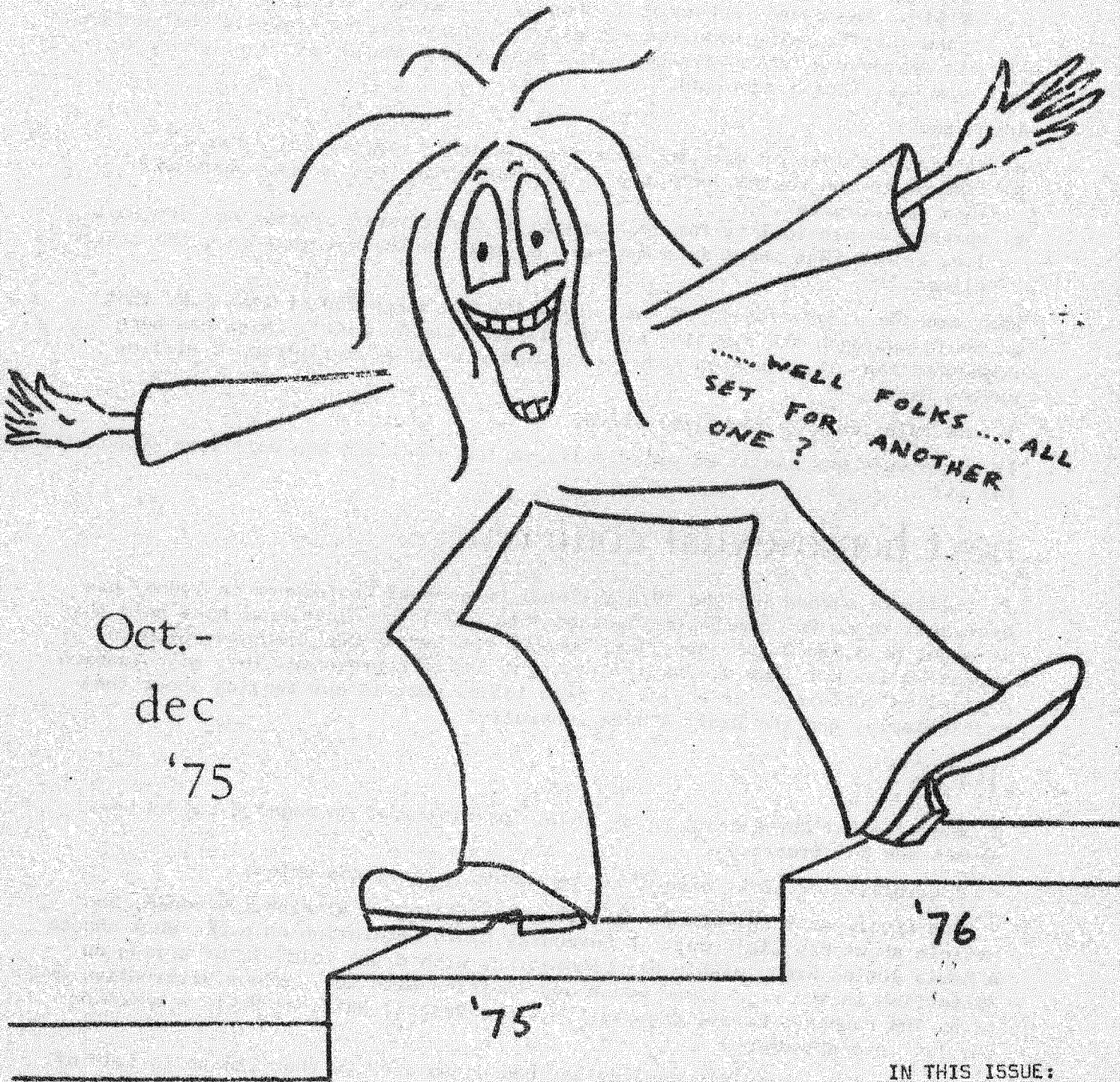


melbourne

GAY LIBERATION



Oct.-
dec
'75

IN THIS ISSUE:

- * Agenda for next General Mtg.
- * Action on the Jones Private Members Bill
- * Gay Liberation in Community Radio Federation?
- * Review of Victorian Campaign to Support Mike Clohesy
- * Where to in 1976 for Gay Liberation

259 Brunswick Street, Fitzroy Ph.41-4926

This issue was put together by Ray, Helen, Gary, John, Max, Graham, Keith and Steve

After the Fraser-Kerr-C.I.A.-
Big Business electoral victory,

what now for the
gay liberation movement?

