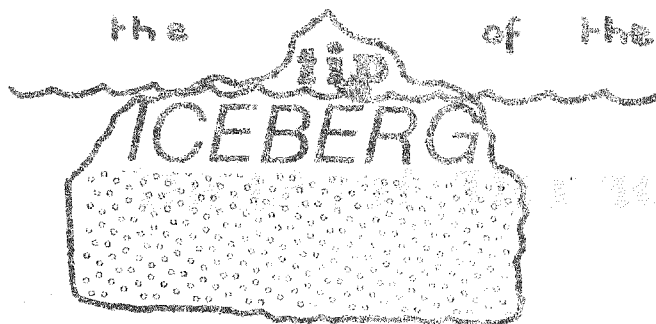
Now, however, we can claim a membership of 20 active people. We have also established a liason with a women's group who share our sense of "being Gay".

Through use of the local paper we have managed to establish that we and at least one of our objectives, a local contact phone, exist.

Now, too, our aims for at least the first stage of our plan can be realized. The primary one is a Gay counselling service, and another to make sure this town doesn't forget we exist.

We extend an open invitation to anyone who can help us, or anyone we can help to get in touch with us on our contact line:

Phone Geelong 214241 (STD area code 052) Tuesday or Thursday evenings.



ESTIMATES OF SOCIAL TRENDS AMONG MELBOURNE'S MALE HOMOSEXUALS

Have you ever thought about how many homosexual men there are in Melbourne? Just how large (or small!) the male gay scene is?

I recently did, and calculated a few rough figures. The numbers are probably off by a wide margin and are likely to be under-estimates, for I have no wish to find strength in falsely inflated numbers!

How many exclusively homosexual men are there in Melbourne?

Take the population of Greater Melbourne as 2.5 millions. Assuming the sexes to be equally represented in this number, there are 1.25 million males. Say 7/10 of this number are aged 18 and over. There are then 375,000 males in this age range.

Nobody knows what percentage of the male population is exclusively homosexual. Let's settle for a probably conservative estimate - 5% - which is the sort of percentage most frequently mentioned in texts (Kinsey's result, for what it's worth, was 4%).

Thus we end up with 43,750 exclusively homosexual males, aged 18 and over, resident in Greater Melbourne. The true figure is likely to be much higher - and this number does not include the surely huge number of bisexual men, who are alive and well, living in Melbourne!

How many exclusively homosexual men are on the gay scene?

Gay scene is here defined as those venues - bars, discos, dances, saunas, coffee lounges (including Society 5's Clubrooms) - patronized either exclusively or mainly by male homosexuals. Beats are not being included; nor are most organizations, as organizations arrange social functions at irregular intervals.

On the scene is defined as going to one of these gay venues at least on the average of once every 4 weeks. Of course any such definition has to be somewhat arbitrary, but I feel "participation once every 4 weeks" combines a time span short enough to indicate meaningful participation, with a time span long enough to include most of the patrons, and hence indicate the size of the male scene. In other words, my impression is that very few men, relative to the total number of patrons, "regularly" participate in the gay scene every 2 months, or every 3 or 4 months. I suggest that the reason lies in the fact that (apart from saunas) these are essentially social places, and if one's friends/aquaintances frequent a place, one does too.

Back to numbers, and these are based on nothing more substantial than my subjective observations: -

On an average Saturday evening (the busiest period at these places), let's say there are 1,000 men on the scene. That number is probably made up as follows -

Inner suburban hotels: 650 ?
Society 5's clubrooms: 200 ?
Saunas: 150 ?

In any case, surely no fewer than 800, nor more than 1,300!

The total weekly attendance at all these places at times other than Saturday evening is probably about 3,000. Just how many of these individuals were out and about on Saturday evening? No one knows, of course. Let's say $\frac{1}{2}$, for the places do have many regulars.

We thus arrive at a figure of 2,500 for the number of individual men on this fairly public gay scene in the average week.

How many in the average 4 week period? We have to allow for the fact that in the following 3 weeks, an increasing proportion of that week's patrons will have been counted already. I guess that $\frac{1}{2}$ will be "new" patrons in the second week; $\frac{1}{4}$ of 2,500 in the third week, and perhaps only $\frac{1}{8}$ of that number in the 4th week. This total is 4,690 - let's say roughly 5,000.

TIP OF THE ICEBERG

Remember we are looking at the proportion of the exclusively homosexual male population which is on this fairly public scene. That 5,000 includes some bisexuals and some straights. Let's lop off 10%, leaving 4,500.

Turning back to the total figure of 43,750 exclusively homosexual males, aged 18 and over, resident in Greater Melbourne, and dividing 4,500 into that, we discover that the percentage which comprises the gay scene, the often described "tip of the iceberg" is ONLY 10% !

