

VECTOR

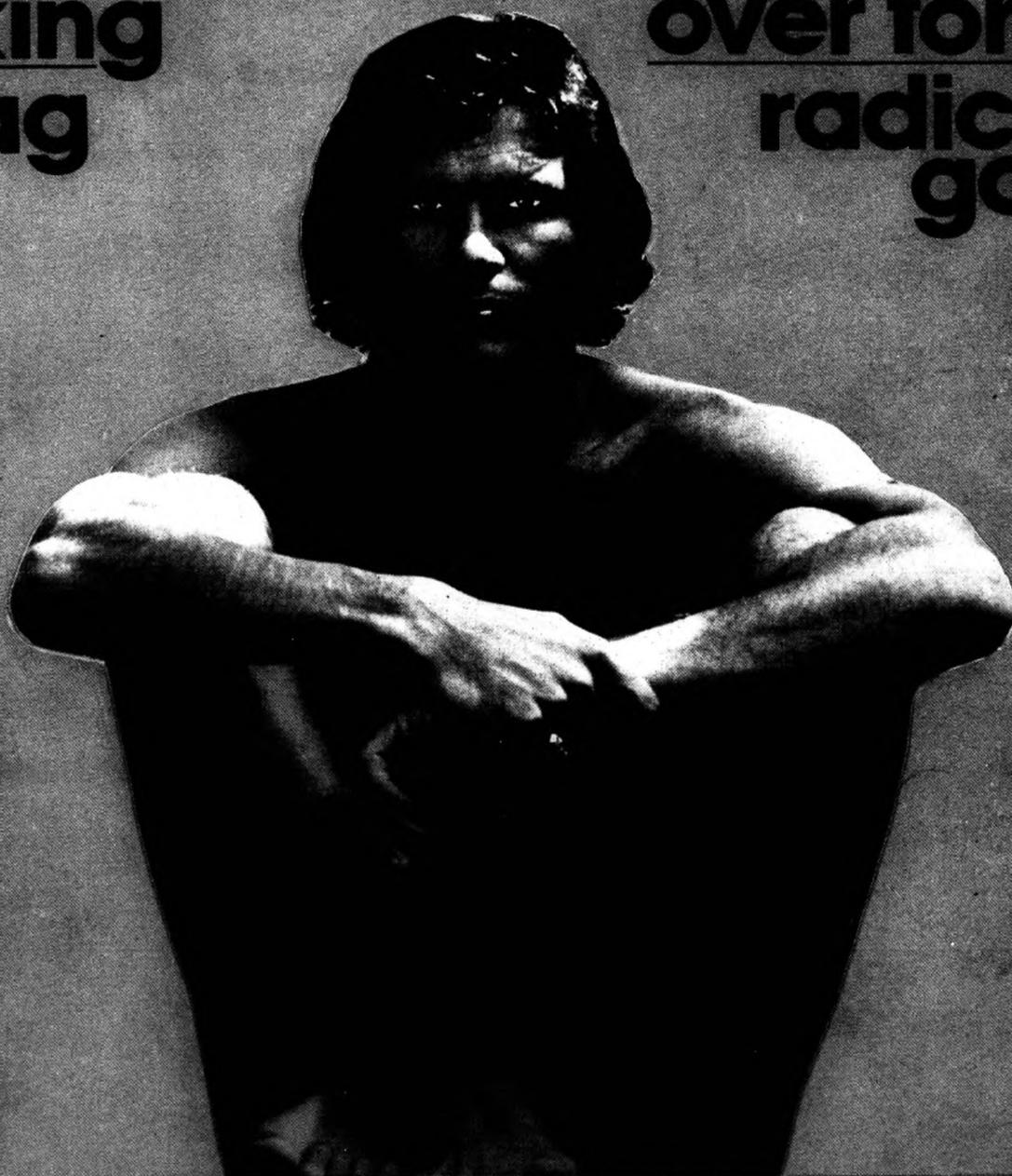
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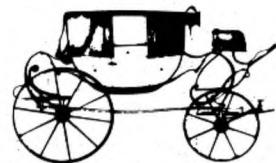
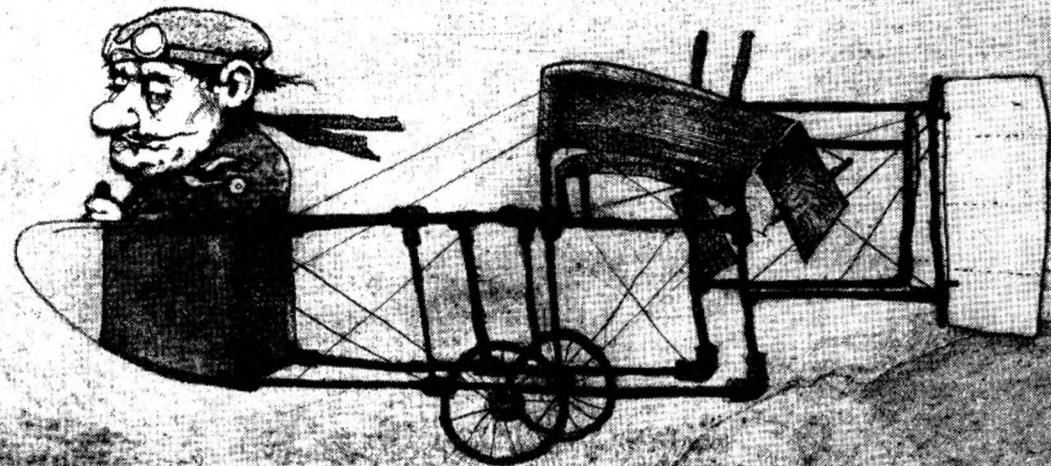
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S.I.R.'S LITTLEST ANGEL