What are our tasks?

- * Not to become despondent, but to analyse the defeat of the A.L.P. and its meaning for homosexual people.
- * Analyse our own mistakes. Not to wait for reformist governments to carry out our demands but to realise the importance of our own strength in the historical process of effecting change. If things are to change, then it should be our voice that counts.
- * To deepen the dialogue with homosexual people so as to heighten our collective critical awareness of the institutions that oppress us. To develop a politics of liberation which embodies our collective will.

* To be prepared for self-criticism.

91. For homosexual men to face their own sexism.

92. For privileged homosexuals to recognise the effects of their class origins - for example, the barriers created by tertiary education to communicating with working class homosexuals.

93. To be ready to critically examine the camp subculture and its effects on us. In particular we must examine the cult of youth and its alienating influence on older homosexual people.

94. To begin consciousness-raising on our racism as white people in a white-supremacist society. To listen to black people and support their struggle against racism in this country.

* To overcome sectarianism and help build a united left. To strengthen the alliance between the movements of the oppressed. To get organised!

We affirm: Power to the people!

Power to the oppressed!

UNITED, THE PEOPLES OF

THE WORLD WILL WIN!

[Written by Gary Jaynes and Ray Brearley for Melbourne Gay liberation. January 3, 1976.]

Action on Vic. anti-homosexual Laws

MAXIMUM PENALTIES FOR MALE HOMOSEXUAL ACTS UNDER EXISTING LAW IN VICTORIA

Section of Crimes Act 1958	Nature of Act	Max. Penalty
68(1)	Buggery with person under 14, or buggery with violence	20 yrs
(2)	Buggery (with consent)	15 yrs
(3)	Assault to attempt buggery Attempted buggery (with consent)	10 yrs 10 yrs
(3a) & (4)	Indecent assault (consent of male under 16 no defence)	5 yrs
(3b)	Ditto, 2nd or subsequent offence	10 yrs
69(4)	Act of gross indecency (or party to) Procurement of a male for act of gross indecency	3 yrs 3 yrs

NOTE 1. Buggery includes acts with any person or animal
2. There are no definitions of 'indecent assault' or 'act of gross indecency'.

Section of Summary Offences Act 1966

18	Loitering or soliciting in a public place for homosexual purposes	\$50/1 month
	Ditto, 2nd offence	\$250/3 months
	Ditto, 3rd or subsequent offence	\$500/6 months

Private Member's Bill is Inadequate.

Barry Jones' Private Member's Bill to decriminalize private homosexual acts between consenting males is likely to come up again in the Autumn session of the State Parliament, after getting only one reading in the Spring Session in 1975.

The Bill in draft form however is unsatisfactory for a number of reasons. So a meeting of all Victorian homosexual organizations has been called for Wednesday January 28th, 8 p.m., at Society Five (270 Lonsdale St.) to ensure that homosexuals make a strong bid to shape it in our interests. This meeting arose out of discussion between people from Gay Liberation and Society Five. The major weaknesses are these:

- It leaves in tact the section of the Summary Offences Act that gives police wide powers to arrest known or suspected male homosexuals in public places (for loitering or soliciting). The recent South Australian legislation has eradicated these anomalies.
- The wording of the Bill, again unlike the South Australian legislation, retains distinctions between men and women, heterosexual and homosexual acts.

Instead of merely outlawing all sexual acts committed by coercion, the Bill punishes all 'acts of gross indecency' between males; but in the next section allows certain defences: that your partner is consenting, over 18, not a relative and the act was committed in private. This wording is a camouflage for 2 areas of discrimination:

- Heterosexual acts are not illegal for persons between the ages of 16 and 18 years.

(ii) Nowhere in the statutes is it said that heterosexual acts must only be committed 'in private'. It is assumed that heterosexuals ^{know} what they can and can't get away with; and if they go 'too far', they risk a charge of Offensive Behaviour. The 'in private' stipulation however is an extra weapon against homosexuals, making us still vulnerable to police spying or entrapment on the beats, in cars, or anywhere a cop can find you. But instead of the nominal fine heterosexuals might receive for getting caught (more likely they'd be ignored), we stand to be imprisoned for up to 3 years for an 'act of gross indecency'.