Allowing for the errors in estimation, especially under-estimation of "monthly turnover" of numbers on the gay scene, one can confidently say: Between only 5% and 20% of homosexual males are on the gay scene

How many exclusively homosexual men "belong" to gay organizations?

This can be calculated with a greater degree of accuracy than can be the numbers on the scene, for the membership numbers of the various organizations can be known. Errors involve merely estimating the number of men who are members of 2 or more of the organizations, and the number who are exclusively homosexual (Not that that's easy!)

The "belonging" may require formal membership (e.g. as at Society 5 and a certain sauna) or merely being on the Newsletter mailing list.

The number is unlikely to be more than 2,000. Going back to our total figure of 43,750, that's less than 5% of the exclusively male homosexual population.

At least half, if not more of these men appear, in fact, to be on the fairly public gay scene as well as in this organized, partly private gay scene.

Where is everyone?

As the preceding figure indicates, they are certainly not hiding away the the supposedly glamorous social happenings organized by individuals and "clubs" in the private gay world. (These are the subject of an article elsewhere in this Newsletter).

And they are certainly not frantically organizing and attending parties in one another's homes. Acquaintances throughout Melbourne confirm how infrequently it is that they hear of parties, let alone attend any: the gay male social "merry-go-round" needs a new motor if its to be even half as frenetic as a popular myth would have us believe!

On the beats? Given the large number of beats said to be scattered around Melbourne, and given also that these "operate" at all hours, it is reasonable to guess that surprisingly huge numbers of men do the beat, at least once every 4 weeks. For reasons that are irrelevant here, it is probably true that a majority of these are not also on the gay scene. However, because of the "quick service" aspect of beats, I do not feel that doing the beats accounts for the whereabouts of large numbers of exclusively homosexual males for periods of time comparable in length with the time spent in the bars etc. by those homosexuals on the scene.

CONCLUSION

The inevitable conclusion is that the great majority of male homosexuals are nowhere in particular - simply everywhere in general! This article has focussed on the exclusively homosexual males in the population, but I presume this conclusion to be true for lesbian women and bisexual persons also. Doubtless, far too many of this majority feel isolated, but I suspect (and hope) that most of them find their immediate social circles enjoyable - for that's all they have.

IMPLICATIONS

I'm not particularly interested in numbers as ends in themselves. I've tried to outline some social trends in order to leave with you the question "WHAT IMPLICATIONS DO THESE TRENDS HAVE FOR GAY LIBERATION?"

The above article was submitted by someone on our mailing list who prefers to remain anonymous.

National Homosexual Conference

Homosexuals and the Left.

How dare you presume I'm heterosexual,

Psychology

Education

Gay Dance

Deviants as critical philosophers.

Ageism

Myths

Bisexuality

Coming Out

We're all just people. I'm not just a person - I'm a lesbian.