ONCE UPON A TIME NOT SO long ago an angel came to the S.I.R. Center on Sixth Street. He was just a small angel and frightened by this city comprised of so many different kinds of people. He was all alone and lonely. He had traveled a long way to come to San Francisco, for he had heard of the wonderful freedom enjoyed by the people here. But, when he arrived, it was so very strange and he didn't know anyone. It was enough to make even an angel cry.

But then he was told of this place, S.I.R., where they helped people to find work and places to live and they were kind. So our angel went to the place called S.I.R., and they did find him a job and a place to live and they were kind and loving to him.

Our angel was very happy, for he had found friends and was doing things that made him happy. His heart was so filled with love that he wanted to help the people at S.I.R. and to help other angels that might come to this wonderful city named San Francisco.

So our angel began to help at the place called S.I.R. There was so much to do; floors to be mopped, trash to be emptied, carpets to be cleaned. Our angel was happy because he was helping others.

He began to help with answering telephones and talking with the people who

would call needing all kinds of things; jobs and places to find something to eat and a place where they could stay. Some would want to know where to find a doctor or someone to help with their problems. Some of the calls were very sad. Sometimes a person would call just because he was lonely and wanted to talk with someone.

These calls sometimes made our angel very unhappy because he wanted to help everyone and sometimes he couldn't. He would try to find jobs for people and would help them to find a place and something to eat. For times were very bad in San Francisco and in the whole country and many people had neither jobs nor a place to live. Our angel thought and thought just how he could get more people to help.

Then the good president of S.I.R. made our little angel the Director of all the S.I.R. Angels, and he began to ask all the friends of S.I.R. to help:

"Everyone can help, wherever you are. If you're in San Francisco and have a job that needs to be done or know of a job, call the angel at S.I.R.—781-1570. If you would like to help with a donation to support the job referral and emergency assistance program, you are invited to become a S.I.R. Angel."

Our angel was happy again because he had found a way to help others, and he was sure many of the friends of S.I.R. would want to feel good by helping.

You can help. Please call 781-1570 or write S.I.R.'s Angel at 83 Sixth Street, San Francisco, California 94103.

God will bless you.

S.I.R.'s littlest Angel, HARRY LEISHURE, at twenty-four is one of the Society's youngest active, unpaid volunteer workers. From mopping the floors with a mop that's bigger than he (Harry's only five feet tall) to emptying trash, answering telephones or helping with job counseling, Harry is always busy. You can meet Harry almost any day at the S.I.R. Center, 83 Sixth St., San Francisco—between Mission & Market.

EDITORIAL

A Word, Sir.

Publicity surrounding the recent S.I.R. election has led to a concern on my part that the credit for S.I.R.'s financial recovery be properly spread among the many hard-working people responsible for it.

The three key elements in this recovery were proper central accounting, many fund raising efforts, and effective cost control. My role in the first area has been well publicized; it is now appropriate that proper credit be given to the other two areas.