(iii) Until words like 'act of gross indecency' are explicitly defined (or better still abandoned) we'll never know what we might be charged for. To a puritan-minded judge, ^{men} lying on a public lawn kissing might constitute an act of 'gross indecency'. We simply don't know. No comparable uncertainty threatens heterosexuals.

Even though the Bill is being put as a Private Member's Bill, the State Labor Party does have a policy on homosexuality. The State Conference for Branches decided in 1975 that 'No law shall discriminate against any person on the basis of sexual proclivity' (i.e. sexual preference!), and that 'Homosexual conduct in private between consenting adults, or between consenting minors where both are of similar age to be no longer illegal'. You'll notice that this even is a more radical stance than the Jones Bill, but for reasons best known to itself, the policy is not binding on the Party.

When Mr Holding announced that he was inviting submissions about the Bill, a Gay Liberation General Meeting formulated its position and sent it to Mr Holding. We argued that 'a homosexual lifestyle is equally valid as a heterosexual lifestyle, and...that the law presently governing sexual conduct for all people is unduly repressive'. We proposed amendments to the Crimes Act and Summary Offences Act that would ensure:

1. homosexual acts between consenting people be no longer illegal provided they are:
 - a) over 16 years of age
 - or b) between 10 and 16 years of age
 - or c) if one person is under 16 the other(s) is/are no more than 3 yrs older.

(This has subsequently criticized around Gay Liberation as being repressive).

2. point 1. apply to incest.
3. the words 'in private' don't appear in the final legislation, as the laws on Offensive Behaviour render them unnecessary. (Incidentally the 'in private' condition doesn't appear in the A.C.T. Legislation, on which the Jones Bill is supposed to have been modelled).
4. emotive adjectives such as 'abominable' be deleted.
5. 'for homosexual purposes' be deleted from section 18 of the Summary Offences Act. (to get rid of penalties for loitering and soliciting).
6. it be a defence against a charge of offensive behaviour relating to homosexual acts that the parties involved in homosexual acts reasonably believed that no non-consenting person was present. (The intention here was to guard against police spying and entrapment methods. Another way might be to say that the person offended should be other than a policeman. This has been written to some codes).
7. the laws on prostitution be repealed (unnecessary and presently discriminate against women).

Meeting Jan. 13 to clarify our position

Our submission didn't say how the law should be re-drafted (though previous efforts of Gay Liberation people have done this); we only stated guidelines for reform. In view of this, and because of the subsequent criticisms, our position needs to be reviewed again before the meeting at Society Five. With such a large agenda for our next G.M. (Jan 8), it is proposed that a special meeting be convened on Tuesday January 13 at the Centre. Anyone with an interest in getting rid of anti-homosexual laws is welcome to come along.

2.
Accurate Criticism Obviously Hurts ———

But Distortion Wins the Day.

**OOOH!
WE'RE
NOT
NICE
DEARS**

SIR:
The homosexual organisations of Melbourne express their contempt for your reporting of the Society Five Christmas party.
The article was factual, but everything else about the presentation was morally bankrupt and unethical, including the heading "Here's Queers For Xmas", the picture of a bearded man in glitter drag, and the caption, "I'll be there in my best gear, sweetie."
We are not about to lie down to technically legal queer-bashing.
We challenge your moral courage to print the opinion of those directly affected.
Carl Reinganum
and five other signatories
MELBOURNE

party of the year
**HERE'S
QUEERS
FOR
XMAS!**
And to you!

Sunday
Observer
Dec. 28

Following a malicious ^{mis}representation in the 'Sunday Observer' of 14th Dec of a Society Five Christmas party, the letter below was submitted for publication.

On 28th Dec. a mischievously censored version of the letter appeared (see above)

If you've got anger to vent about this, come to the General Meeting on Thursday 8th Jan at the Centre. Gay lawyers and media people particularly welcome.

Letter to Editor of Sunday Observer

The homosexual organizations of Melbourne wish to express their contempt for your newspaper's reporting last week of the Christmas party scheduled for this Friday at Society Five.