Media

Gay Culture

Ethics

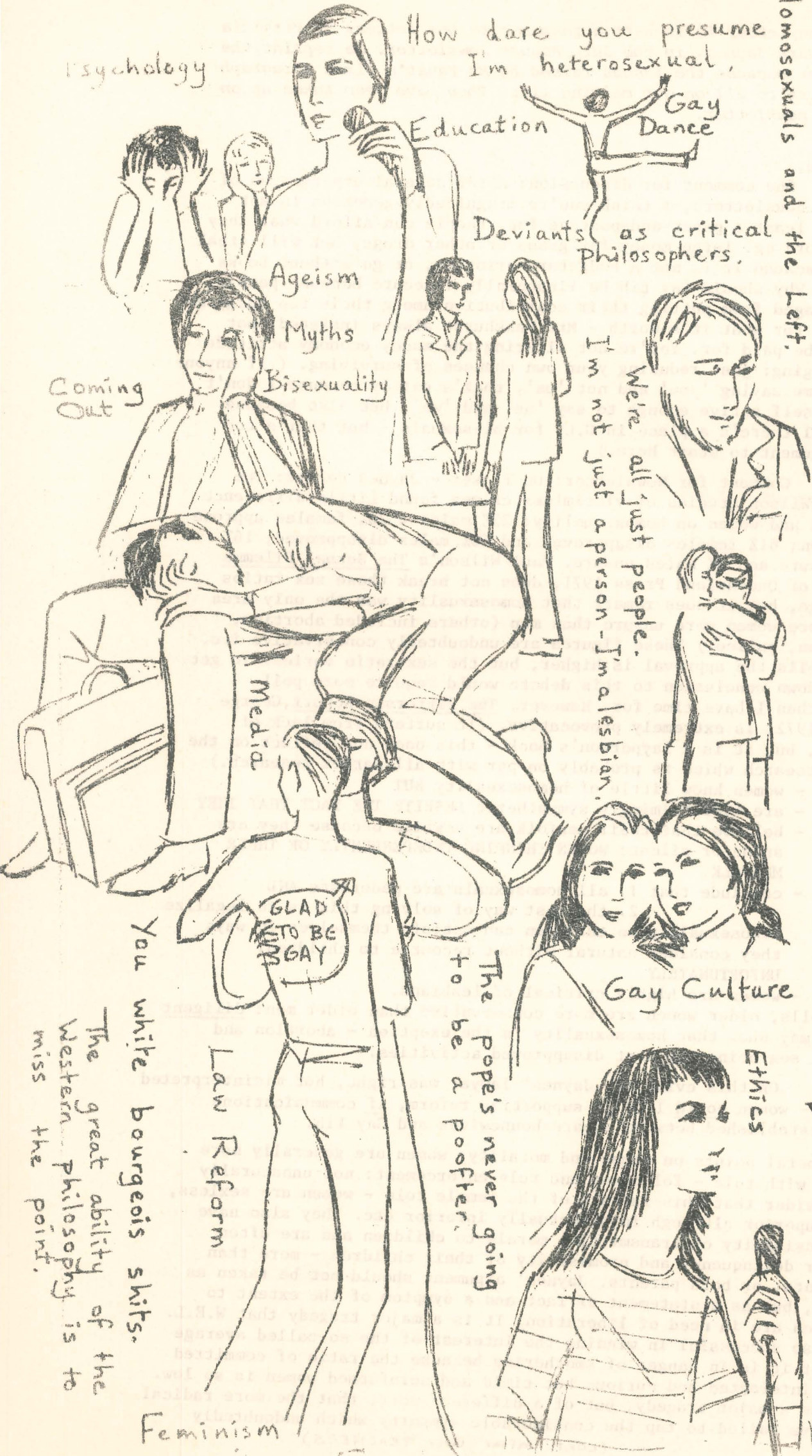
The pope's never going to be a pofter.

Law Reform

You white bourgeois shits.

The great ability of the Western philosophy is to miss the point.

Feminism



CONFERENCE FEEDBACK

AFTER THE CONFERENCE

The energy/anger that makes me write down these feelings comes mainly from the National Homosexual Conference.

I accept the fact/generalized statement that men oppress women, but I don't accept that in every situation woman is automatically oppressed by man, e.g. I feel that on the "hierarchy of oppression" a gay male who suicides because of the way he has been oppressed is "higher up" than an up-front lesbian who is strong/privileged enough to make it. Okay, so the man can get housing loans easier, but as a person who is free to be he's ratshit, nowhere, finished.

I react when all men are lumped together as all being/feeling/wanting something - (I don't mean things like the way men have more legal status than women or the way men can have other benefits from "the system" that women can't, which are obviously true) - I feel this is sexist.

The Conference was open to all gay people, so presumably a certain proportion of these people would not be into either feminism, effeminism or gay lib - especially the men. If the Conference was a gay lib one, where it could be assumed that everyone had a fair idea of what sexism is, okay - but I understood that as all gay people were being encouraged, we had to expect that there'd be a wide range of awareness, so why the heavy speeches that seemed to alienate a lot of men and some women?? (I'm not disagreeing with or trying to negate the reasons/feelings behind the speeches - but the method made me angry and I don't think it made many men examine their heads. But then again, if anger is felt there's a reason why, so I'm not even sure I should be writing this). The men who were in gay lib at the start aren't even in it (in Melbourne) now, so assuming that the men in the audience knew what sexism in gay lib was about, got nowhere - most didn't relate to it.

I was angry with myself for voting for what I now think to have been a gay lib "heavy" i.e. the chucking out of motion 3 (the motion wanting support for the MCC's acceptance into the Australian Council of Churches). Okay, so everyone had a chance to say their piece and democracy reigned etc etc but, once again, all gay people were invited and it just happens that gay lib people are generally more vocal and outgoing and were in positions of power. Power politics is what the Man plays and to assume we've got all the answers is fascism.

JOHN HOLDEN

LETTER FROM YARRAWONGA

Dear Sir,

...Sounds if the National Conference was quite successful...Convey my congratulations to Ron Thiele on the way he handled the T.V. interview re the National Conference. Although it was very brief, he stated the case well and made a good impression on a number of people in this area who saw the newscast. Good publicity like that can and does do a lot of good in overcoming many false notions of homosexuality and the homosexual.

Yours ...