Those responsible for the highly successful fund raising efforts over the past two years include, but are not limited to, Hector Navarro Caceres, Gardner, Ed, Don Scott, Jack Baker, John Callen, Joel Coleman, Russell White, Eddie Paulson, Charlotte Coleman, Bill Bailey, Naomi Murdach, Kimo, Ron Ross, La Kish, Frieda & The Owl Court, Russ Higginbotham & The Phoenix Court, Bob Cramer & The Cable Car Court, Larry Eppinette, Dave Monroe & Acme Beer, VECTOR Coverboy Contestants Denny Haddah, Stuart, and Peter Decker, Paul Bentley and the tap dancing "Lushettes," San Francisco Tavern Guild, Dick Myhre, Ken Rice, Sweetlips of the Kokpit, Jerry Pruitt, Ray Hedges, Bob Ross, Randy Johnson, Bond Shands, and many others who attended functions, helped

who attended functions, helped out, and donated money.

Equal credit must go to those many individuals who helped us reduce costs by carrying on the day-to-day functions of the Society on a purely voluntary basis or at salaries below current standards. A list of those must include Bill Plath, Richard Piro, Ken Rice, Elmer Wilhelm, David Stahlmann, Ferris Lehman, Rick Hansen, Chuck Clocker, Norman Armentrout, Harry Leishure, Max Clements, and, again, many others.

Do you have additions to the list? Let us know. We'll print them!

Extraordinary results are usually achieved, not by miracles, but by many ordinary people doing ordinary tasks with consistency and dedication. That is what S.I.R. is all about and that is the way it will continue to progress.

As this issue of VECTOR goes to press the California State Legislature continues to move ahead with Assemblyperson Willie Brown's Consensual Sex Bill (AB 489) and Assemblyperson John Foran's Employment Non-Discrimination Bill (AB 633). We once again wish to remind our California readers to contact their legislators, urge their favorable consideration, and commend or rebuke them as appropriate for their performance. WE ARE CLOSE TO VICTORY! KEEP UP THE MASSIVE LOBBYING!



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In Memory of

It was with regret that we learned of the death of Chet Seigers. He was quite a man who thoroughly enjoyed life, living it to the full.

In his younger years he was active in vaudeville and other theatre work. As a long time active member of the Society for Individual Rights he accomplished much for the entire gay community. He was also associated with the Catholic movement, Dignity, where, again, he was much appreciated.

Chet being Chet knew how to bow out gracefully. Having had dinner and a pleasant evening at the theatre he had a stroke, leaving the land of the living in a matter of a few hours.

We will miss him—all of us.

Chet

HETEROSEXUALITY

Might one point out to Dr. Reuben that being heterosexual is a problem for most of them
^ In my years of association with heterosexuals, some of whom I consider to be my best friends, I have observed that many of them frequent bars, street corners, parks, and houses of prostitution, out of the inability of our society to come to grips with the true nature of their sexuality?

*Richard Amory
San Jose, Calif.*

RECOGNITION OF CREDIT

We both know the names of the many individuals who did so much for S.I.R. last year, but have we really given them the recognition they so justly deserve? I think not! Looking over the list of benefits, recalling the names of the many organizers and participants, I cannot help but think that we have been much too conservative with our praise and the result has been the misdirection of our recognition away from those who were and are most deserving.

In my opinion, statements like those of your VECTOR Editor belittle the many fine and successful efforts of our fellow team members. Credit for S.I.R.'s success, in these instances, must be equally shared, and the lion's share (if there is to be any) must go to President Hector and the other organizers of our benefits (Joel Coleman, Ron Ross, Eddie Paulsen, Bob Cramer, the Acme Beer people, Charlotte Coleman, Russell Higgenbotham, the VECTOR Coverman Contestants, etc., etc., etc.).

*Bond R. Shands, Jr.
San Francisco, Calif.*

ADDED BENEFITS FOR MEDI-CAL!

An alternative plan for Medi-Cal card holders is in effect now and the advantages to those who may qualify are indeed worth the time it takes to inquire.

For information and to see whether you qualify for these added benefits, simply call Phil Hollis at 863-1912 before 9 am or after 7 pm and he will check your card for you. You must request these additional benefits if you qualify. There is no fee involved. You must reside in San Francisco or Daly City.

*Phil Hollis
San Francisco, Calif.*

AAA DENIES LOVER CARD

The California Automobile Association has discontinued automatic cards to spouses and children of the primary card holder. Requests for additional cards must now be in writing and paid for as "associate members." Recently I made such a request for my lover and inclosed his check proving residence in the same household, etc. A very nervous AAA employee called to explain that since he was not a legal dependent they could not, etc. We would like to take AAA to task. If anyone has had a similar experience, please contact the VECTOR Editor and maybe we can get something going.