Strictly speaking, the article was factual but everything else about the presentation was morally bankrupt and in contravention of every ethical standard that journalists of any integrity might ever aspire to.

It would be futile to detail the offensive characteristics of the whole spread for your benefit. Readers however should be made aware of the means that are available to the sub-editor who wishes to discredit the subjects of a fairly neutral article

- * He can slap a derisive heading across the top ("Here's Queers for Xmas").
- * He can give prominence to pictures of people who in no way represent those referred to in the article (a bearded man in glitter drag).
- * He can invent captions to photographs that reinforce negative stereotypes of minority groups ("I'll be there in my best gear sweetie" said the alleged Gay Libber in drag).

It is also pertinent to mention that the information was furnished to your reporter only after being assured that this was not a "set up job".

We are not so naive as to view the "Sunday Observer" as a paragon of responsible ^{published} journalism. Possibly the article was no better or worse than the many others you've ^{published}. On the other hand, we are not about to lie down to technically legal queer-bashing.

Since we don't believe in censorship, we don't question the right of newspapers like yours to exist. We do, however believe in fair play. Thus, we issue this challenge to your moral courage to print the opinion of those directly affected by your editorial decisions. Then let the readers judge for themselves whether, even for the "Sunday Observer", a stunt like that was below the belt.

Signed by 5 reps of Gay Liberation, and one each from Society 5, and M.C.C.

next national conference

THE SECOND NATIONAL HOMOSEXUAL CONFERENCE SYDNEY, AUGUST 29-31, 1976.

A collective has been formed in Sydney to organise a second Australian homosexual conference, to be held this year.

This is a draft agenda and think piece, to be distributed as widely as possible throughout the movement in Australia. It is hoped that any suggestions, changes, criticisms, comments on the agenda and structure will be made so that a final agenda can be set late February or early March.

STRUCTURE

The collective feels that the workshops were the most successful part of the last conference, although plenary sessions still have a useful role to play. Thus the number of plenaries has been reduced, time for workshops expanded, and a final session suggested which will consider motions and also allow for the workshops to report their decisions or views if they wish.

We feel also, after the broad areas of discussion at the Melbourne conference, that the plenaries should concern themselves at this conference with more specific areas. Some attempt could be made to solicit original papers for these sessions.

Workshops can be held on any topic that people attending want to discuss. We envisage that some papers might not be presented to a plenary session, but might instead form the basis for a workshop discussion. Such papers would still be circulated to all who registered.

We are suggesting that the conference be extended by one day, as many felt the last conference was rather short. The Friday session would be given over to discussing education and homosexuals, with the primary focus being a follow-up of the motions passed by most campuses in 1975. This Friday coincides with all University, CAE and most school holidays, so all actively involved will have the opportunity to attend.

Draft Agenda

FRIDAY AUGUST 29

- 10 a.m. Plenary - Education
- 2 p.m. Workshops - largely on education
- 8 p.m. Registration of delegates and an informal social function

SATURDAY AUGUST 30

- 10 a.m. Plenary - Religion
- 2 p.m. Workshops - as proposed by delegates
- 8 p.m. Dance

SUNDAY AUGUST 31

- 10 a.m. Plenary - EITHER Government legislation, law and violence
OR Sexism in men
- 12 noon Workshops
- 3 p.m. Plenary - Motions, reports from Workshops, plans for future action etc

NOTE: This agenda is a working draft only; hopefully it will stimulate discussion/comment/suggestion. Please write to us as soon as possible offering any comment you may have: -

Sydney Homosexual Conference Collective
C/- Box 5, Wentworth Building,
University of Sydney SYDNEY 2006

This agenda comes up for discussion at the G.M. on Thurs 8th Jan.

See p.2. item 2. of the agenda, re the possibility of Men Only Conference.

a letter to "Campaign"

To the Editor:

The enclosed report of the Victorian campaign to support Mike Clohesy is submitted for publication on the condition that this letter is published adjacent to it.

Why the condition? Although I would hope to assist wherever possible with news of interest to Campaign's readership, I am concerned that any contribution of mine to Campaign should not be seen as endorsement of the almost exclusively male-orientation of the newspaper as it now stands. Allow me to elaborate.