EXCERPTS FROM A REPORT IN SOCIETY 5'S SEPT. NEWSLETTER

After describing some workshops, which the reporter considered the most personally valuable part of the Conference, the report remarks on the Lesbian Separatists' declaration:

One thing of which I became very conscious during the plenary sessions was the demand of our Gay sisters for acceptance of themselves as individuals. The female side is almost non-existent at Five. It looks as though the Lesbian Women will go their own way and form their own organisations to deal with their specific problems, joining with the guys only on related issues.

and expresses admiration for some of the contributions to the Speak Out:

...what impressed me most, again, something I am not often aware of at Five - people's ability to think about and express points of view, political and personal, about their gayness...points of view which indicate deep concern with their place as Gays in the human situation.

The report concludes:

About 20 members of Society Five were at the conference, and I think it was a pity that there weren't more...Society Five's credibility as the largest and most active homosexual organization in Australia is dented when nothing of a serious nature emanates from its members on such important occasions.

CONFERENCE FEEDBACK

The conference has come and gone and the big question is What next? Elsewhere in this newsletter there is mention of two activities arising out of the Conference: the National Gay Teachers' Group is written up extensively and the New Lesbian Group that meets on Mondays at the Women's Centre is mentioned in the Coming Events. We have heard that there's a Lesbian Mothers Group formed, and is contactable through the Women's Centre. As this goes to print we've not been able to confirm that. Lex Watson, CAMP (N.S.W.), is collating evidence of police harassment of homosexuals for a submission to the Human Relationships Commission. We can refer people interested in contacting a group that exchanged addresses in the Homosexuality & the Left workshop. And we have a contact for Homosexual Fathers. These are the only activities arising out of the Conference that we have contacts for. We'd be glad to know of those we've omitted.

The Conference Collective will be re-convening soon to organize publication of the Post-Conference booklet. It's not too late if you wish to submit a contribution; and if there are people willing to assist with any facet of production -type-setting, graphics, layout, proof-reading, collating, binding - please write or phone the Centre.

Following are some pieces that individuals have written about the Conference.

Looking back over five gay years

Lex Watson

THE FIRST Australian National Homosexual Conference was held at Melbourne uni over the weekend of August 16-17. It has taken the "homosexual movement" about five years from its beginnings to get up to a conference of any sort - Acceptance, the roman catholic homosexual group, had the first earlier this year, and now this AUS initiated one.

So a conference of over 600 homosexuals from all over Australia should be a good opportunity to assess where the homosexual movement has got to in five years, and where it is going. And in a paradoxical way, it was just that.

The most significant thing to come out of that weekend was probably the creation of a homosexual movement in Australia where none had previously existed in any meaningful form. This was a start, or looks to have been, rather than some way along the line of development.

Even the structure and aims of the conference were a symbol of that situation. For the AUS Collective which organised the conference had decided it was to be a talk-shop rather than an action oriented affair. More "academic" than "political" though the supporters of that position would not accept that description.

And, as an academic talk-shop, the conference was a mark of how little had happened in Australia since 1970 when CAMP was formed and the ideas of gay lib first surfaced here, and showed how little on a theoretical level has been introduced since then, or since the Altman book came out in 1971.

Thus the first two plenary sessions were devoted to how we are oppressed and why we are oppressed, and the third was on homosexuality and feminism. It was pretty tired old stuff, and on an academic level, even by the standards of such conferences, much of it was rather poor. Perhaps those of the 600 who were fairly new to the movement - and many of them must be - learnt something, but there is probably an easier way to do it.

One of the surprises of the conference was how little the differences in the movement surfaced in any aggressive form, though some did become fairly clear. There are perhaps three obvious ideological ones - two of which, about socialism and feminism, usually get run together. The third concerns the church.

Several of the papers concerned socialism, the family and oppression of homosexuals. Broadly a rehash and occasionally an attempt to update Engel's tract on the origin of the family in order to provide a critique of homosexual oppression which allows for a simple single factor panacea for the world's ills. Such an analysis does not work, but it clearly has considerable appeal to many.

The curiosity of it is that it allows its proponents to argue that the feminist revolution, or the socialist revolution, or both, are preconditions for homosexual liberation and thus the logical extension is to stop talking about homosexuality and put our weight behind someone else's struggle instead. The radical solution that satisfies the closet queen - not very satisfactory.

Not all the feminists, be they "lesbian women or male homosexuals" (a new formulation blessed by the conference), got involved in an attempt to interpret Marx or Engels for our

purposes. Some stuck with "sexism" as the grab bag of all ills. Thus on Sunday morning the conference was treated to a repetition of the angry shouts that have been heard all over the world from lesbian separatists. "All men are guilty of sexism until proved innocent. Gay men had often asked lesbians to 'teach us about sexism', but it is not going to be women who cure them of their sexism. Often the request for information is simply a sop to their consciences ..." and so on.