*Name Withheld
Oakland, Calif.*

TEAMSTER IN GAY SUPPORT

Dear Assemblyman Foran:

I am pleased to learn that A.B. 633, extending fair employment coverage to gay people, has been reported out of the Labor Committee. Such legislation



letters



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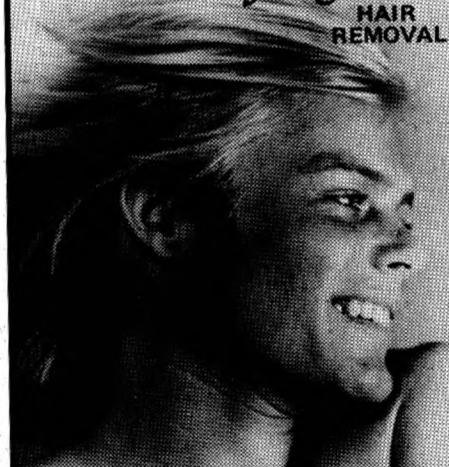
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is long overdue. Teamster Local 888, Beer Drivers and Salesmen, has recently succeeded in placing an openly gay person as a beer driver. We hope more will follow.

We are grateful for the wide support the gay community has given to the Coors Beer Boycott, which is directed against the racist and sexist policies of that company.

When gay people face discrimination in employment, all working people are less secure in their jobs. A.B. 633 is an important step in the long struggle of the gay population for human rights and dignity. We enthusiastically endorse this bill. Let us know if we can aid its passage.

Respectfully,
/s/ Allan Baird
Teamster Representative
Local 888

HOORAY TO THE SOFTBALL GAMES

I submit that the entire article in the April issue concerning "Gay Money for Straight Causes" rests upon false assumptions and that the authors are guilty of deceitful conduct in portraying the annual gay/police softball game as a vehicle in which to attack the Police Athletic League, all under the guise of appearing to support gay charities. I am proud of our Community Softball League and its spirited, friendly competition with the Police Department on the softball diamond.

My belated congratulations to guest editor George Mendenhall for the marvelous job he did with the previous (March) issue of VECTOR. Perhaps the concept of monthly guest editors should be tried more often, every second or third month!

Bond R. Shands, Jr.
San Francisco, Calif.

NOTICE: VECTOR appreciates and welcomes feedback from our readers. Letters should be brief and signed and automatically assumed for publication. Requests for withholding authors' names will be respected however we reserve the right to edit all letters for clarity. These guidelines are included in notes written on the back of the membership renewal forms. Readers who wish to challenge the veracity of any articles are invited to do so in manuscript form so that we can give equal coverage to alternative viewpoints.

THANKS

Last month I wrote that I had not received VECTOR for three months. I am happy to say that someone was kind enough to send me the ones I hadn't gotten and I'm now up to date.

I enjoy your magazine very much; I think it gets better all the time. Thanks again both for the back copies and for the work you all are doing.

Roscoe W. McGuire
Los Angeles, Calif.

NEW ZEALAND WITH LOVE

For one year now I'm reading your magazine and it's very nice and a great joy to receive each new issue.

I wish you every success for your tremendous work.

Jean Pierre
New Zealand

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MARS, GOD OF LUST AND WAR

MANY OF THE PLANETS ARE named after gods. Unfortunately some astrologers make the mistake of thinking the planets are gods and, willy-nilly, go on to ascribe godlike qualities to the astrological significance of the planet. In most cases this is unjustifiable. For instance, the god Mars may have been the god of war, but the planet Mars is not the planet of war. The Sun is the planet of war. I say this because it is my belief that wars are a result of pride, and the Sun is the planet par excellence of pride. But the planet Mars does play its part in anger and pain.

In the natal chart Mars indicates the self-preservation instinct possessed by all men. It stands for the aggressive and fighting abilities each of us has. It is best compared to the adrenalin effect we all undergo at times of fear and anger. Mars, the planet, does demonstrate our ability to fight, but it also shows our tendency to flight in face of danger and threat. A strong Mars, one near the four major angles of the chart, indicates a person who has little fear (unless he is really challenged). Such a person is usually very "pushy," demanding, aggressive, and selfish in the extreme. His basic manner is impatient, impulsive, and headstrong. Males with this configuration tend to be the superbitch type, hung up on the elusive ultramasculine image. Females are apt to be the hard, polished, brassy type of superbitch portrayed by Scarlet O'Hara. Some Martian types have a marshmallow center, and after much histrionics display a breaking point at which they can be reached. These are the lucky ones. Those Martian types who don't give in usually wind up very sure of themselves, but

STAR CRUISE will be devoted to the needs of the Gay Community. It is our hope that through Sidereal Astrology you can better understand yourselves and your lovers, and better cope with the everyday joys or problems of life. Send in those cards and letters, folks. We want to hear from you. Astrology applies to EVERYTHING! (or anything.) If you have a question about yourself please send your complete birth data - that is - date, year, time and place of birth, along with your question, of course. If you have a question about someone else we need all that information about him or her, too. We cannot make personal replies and letters cannot be returned. But watch the column. We will try to print and answer all letters received. Of course you'll remain anonymous.