As readers who attended this year's National Homosexual Conference in Melbourne will appreciate, a great number of lesbian women who worked in the mixed gay organisations, and in some cases did nearly all the work, have now decided that their energies were mis-spent. The gay men who on first appearances were their natural allies (since at least they didn't exploit women as sexual objects only).

They shouted women down in meetings and bored them with pompous speeches; they would speak as though "homosexual" referred only to male homosexual; they dismissed any women strong enough not to be cowed as "aggressive bitches", and ignored or patronized those not so strong; they allowed women to do much of the shit-work, yet took all the kudos; they expected women to provide them with emotional support while they treated other males as merely sexual objects and potential conquests; the more masculine male would put-down the more effeminate, and so on.

There's much generalization there, and of course it wasn't all men doing all those things all the time. But it was sufficiently prevalent for women eventually to get sick of it. When challenged by women about this sexist behavior, with characteristic male egoism, many would doggedly refuse to admit they might be wrong, some would even accuse the women of "just seeking attention". For these sorts of reasons many women left Melbourne Gay Liberation from 1972-4, while others stayed on to fight. Needless to say, those who've stayed are not prepared to be put down by men again. Survi-

val of the fittest, as one woman put it. And those men around now, mindful of the divisive effects of our sexism (as well as its destructive effects in our personal lives) are not about to repeat the mistakes of the past.

I know sure as hell we're not "cured" of sexism — no male product of a culture as pervasively sexist as this could be. We do know however that unless we're prepared to continuously monitor our "instinctive" responses for tell-tale signs of sexism, then we can't expect serious-minded lesbian women to commit their energies to working with us. Indeed why should they, when they can go to a Women's Movement from which they can organize as women and lesbians. But if they do, I know it's not the women who will lose out, as we saw when Melbourne GLF all but collapsed at the end of 1974.

So much for background.

I've read that you want to develop "Campaign" as a national newspaper representative of all opinion in the gay community, and that seems to me a fine goal. At present as you point out, there is a scarcity of women's contributions, and you would like to remedy that. Having seen your first few issues I'm doubtful however that many gay women, at least not the "survivors" in Melbourne GLF, and certainly not the lesbian feminists outside of it, are likely to be very interested. (By the way have you asked them?) Except for the odd inviting sentence, the whole flavour of the content is geared to appeal to male homosexuals only — and not the more seriously minded of those either. I can see there's a dilemma that while you're only getting contributions from males, how can you possibly attract women's contributions. My only answer to that is, Don't repel them. For instance:

* Don't tell lesbian feminists (or gay men for that matter) that they shouldn't be concerned with abortion and prostitution, as though the oppression of women and male homosexuals were unrelated.

* And don't trivialize the Women's Movement with front-page captions like "Lady Menstruation, Queen of Women's Lib" beneath the photo of a man in drag.

"Campaign" claims to "Australia's national newspaper for the gay society". Some of us feel it has limited appeal.

That's Sunday Observer style, and gay people better than most should know how that can hurt. If you want to convince women that we, as male homosexuals, aim to treat each other as humans rather than sexual objects, then let that be reflected in the content, especially the advertising. God knows we don't need mimicry of the exploitation of sexual frustration that characterizes the heterosexual world of advertising.

When you fill up three pages of an issue with pictures of men in

drag, spare a thought for women readers who are angry about the female sex role stereotyping, especially in dress. By way of analogy, how have you felt when gays are being stereotyped, "just for fun", by straight comedians?

One way might be to consciously read each issue as it might appear to a woman, keeping two questions in mind: Is it relevant to women? Is it offensive to women?

Yours sincerely,
Gary Jaynes.
Melbourne GLF.

Better a sexist gay newspaper than none at all, says editor of Campaign

Editor,

Gary,

Thank you for the news report. I would have printed your letter anyway for I have never been upset by criticism. Your letter raises many important points which deserve answering and a point of view which is valuable.

'Advocate' is recognised as the largest selling gay newspaper in the world. Their advertising, content and news is far more male orientated than is CAMPAIGN'S. There must be a lesson to be learnt from this. Could it be that male guys are more organised than their gay sisters, are more inclined to put their views on paper? Without advertising CAMPAIGN would not exist so I'm certainly not inclined to refuse adverts that are sexist. Ideals are one thing but we also deserve a gay newspaper and due to lack of benefactors or charities we have to cover our expenses.