That quote actually comes from the International Homosexual Conference in Edinburgh last December, but the rhetoric is identical and as vacuous. "We want you to do something but we are not going to tell you what." Curious.

Anyhow the lesbian women have decided to form a separate movement. Some of the men will go with them as a men's auxiliary, regarding the feminist revolution as "primary"; while the rest of the men will perhaps get on with other of the problems that face us. Perhaps out of it all will come a more subtle analysis which does not necessarily have to see everything in the one light. Certainly it is time that male homosexuals got over their fear or concern with lesbian and feminist bullying and felt no guilt about fighting for things that do not particularly interest or affect lesbian or non-lesbian women.

Not all lesbians, nor all socialists, follow either of the above paths.

The third split was about the church. Several of the few motions put at the end of the conference concerned the church. In best student political fashion, it was moved that "the motions be not put", ostensibly on the ground that religion had not been sufficiently discussed at the conference. The same concerns did not apply to solidarity motions for our "Chilean brothers and sisters" or the Mexican homosexual movement. The conference being heavily anti-christian, the motions were dropped and the christians present felt alienated.

The concern with sexism, with broad ideological theorising, with the old "personal is political" line, and the origins of the movement in the counter-culture of the 1960s showed very clearly in the disinterest that the movement has shown and showed in Melbourne with political activity of any sort. We are still a very introverted movement, prepared to back "reformist" women's movement demands, but not interested in making any of our own.

The most profitable results of the conference, apart from the broad solidarity that, despite the above, did emerge, came from the small workshops. A gay teachers group was formed, a gay history group, a law and prisons group, and possibly others - in our subjugation to the tyranny of structureless, reporting back was not encouraged and so the information flow was poor.

That the conference happened at all is probably the appropriate measure of its success. That 600+ came is spectacular. That there was overwhelming agreement that there be another was another sign. It is likely to be in Sydney next August. What the movement has to say for itself should be more apparent then, or indeed whether there is a movement at all.

As a post of footnote it is worth noting that the press managed to ignore the event almost entirely, except for the *Australian*, which found two column inches on page one to record that homosexuals wanted to adopt kids. The electric media did a little better. Anyone for a press council?

Nation Review
Fri 24th Aug

national gay teachers group

A National Gay Teachers' Group formed at the recent National Homosexual Conference in Melbourne. The group has 40 foundation members from 3 states, and welcomes other interested homosexual teachers and trainee teachers.

The first move toward forming the group was a letter sent to the Director-General of Education in Victoria, Dr Shears, before the Conference asking him to clarify the legal status of homosexuals in the teaching service. It seemed a good starting point because no-one was actually sure about whether we were legal or not! No reply came in time for the Conference, but apparently there are enough jittery - or angry - gay teachers around to warrant forming the group. Copies of the letter to Dr Shears were also sent to teacher and student unions, media contacts interested in education, a few politicians, teacher-training institutions - mainly to solicit interest. Prompt replies came back from the VSTA (keep us in touch), Shadow Minister in State Parliament (prepared to ask a question in the Spring Session) and the Committee on Discrimination in Employment (let's know if you've got proof of discrimination on grounds of sexuality). Dr Shears' reply told us two things:

- (a) there are no specific regulations relating to homosexuals in the teaching service
- (b) but the "relevant regulations" in the Public Service Act and the Teaching Service Act relate to "disciplinary action which may be taken against any member of the Teaching Service".

We checked these out to report to the first Melbourne meeting of the Group, and the position seems to be this (we say "seems" because we're not experts at interpreting statutes); homosexual teachers can be charged for two reasons -

- (a) any act of "misconduct" (Section 59, Public Service Act)
- (b) and, in the case of male homosexuals, "any conviction for a criminal offence punishable by imprisonment" (Section 64, P.S.A.)

"misconduct": To be charged with "misconduct" you must be informed in writing of the particulars of the alleged offence, and the case would be heard by the Director General. Presumably, and we'll check it thoroughly, anyone can write to the Director General & allege "misconduct" (parent, principal etc), and presumably the Director General is the interpreter of the word "misconduct". If found guilty the person would be liable to one or more of the following penalties: admonition, reprimand, fine of not more than \$200, reduction in classification or grade, reduction in salary, removal from and appointment to another office, dismissal..

"criminal conviction": If a person is convicted of a criminal offence punishable by imprisonment, and the only homosexual offences apply to men, he's brought before the tribunal (presumably the police would automatically notify them of your conviction), and he may be dismissed, demoted, lose salary or suffer "such other punishment as seems appropriate".