THE PHILOSOPHY AND NEW LIFE APPLICATION OF THE PLANETS' TRIPS AMONG THE FIXED STARS OF THE CLASSICAL SIDEREAL ZODIAC

by JEFF

Sagittarius	Dec. 17	-	Jan. 15
Capricorn	Jan. 16	-	Feb. 13
Aquarius	Feb. 14	-	Mar. 15
Pices	Mar. 16	-	Apr. 14
Aries	Apr. 15	-	May 15
Taurus	May 16	-	Jun. 16
Gemini	Jun. 17	-	Jul. 17
Cancer	Jul. 18	-	Aug. 17
Leo	Aug. 18	-	Sep. 17
Virgo	Sep. 18	-	Oct. 18
Libra	Oct. 19	-	Nov. 17
Scorpio	Nov. 18	-	Dec. 16

very alone. Another misconception in astrological circles is that Mars gives energy. This is true, but only to a certain extent. We are all familiar with the instant and overwhelming energy that adrenalin gives us in moments of stress. But the operative word here is *moments*. For as soon as the extra energy of adrenalin is no longer needed, we collapse. Later we find that we have used much of our store of natural energy and greatly to our physical detriment. The energy of Mars is ultimately depleting and exhausting.

When Mars transits our natal Sun, this is exactly what happens. We feel a burst of nervous excitement and an overwhelming urge to get out and *do something*. Unfortunately, we usually do anything that comes to hand, whether we have the real energy or not.

From May 1 to May 14 the planet Mars will be transiting the constellation Aquarius. Those of you in the Fixed Group, that is, Aquarius, Taurus, Leo, and Scorpio, will feel a new spurt of nervous energy. This two-week period will be most active for you, and, if you pace yourselves, you can accomplish. But please pace! A Martian transit can deplete your energy store to such an extent that you may need a prolonged rest to recuperate. Also, the transit of Mars can result in accidental situations that can do real physical harm. The Fixed Group is usually a solid, reliable bunch who are not apt to be brought down by a simple transit of Mars to their natal Sun. This cannot be so easily said for the Mutable Group.

From May 14 to the end of the month Mars transits the constellation of Pisces. Those of you in the Mutable Group, that is, Pisces, Gemini, Virgo, and Sagit-

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tarius, will do well to attempt to follow a tranquil path during this time. You are ultranervous types anyway, so the added agitation of Mars will only serve to stir up an already fidgety state. You Pisceans had better look around for a good anchor. You will be doing your best whirling dervish number during the last half of May.

MAY BIRTHDAYS

May 1 or May 2: Your Sun is in the middle of the constellation Aries. You are the Don Juan of the Arian set. Your game is love, and your arsenal of tools begins with seduction. You are never one to curl up with a good book if there is a reasonably warm body around. But pity the warm body who has the temerity to say "NO." It is an answer you simply are not prepared to accept. Your campaigns in love are legendary and spectacular, especially if you are denied. You will try the hearts-and-flowers bit, but only for a while. Rape is not far off if you are really intrigued. However, if rebuff leads to total rejection, you are not above the sour grapes routine. You know only too well the old adage, "A woman scorned. . ." You can be a formidable enemy. 1975 offers you a chance for many new and exciting romantic contacts. Most of these will be made (!) in interesting social situations with new friends. The planet Uranus is aspecting your Sun this year; so be ready for surprises of a positive nature. Get out and do something different!

May 3 to May 15: Your Sun is in the latter degrees of the constellation of Aries. You hide the brilliance of your mind behind a rather gruff and unkempt exterior. You can be the overwhelming, uncouth Arian whose somewhat literary interior surprises your intimates. No piker in the romance department, you get it on with as much readiness as any child of Aries, but you can think, as well. You are not above being a manipulator of people and their ideas, either. You can be very political, but only if it serves your own purposes. One failing is lack of tolerance on your part of the lack of mental brilliance of those around you in comparison to yourself. You can be a mental snob. I'm sure you have discovered that there are some pretty stupes wandering around. One can only hope you are able to get over your snobbery long enough to enjoy them.