I have never told anyone not to be concerned about abortion or prostitution. What I did say was that gay rights societies should be working for gay rights. Abortion is a hysterical subject on which people take opposite views . . . murder or a blessing. It's exactly the same with party politics. I don't give a damn if we have a Gay Abortionist Society, A gay ALP Society and a Gay Liberal Society. What I do care about is unity and a stopping of the petty

squabbles and internal arguments that expend all our energies. If it isn't possible to have one society to achieve this (and I believe Society Five proves that it is) then lets organise ourselves into separate interest or political groups and **WORK TOGETHER.**

'Sexism' is the most overexposed word in our society. Remember the classic instance when Martin Smith put up a notice asking for help to 'man the hustings' when he stood for parliament? It caused so much controversy and was finally changed to "people the hustings".

Your report of the last Homosexual Conference is one of several I have received . . . each give a different version and each are one sided. If the organisers of the next one listen to all these and learn the lessons then perhaps we can achieve something next year.

Unlike previous gay publications we aim to cater for all homosexuals, male or female, drag queen or closet, intellectual and uneducated. You will know just how impossible that course is and it certainly won't be other than fraught with criticisms. If we are not permitted to print photographs of men in drag at a fun party or at a social gathering we fail to report news. Where's our sense of humor?

Thanks again for your letter. A Happy, Prosperous and Unified New Year to all societies everywhere.
CAMPAIGN

debate in » Geelong News «

A "debate" on homosexuality in the "Geelong News" last August managed to flush out some of the more blatant and twisted anti-homosexual feelings that are around. A sympathetic but apologetic article headed "The Third Sex" (groan!) started it all with an interview with Leo and Martin from Geelong Gay Liberation. Amongst the reassurances to the general public that homosexuals (men only, of course) aren't all that bad, there was also a seven-point manifesto, which would have been the main outrager of morals. The manifesto wasn't radical in a traditionally political sense (i.e. there were no calls for the smashing of capitalism, etc) but it dared to affirm and promote the validity and worth of homosexuality.

The response to the article varied from a married man who told of the loneliness and pretence of his life, to religious people quoting the bible and being morally outraged.

The "debate" occupied the letters page of the "News" for 9 weeks and was finally stopped (even though the paper said they were being swamped with letters) due to the "debate" being "well aired".

CLOHESY CAMPAIGN - a review

The Campaign to Support Mike Clohesy in Victoria

Gay men and women in Victoria, angered by the Roman Catholic Church's dismissal of Mike Clohesy for 'coming out' on television, took to the streets on consecutive Sundays in late November to protest at St Francis Church in Melbourne and St Mary's Church in Geelong.

The lobby was initiated by Melbourne Gay Liberation and brought together representatives of the organisations working publicly for homosexual rights in Victoria: Melbourne Gay Teachers' Group, Geelong Gay Liberation, Society For a More Inclusive Community Church and Lesbian First Steps. Only Melbourne Acceptance, the Catholic homosexual organisation, refused to have any part in it, but then it is scarcely an organisation working publicly for homosexual rights. Its convenor claimed that being a signatory to the letter that was signed by representatives of all other organisations would have compromised their 'behind the scenes' submissions to the Church. At that stage they had taken no position on the Clohesy case and had no plans to, because no correspondence had been tabled on the issue at the last committee meeting.

Referred to the fact that we probably could exert an influence that would get Mike his job back, the aim of the lobby was threefold:

(a) to alert the public, gay and non-gay, to a blatant instance of discrimination in employment against homosexuals; (b) to highlight Roman Catholic dogma as a source of that discrimination;

(c) to exert pressure on the relevant employing authorities on the Victorian Catholic system.

A letter was written to the Catholic Education Office in Victoria asking it to state its position on employees who publicly declare their homosexuality (see draft in Melbourne GLF Special Bulletin, Nov 2nd). Their reply was predictably evasive. It said the matter was 'very complex', that it had 'polarised' the issue, and that responsibility for hiring teachers wasn't theirs anyway; it referred to the local authorities. Nevertheless they'd be prepared to engage in 'dialogue' with us.