As you can see, we've still got some checking to do. What we're unlikely to find out from official sources however, is how "misconduct" has been viewed with

The Age (Ed'n Pages) 16-9-71

Seriously gay

THE National Gay Teachers' Group, formed at the 600-strong National Homosexual Conference in Melbourne, held its first meeting last week.

"Some initial objectives of the group," it has stated, "are to research the legal status of homosexuals in the teaching service, to seek explicit union support for homosexual teachers, and to explore the means for presenting homosexuality as a valid life-style to parents, students and fellow teachers."

Many of the 25 teachers reckon that while there are no obvious cases of victimisation, homosexuals in some schools "could be transferred, given unfair workloads or eased out of socially sensitive activities (for example, counselling, sex education programmes or school camps) on all manner of pretexts".

The other main concern was to foster less hypocrisy on the matter. "For too long we've compromised ourselves with all sorts of lies and pretence in order to accommodate the pernicious assumption that everyone is heterosexual... This means... the right to express our homosexuality. In practical terms this will mean [among other things] feeling free to sign our names to an article like this, freedom to address our colleagues as homosexuals..."

GAY TEACHERS GROUP (cont.)

regard to homosexuality in the past, and we're urgently seeking contact with gay teachers who've experienced hassles with the Department. There are plenty of rumours of transfers, and subtle victimization, and the fact that Dr Shears says the disciplinary regulations are "relevant" to us must mean something - but exactly what we won't know till people who've found out the hard way tell us. We'd prefer not to be martyrs in a test-case.

The first meeting was on Monday Sept. 8th and attracted about 25 people, roughly equal numbers of men and women, mostly in the secondary division, and more social studies teachers than any others. There were only 2 trainee teachers. One interesting thing about the composition of the group is the number of people who've not been active in any homosexual organization before.

After the report on the legal position so far as we know it, discussion revealed a number of reasons for people's involvement besides job security. The common denominator of these however appeared to be anger at succumbing to the pressure to conceal one's homosexuality. To be an authentic person, as teacher, counsellor colleague, friend - or however you view the significant relationships in a school - one cannot tolerate circumstances that induce deceit and hypocrisy. True, it's partly in our heads, but there are some bloody good reasons why we presently don't reveal our gayness when it's relevant and we'd really like to, let alone announce it at school assembly or in open letters to parents. And that's what we're on about changing.

The strategies for achieving change are not worked out thoroughly yet. There's consensus that we should seek explicit union support as soon as possible - not just for defensive reasons, such as in the event of proven victimization, but also to support campaigns for such things as recognition of de facto relationships for postings. An article is being written for the V.S.T.A's magazine at present, to be submitted with a request for an appointment with members of the Executive.

What else is achieved is very much a matter of what individual members of the Group put into it. Each of us has got a unique set of resources: skills (e.g. at typing, writing, talking, thinking, drawing, organizing) and areas of influence (e.g. media, subject association, union, political groups, library, even in the Principals' Association!) - and it will be up to each member to utilize these in the way he or she sees fit.

There was also a strong feeling at the meeting that as well as doing this for ourselves, we've got obligations to homosexual students. Even more than good books about homosexuality (and God knows how scarce they are in school libraries), young homosexuals need to see some positive living models of homosexuality to counteract the poisonous myths that have fed many young homosexuals' hateful concept of themselves (and perpetuated non-homosexuals' phobic images of us). We therefore want to express our homosexuality in schools, and especially give open support to homosexual students when they are victims of bullying and ostracism.

Anyone interested is welcome to come to our meetings. The next is on Tuesday, 30th Sept at the Centre, 8 p.m. We don't know each other well yet, so besides the business side of things we're having parties in private homes (the first was last Sat.) If you want further information phone the Centre, 41-4926.

*

LETTER FROM BEATRICE FAUST (cont.)

exists in square society. Margaret Mead has some useful points about inter-generation communication which could just as well apply to gay-square and feminist-non-feminist communication, (see Culture and Commitment, 1970, Panther edition p108-109, but really the whole book is worth reading.) Alan Watts puts it more briefly: the revolutionary's problem "is to avoid changing the rules so radically that no bridge remains over which the public can follow him". Psychotherapy East and West, Jonathan Cape, London p183.

Yours sincerely

Beatrice Faust.

HOMOSEXUALITY in the MEDIA

The Age Wed Sept 17

Holding plan for bill to end sex discrimination

The Leader of the State Opposition (Mr. Holding) is planning a private member's bill to legalise homosexuality and end sex discrimination in employment and other areas.

Mr. Holding said yesterday the bill would be based on a bill drafted by Baroness Sear, a Liberal member of the House of Lords, and printed by the House of Commons earlier this year. He will draft it after im-

puting submissions from the State Government, the National Party, the DLP, the Women's Electoral Lobby and other organisations.