You could use some of the warmth and charm of your arian brothers and sisters. 1975 offers the same Uranian transit in opposition to your Sun. For you the experiment will be in the exciting field of new ideas. New opportunities will present themselves for success in many of your pet projects. But you would do well to concentrate energy in the development of new and lasting friendships. A little effort toward emotional honesty with those close to you would pay good dividends as well.

May 16 to May 28: Your Sun is in the early degrees of the constellation of Taurus. You broadcast charm on a steady beam to all and sundry. Life to you is a prolonged, satisfying love affair. You are the constant lover, and those you love bask in an overwhelming warmth that is hard to find elsewhere. You don't demand love, you don't have to. You attract love like a magnet. You are an incurable romantic, and those who come into your close circle catch romanticism like the flu. But you need reassurance occasionally. A touch, a kiss, a gentle word are enough to keep you corralled for life. You bask in reciprocated love like a sunbather. And you reward it with more love. 1975 presents you with a muddled picture at best. The negative planets of Neptune and Pluto are casting their baleful lights on your Sun this year. Swift, unexpected retribution can be yours for the slightest overindulgence. You may be subject to vague feelings of detachment and loneliness. The changes in your life may take a sinister form, leaving you bereft and confused. 1975 is a year when you will have to rely heavily on your native charm to maintain satisfying companionship. Be ready to change at a moment's notice, and recognize that it's only a year's time until things will be looking up again. The full Moon of May 25 aspects your Sun heavily. Watch a tendency to be too generous. Be sure to investigate any grand schemes thoroughly, for you could tend to make bad investments during this week. Some financial deal will appear to be better than it really is.

May 29 to May 31: Your Sun is in the final degree of the constellation of Taurus. You are every bit as romantic as other Taureans, but you tend to get a little gloomy about it. Unrequited love is somehow appealing to you, and you

are never happier than when you are mooning over an impossible love object. You are the classic troubadour. The unattainable is the most attractive to you. But you can be practical in love. Sometimes you do without altogether rather than be really caught. One thing is certain, if someone wants a steady lifetime partner, you're it. Once you make a commitment, you stick with it with a stubbornness that can become very uncomfortable. But reliable you are. 1975 shows the planet Neptune opposing your Sun. This opposition will give you a strong sense of the unusual and the weird. You can suffer delusions and illusions this year along with vague fears and depressions. Your needs will seem heightened, but you will experience difficulty in achieving satisfaction. You should emphasize the more positive sides of your imagination and creative ability this year. □

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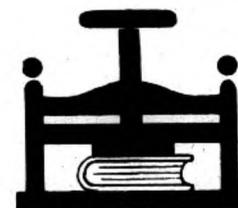
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BOOKS

BISEXUAL LIVING

by Julius Fast & Hal Wells

M. Evans & Co. — 1975, \$6.95, 240 pp

In my early twenties I attempted to travel the heterosexual path. I was still greatly confused about which way to turn. These stabs at dating failed ultimately. I wanted to be broad-minded, in a sense. Perhaps I somehow felt that a bisexual potential was present in all humans. As I look back upon those days, I realize that sudden insight burst upon me. I was often turned off by the female sex, not because of its basic nature, but because of the rigid social mold through which I was forced to encounter females. I felt that a heavy false front was essential to survive the ordeal of the dating system. I was expected to act nice and be extremely proper and to deny my own core reactions. But social constraint had been ignored. Who can say what might have developed? Small wonder that bisexuality intrigues so many.

This whole concept has raised the hackles of psychological experts. Many insist that such a state of mind cannot be proved. The majority of case histories demonstrate, we are told, that persons are either hetero or homo in outlook. This can be taken to mean that few humans "ball" on a fifty-fifty basis. But this observation still does not cancel out the fact that man and woman can interact in a bisexual manner.

Julius Fast and Hal Wells have sought to answer the bisex riddle. If it is such, in a series of interviews with couples and single persons of both sexes.

The authors comment at the conclusion of each discussion about the sexual orientation of those they interviewed.

We meet Bill and Lisa, a couple who drifted into multisexual ways of satisfac-

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tion. Bill appears to seek such experiences actively while Lisa has gradually learned to tolerate other partners for his sake.

In contrast, we then meet Clark, who picks up men in a dizzy whirl of quickies, while he builds a solid community front, decorated with loving wife and children.

Then we are introduced to Jean, who inhabits a relatively serene environment. She has shifted quietly at various times between partners of both sexes. She appreciates the unique qualities that each sex offers. Jean finds that bisexual personalities often can fulfill and adjust to the needs of the opposite sex in a more sensible fashion than either gays or straights.