All this was very strange to us. What could be simpler than saying 'yes' or 'no' to the question 'Would you hire or continue to employ a teacher who declared his or her homosexuality publicly?' As we discovered later, when we accepted the invitation to 'dialogue', it was simple after all. The answer was NO — they just didn't want to put it in writing. As for the responsibility of hiring and firing resting with 'local authorities', that is evidently only true in routine cases. Politically contentious decisions are made at headquarters, as we saw in Mike Clohesy's case. The Principal of Marist Brothers didn't want to sack him — and said so shortly after the TV appearance. He was happy with Mike's teaching, and wished the whole thing would die out, but later informed Mike that he'd been 'instructed' to dismiss him. The statement by James McLaren of the Sydney Catholic Education Office on A Current Affair (16th Oct) left no doubt as to where the instruction came from. As long as he remained in the closet, according to McLaren, Mike's homosexuality, though 'sinful', was not reason enough to get him the sack. But once 'out' he and others who follow his example must expect to be sacked. That is, homosexuals are OK by the Roman Catholic Church so long as they collude in the Church's hypocrisy.

The mentioned meeting with the representatives of the Melbourne Catholic Education Office didn't resolve any differences, though it did clarify them. You see, we simplistic sods fail to recognise the distinction between the 'internal forum and the external forum'. That's theological jargon for what's commonly called the double standard. The Roman Catholic Church judges what you do in private and what you are seen to do in public by two different moral standards. Practising homosexuality is a sin, and you should feel guilty about it; but proclaiming homosexuality without guilt, even if you aren't actively homosexual, is far worse. In fact it's so bad that it warrants 'real' punishment, in material deprivation, rather than spiritual. You'll not be ex-communicated for 'coming out' in these days of declining numbers of faithful; but just as thieves and murderers can't be allowed to influence the young so homosexuals must keep quiet about it. The threat to those in a position of

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Clohesy Campaign (cont)



influence over the young is much greater than merely God's wrath; it's a case of lose your job. The argument that this reinforces guilt and shame at being homosexual doesn't impress Catholics; probably because they're meant to feel guilty about so many things, including just about all forms of non-procreational sexual activity. The meeting didn't turn up much else, except that they thought the only way Mike might get re-instated would be if he went back and said nothing. 'He could go to lots of places and no-one would know anything about him'.

Double-talk is not dialogue in our opinion, so we decided to take the issue into the streets. On Sunday, 23rd Nov, about 45 men and women from all the groups stood outside St Francis Church in the city and handed about 800 pamphlets to passers by and church-goers. The pamphlet outlined the Sydney dismissal, how the Melbourne Catholic authorities had, by default, endorsed it, and urged them to contact Fr Martin, Director of the Melbourne Catholic Education Office, if they didn't want to be a party to their church's persecution of homosexuals. Banners reading 'End Homosexual Discrimination in Employment' were made especially for the occasion, and these, along with the familiar GLF banners and symbols, made an impressive sight for the passing traffic. 'Lesbians and Poofsters' was, as always, a traffic stopper.

Publicity was mixed. On the one hand we got plenty of it — 2 radio news spots before the event and 2 on the day, coverage by 3 TV channels and Sun and Age reports on Monday — but much of it was poor. Inadequate reporting is perhaps to be expected on radio and TV, but false reporting of the newspapers was rather more galling. All reports understated the numbers present, the Sun and Age reducing us, by error and innuendo, to a handful of freaks aimlessly disrupting the service and getting our names taken by police. In fact, as an unpublished letter sent to the editor of 'The Age' stated, no names were taken by police because there was no need to. The demonstration, for our part, was peaceful. The only ugliness in the occasion was caused by one church-goer who took it upon himself to attempt to rip our banners and physically attack the men and women holding them. He was restrained without retaliatory violence. The Assistant Editor of 'The Age', Geoffrey Barker, says his anonymous reporter 'saw and heard names being taken by police', and at the time there were only '12 to 15' people present, though he wasn't present for the duration of the demonstration, and didn't see the violence of the church-goer. We say categorically that no names were taken, and that the only time we spoke with police was when we were setting the banners up and the police briefed us courteously of our rights. At that time, 9.30 a.m., there were only about a dozen of us, but the leafletting was due to start for the 10 a.m. mass, by which time there were over 40 demonstrators present.