"The Premier (Mr. Hamer) has delayed for too long in bringing in a Government bill," Mr. Holding said.

"I hope Mr. Hamer will prove his sincerity in the matter of liberating women and homosexuals by supporting the Holding bill."

The bill, as well as legalising homosexual acts between consenting adults in private, will outlaw discrimination against both men and women in the course of obtaining jobs, attending educational institutions, obtaining life insurance and credit, qualifying for membership of trade unions and other bodies, and in the provision of goods, facilities or services.

new senator

Senator Field said he thought he would concentrate most of his attention on unemployment and Labor's preoccupation with social reform more than on issues like homosexuality and abortion.

"I don't think homosexuality should be spoken about in the Senate," he said. "It brings the homosexuals too much out into the open."

Much quieter

"I guess they can't help being what they are — and you never know who is one — but they were certainly much quieter before people started talking so much about them."

"Anyway, they may not even like all this talk themselves. It probably embarrasses them."

Senator Field, 64, said he approved of abortion only when a woman had been raped. If a woman "got herself into trouble", she should have to take the consequences.

He listed his recreations as football and dancing — particularly living.

He said he had once been a roller skater and ice skater but given up the sports because of his age.

The Age Wed Sept 10

Homosexuality legal in SA

ADELAIDE. — South Australia yesterday became the first Australian state to vote to legalise homosexuality between consenting adult males.

A Bill to legalise acts in private between consenting adult males was passed in the Legislative Council, 12-6, at the third attempt.

The Bill passed in the Assembly on August 27 after being introduced by Mr Duncan (Labor, Elizabeth).

An amendment yesterday, which sought a jail term of up to one year for anyone, who, within the precincts of any school, advocated or encouraged any unnatural

sexual practice, was defeated.

Another amendment to make it an offence for a person to advertise that he or some other person desired, or was willing, to engage in any unnatural sexual practice, was defeated.

Mr Duncan said last night: "This is an indicator of the continuing role of S.A. as a place where Government and society are prepared to take a liberal view and have laws which provide maxi-

mum freedom for individuals."

It was the first time since the 1870s that male homosexual acts were legal in Australia, he said.

They were banned as a crime in the late 19th century, he said.

"We can now look forward to a situation where homosexuals will not be blackmailed and discriminated against to anything like the extent prevalent before."

Opposing the Bill in

the Legislative Council yesterday, the Lands Minister, Mr Casey, said he did not believe the Parliament had a mandate to change by law the moral standards of the community.

"If we pass this Bill, our moral standards and values will be affected," he said.

"I want to protect our social structure in this state, not help to undermine it."

Homosexuals would try to convince other people of their way of life, he said.

The Sun Thurs. Sept 18

The April '73 issue of Cleo was sent to us by someone on our mailing list who thought the article "Love and the Lesbian" might be of interest. It could be useful to give to someone who's understanding of homosexuality is fairly meagre. Concentrates on refuting myths about lesbians. Apologetic & anti-feminist in parts.

Time Magazine, 8th Sept. 1975 (7 pages) - "Gays on the March". A review of the gains of the American Gay Movement in the past 6 years. As Time articles go this isn't too bad till you reach the last page, which really hedges. We're symptoms of faulty child-rearing, and tolerance of us is a sign of cultural impotence and decline. Definitely written by a committee.

Nation Review published an edited transcript of the Laceline interview by Richard Neville with the paederasts. Our filing system has failed and so we can't give you the date. Phone Nation Review if you're interested.

Sydney Morning Herald. Tuesday Sept. 2 reports Cardinal Freeman, the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Sydney, in a pastoral letter saying that the Section of the A.C.T. Crimes Ordinance which "appear to give legal status to a homosexual spouse" are "grotesque". This amounted to a "blatant undermining of the traditional, civilized, sacred concept of marriage and the sanctity of family life, which is the foundation of civilized society". "We flout it at our peril".

The Digger, Sept. 8 - Oct. 6th contains Martin Smith's column, Gayzette. He invites anyone with gay information to send it to Box 4, Wentworth Building, Uni. of Sydney, 2006.

The Geelong News is covering a running debate through its letters column. This followed the reporting of an interview with some Geelong Gay Lib people in the same paper. More about this in the next newsletter.

homosexuality not in the media

A half-page review by Les Murray in the Sydney Morning Herald (aug. 2) of "W.H. Auden - A Tribute" (ed. Stephen Spender) failed to make any mention whatever of Auden's homosexuality. Just another of those artists who happen to be homosexual.