Throughout the readings of these conversations we get the impression that Fast and Wells represent the conventional view of sexuality and that they are probing their subjects for weak spots. They attempt to prove indirectly that these people are weak and that society is right after all. They seem to say that pathology will always lurk near anything outside the missionary position—she bottom, he top.

The book concludes with an interview with Dr. Wardell Pomeroy, who coauthored the Kinsey report on the male.

The authors again show their true colors during this conversation, but Pomeroy rises to the challenge every time.

Q: What forces make a man bisexual or a woman?

A: I think that's the wrong question. You should ask, Why isn't everybody bisexual? What keeps people from bisexuality? Genetically, you would expect that everyone was.

Q: Not really. We've evolved genetically with two sexes for reproduction. You would expect heterosexuality to be the main stream of sexuality.

A: I think you're ignoring the fact that sex is fun.

Q: Isn't that hooked onto sex by nature to ensure reproduction?

A: Perhaps, but the fun is still there. Even animals display a great deal of homosexual behavior.

Bisexual Living merits reading. The discussions are thought-provoking, and you can gain much insight into the bisexual process if you recognize the bias of those who interpret the material.

—Frank Howell



out on campus

A FIT TO PRINT
 by JACK ANDERSON

A CAMPUS NEWSPAPER IS expected to provide a liberal mouthpiece and visibility to all facets of university life, academic and social. Just try, however, to get some copy space for gay matters, and you will find most campus papers to be just as establishmentarian as most media. We have an excellent case in point with our recent attempts to gain some publicity for the new Bay Area Gay Academics Union, now being formed by gay faculty and graduate students at or near Stanford.

To publicize our first organizational meeting, we sent flyers to the chairpersons of the various departments; to our knowledge, only one department out of sixty-four posted the notice. New tactics were needed. So, to approach our potential objects of publicity from the opposite direction, we sent a rather elaborate press release to the campus newspaper.

This press release was accepted rather reluctantly, but it was accepted; we waited several days, and our article did not appear. When we finally demanded an explanation, we were told that the editors could not print so opinionated an article without specific spokespersons to express the opinions. Several people had to agree to cast caution to the winds and come out officially in the campus newspaper. That was arranged easily enough.

We waited for several more days and still did not see our article in print. Upon inquiring again, we were told that the editorial board preferred not to print articles written by people who weren't permanent reporters for the campus press. They would prefer to send one of their own reporters around to interview us

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GAY NEWS IN CAMPUS NEWSPAPERS

individually so that they could compose their own articles. Unfortunately, none of their reporters was willing to write an article on gay matters.

At this point we were pulling out our poisoned pens to prepare a series of scathing letters to the editor, hoping to turn their repressive tactics into publicity for our own ends. We were temporarily placated when they informed us that one woman reporter had finally volunteered to "cover" our "story." By this time the second Bay

PREFERRED NOT TO PRINT

Area G.A.U. gathering had already taken place; so our publicity article could no longer be especially effective. The article to be written was now a report on the meeting itself. Since late publicity is better than none at all, we put our poisoned pens away temporarily, and several of us were interviewed.

Again we waited for several days, and again we failed to see even our names in print. Again we determined to sharpen our poisoned pens, when the "Article" finally appeared: nine inches of column announcing the meeting and quoting a

ONE OUT OF SIXTY-FOUR

few phrases from four people. It wasn't exactly what we had wanted, when we wanted it; yet at least we finally got something printed. We are presently redevising our tactics to see what other controverted sources of publicity we can tap.

Anybody interested in the Bay Area Gay Academics Union can obtain information from the Gay People's Union Office at Stanford University.

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political savvy

GAY CAUCUS
by FRANK FITCH

THE GAY CAUCUS OF THE California Democratic Council (CDC) voted unanimously at the recent March 14-16 CDC Convention in Fresno to take an active role in the organizing of support for state legislation now pending in Sacramento. The caucus planned to publish a newsletter for distribution statewide, encourage letter writing and visits to legislators in support of the bills, and urge the CDC officers to push for these important legislative reforms.

The Caucus won the endorsement from the one thousand-plus delegates at the 1975 convention of the Brown Consensual Sex Bill (AB 489), the Foran Fair Employment Bill (AB 633), the Moscone Repeal of Solicitation Statutes (SB 513), and the Meade Defense for Victimless Crime Bill (AB 642). These endorsements and the anticipated support of the officers is the culmination of over four years' involvement by politically active gay people as members of CDC. This experience may be of benefit in other states which also have liberal, grassroots organizations within the state Democratic Party.