It is worth emphasising here that 'The Age' refused us access to both their 'Letters To The Editor' column and their 'We Were Wrong' system for correcting factual errors. Our complaint that their report was both factually incorrect and gave little insight into the reasons for the demonstration was arbitrarily rejected by the Assistant Editor, who said he was not 'persuaded'

that they were wrong, and that he would not allow us to make 'unjustified charges against their accuracy and honesty'. This leads us to ask how he might ever be persuaded. Does it require sworn individual testimony from all those present? Certainly it's hard to argue personally with anonymous reporters. In fairness, he did say that he would 'consider' for publication a 'brief' letter at a later date, having admitted the inadequacy of their coverage of the broad issue of homosexual rights. But the question remains, what purpose does the letters-column of 'The Age' serve if it's not to open debate on matters it has just reported. It would appear the column is, at least partly, a vehicle of criticism, but within certain editorially defined limits. On this occasion those limits don't allow the group of persons directly affected by their reporting to publicly criticise 'The Age'. Instead 'The Age' chose to disbelieve us on some counts, and make excuses privately on others.

The following week at Geelong a smaller group of 25 was involved, but we did better with the media. The 'Geelong News' gave it front-page headline coverage the day before, and about a half page including a picture the following Tuesday. Moreover it did so accurately. This paper deserves some credit. It has given considerable space to discussion of gay issues (9 weeks debate in its letters column about the setting up of GLF in Geelong) and its reporting and commentary upon gay-related news has been generally fair and accurate.

A feature of the reactions of those being leafleted on both occasions, was the timidity of women in the company of their husbands. So frequently did the husband make out as to shield his wife and children from our insidious presence, and presumably our information, that some of us tried to bypass the husbands and approach the woman first. However it was a rare woman who dared take a pamphlet in the company of her rejecting husband. But that shouldn't surprise us, as a friend remarked, because that woman's got to live with the bastard when she gets home, and is probably economically dependent on him. Who says feminism's got nothing to do with gay liberation?

POST SCRIPT

A final comment about the publicity campaign within the gay community. Before the first demo we leafleted the gay bars in Melbourne to inform gays about the issue we were fighting. Only one bar, the Union in North Carlton, unfortunately it's for men only, permitted distribution of leaflets within the bar. On this and other campaigns to publicise gay political and social activities we've found the Union's co-operation to be in sharp contrast to the attitude of all the other gay bars, including Annabel's, the pub that's ostensibly run by and for gays (which gays we might ask). Their policy forbids distribution within the bars of any pamphlets relating to religion or party politics. This is meant to be in keeping with the 'purely social' and 'non-political' status of the establishment. It's entrepreneur is not convinced that institutions like the Catholic Church or legislation like the Crimes Act have any political significance for gays. And even if they did, he says he won't allow us to impinge on people's 'fun'. If we care all that much we should be prepared to contact gays by standing outside and handing out pamphlets individually. And of course we can; but as I say, that's the difference between the Union and the rest.

Gary Jaynes



Animal Farm

Gay Lib speakers
at Neerim South
Apex Club

At Neerim South pub I really felt I was in a strange country where I could not understand the locals. They would ask questions, and yet appear not to take in the answers. One man kept harping on hormones and the "what about child molesters" questions kept recurring. What we said made no difference to those who thought they already knew.

One thing everyone understood and appreciated was that there's a lot of homosexuality about. They know all about it, they all know someone who once kissed someone etc. And then there's the animals.

Like dogs you know. Dogs'll play around with each other, and two bitches will try to have intercourse. And horses too. Yeah, you have to watch out for that.

We're talking about people.

The law doesn't discriminate against homosexuals

You can still get 15 years for buggery.

But that's not homosexuality.

Yes, anal intercourse. Homosexuals do that.

No buggery's with animals isn't it?

Isn't it? Yeah, animals.

People too. People too? Yeah.

You get it with the horses and the cows.

We've got cows like you - lesbian cows. We get rid of them, sell them or butcher them. You can't have them in the herd. It's not natural.

No it's not natural to go around shooting people.

But you can't have them in the herd.

Now you've only got those cows for profit. You keep them for the money you can get out of them. You can't treat people like cows.

No! We love our cows! And there's not much profit in cows these days.

HELEN