NOTICES

EXCERPT FROM THE C.A.M.P. (N.S.W.) July Newsletter

Who Said We Weren't Oppressed

"The principal of Holland Park High School, Brisbane, wrote to C.A.M.P. to notify that he did not wish to receive copies of the I.W.Y. seminar reports (on lesbianism). Quote: 'Kindly be advised that pornography is not part of the curriculum here.' The said gentleman indicated that he would be protesting about our grant."

GAY FITZROT

Contributions for the GAY edition of the Poetry magazine "Fitzrot" are coming in slowly. All contributions are appreciated, will be appreciated! Please send any "Gay" (relevant?) poetry, short prose, b/w drawings or photographs to: - C/- William, 61 Coppin St, Richmond, 3121. THANK YOU.

A JOURNAL OF HOMOSEXUALITY

A journal of homosexuality geared to assisting the "helping professions... keep their thinking open" about homosexuality has been launched in the U.S. It proudly announces itself as the first professional journal on homosexuality. The editorial board consists of sexologists and academics in the fields of Education, Medicine and Social Sciences - which makes it all very respectable in the manner of Australia's own sex journal, Forum. But whereas Forum's editors are presumably well-practised heterosexuals, there is no indication that any members of board of the American publication are openly homosexual. The publicity brochure reads as though it's a journal about homosexuality and homosexuals, rather than by & for homosexuals. Vol 1, No. 1 includes articles titled: "Two Names, Two Wardrobes, Two Personalities", "Model of a Sexual Retraining Program for Incarcerated Homosexual Pedophiles", "Some Characteristics of those who Hold Positive & Negative Attitudes towards Homosexuality", "A Study of Buggery & the Royal Navy". Sound ominous to you?

If anyone is prepared to fork out the \$15 individual subscription, or \$30 institutional sub., then we can provide a copy of the subscription form. Let's know what it's like.

STEPHEN H. Like to hear from you. Please write me C/- 49 McElhone St, Woolloomooloo, and phone Colin 5255-147, 8 to 9 p.m. Reverse charges OK. Happy Birthday, Love, Jo.

ROOM TO LET \$15 weekly. Apply 61 Coppin St, Richmond, 3121, or phone William on 51-3661, ext. 25 (work).

LAW TOKENISM IN A.C.T.

C.A.M.P. (N.S.W.) has mounted a vigorous campaign against aspects of the A.C.T. Ordinance relating to homosexuality. They dismiss the bill as "paternalistic tokenism" and urge repeal of all existing laws relating to sexual behaviour and replacement by one single law making sexual conduct criminal only when assaults, threat or coercion are used.

See the post script on A.C.T. Law Reform in the Melbourne Gay Liberation July - August Newsletter. Society 5 will be outlining its objections to the Bill on radio, 3ZZ, on Friday, Oct. 3rd.

Tuesday, 30th Sept. 8 p.m.

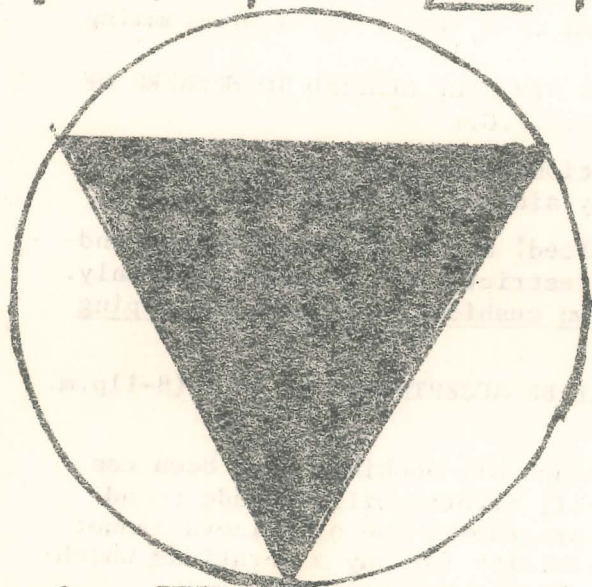
Gay Teachers' Group meets at the Centre.

Thursday, Oct. 2. 8 p.m.

General Meeting of Gay Liberation at the Centre to discuss the submission being invited by Clyde Holding for his Private Members' Bill. Also discussion of follow-up action against the Truth. TRY AND BE THERE IF POSSIBLE.

Friday, Oct. 3rd Society 5 on 3Z. It is proposed that the programme be about the work of women in the homosexual movement, law reform throughout Australia, and why Society 5 opposes the legislation in A.C.T. to "decriminalize" homosexual acts between consenting adults. Anyone wanting to be involved contact Jay Watchorn on Saturdays, at 663-4555.

GAY LIB



PARTY

4th Oct. 8pm.

B.Y.O.G. Donation \$1
259 Brunswick Street.
FITZROY

Take Collins St. tram No's 9 or 11 to
Johnston Street.