The Gay Caucus is composed of all gay delegates from such CDC-affiliated Democratic clubs as the Alice B. Toklas Memorial Democratic Club, Hollywood Hills Democratic Club, Preservation Hall, Harry S. Truman, and others. The Caucus chairperson, Jim Foster, is a member of the CDC executive board and works with Northern chairperson Jo Daly and Southern chairperson West Dseton.

The California Democratic Council is the coalition of many, not most, of the Democratic Clubs in California. It is the grassroots organization of active party politics. CDC acts as gadfly or conscience of the Democratic Party in the state. Most significantly it takes the viewpoints of gay people and has generally been five years ahead of the party on controversial issues.

Over two hundred Democratic clubs with a combined membership of about 10,000 are affiliated with the CDC. These clubs are the raison d'être of the

Council; it is to coordinate their activities and disseminate information between member clubs as well as facilitate the annual convention for endorsements and issues discussion.

The clubs provide one of the two essential ingredients in a winning campaign—volunteer workers. With the advent of campaign finance reforms, volunteer activity has become even more important than the other component, money. The grassroots club volunteer effort for candidates is a potent persuader to draw candidates toward CDC-endorsed posi-

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tions and the volunteers themselves inject a liberalizing influence into the candidates' campaigns.

Democratic or Republican club activity offers opportunities to the gay person who wishes to become politically active and see the results of his or her actions in winning campaigns and promulgating issues.

CALIFORNIA POLITICAL NOTES

It is likely that all six incumbent supervisors (with the possible exception of Quentin Kopp, who is considering a number of options) will run for re-election to the San Francisco Board of Supervisors. With gay support, John Molinari could well get the highest number of votes and capture the Board Presidency.

A number of gay organizations are holding off on endorsements in the mayor race until at least the Consensual Sex Bill passes the Senate, where two of the candidates now hold office.

If you have time enough for only one letter to a congressperson in support of the Abzug Equality Act of 1975, why not send it to Don Edwards, chairperson of the Constitutional and Civil Rights Subcommittee, House Judiciary Washington, D.C., 20515.



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dear don

Note: I am a clinical psychologist who, by choice, specializes in work with gay people. Gay is not sick. But I believe, as do a growing number of humanistic psychologists, that you do not have to be sick to get better. The purpose of this column is helpful commentary rather than advice or psychotherapy. Only those letters selected for this column will be answered.

Dear Don,

My lover and I were together for little over a year. It wasn't perfect, but it was as close to it as I've seen any other couples get—straight or gay. Then this month he decided he had to move to another city for his career. I really don't want to leave here, and I'm getting so depressed now I don't know what I want to do. I don't even understand why I'm depressed. I know we love each other.

It is not safe to offer advice to an individual, based on one paragraph of information, which is why I try to stick to general comments in this column. One general comment may be that, whenever anyone feels depressed and cannot find a way to come up out of the depression, it is time to treat himself to one or more visits to a competent counselor or psychotherapist. When the depression seems gay-related, it is a good idea to seek a counselor who is himself gay-oriented.

Depression is customarily related to anger. The statement may not make sense at first, but we see it time and time again in the process of psychotherapy. As we uncover depression, we find anger just beneath it. One reason why the anger is converted to depression is that the individual believes his natural angry feelings are not justified or reasonable. We forget that all feelings are unreasonable and that nature has arranged it that way so that emotion can add color and balance to our very busy rational thinking part of self.

It may not make good rational sense, but it makes good emotional sense to feel

angry when a lover chooses a city and a job as more important than you. It is impossible to justify the feeling rationally because you know that you can go along to the other city and continue to be loved, but, deep down inside, each of us wants to be unreasonably loved as the most important person and circumstance in another person's life. Anger is a natural result of having that wish thwarted. And when the anger is disowned, it has to go somewhere. So it is swallowed and begins to eat away at your emotional insides in such a way that one describes as depression.

When one is depressed, it helps to try to find new things to do—new experiences that open his eyes and lead to new feelings. It also helps to provide as many

emotionally nourishing experiences for yourself as possible. And last, but not least, it is important to express anger when you are aware of it. When your anger reservoir is down to normal level and new and nourishing experiences are permitting you to get some positive reinforcement for living, things brighten. And, as I said earlier, trained counselors are around to help people when all the self-help fails.

Dear Don,

I have a very special friend. We have known each other for some years and seem to get closer and closer all the time. We call each other up almost every day. Sometimes we go away

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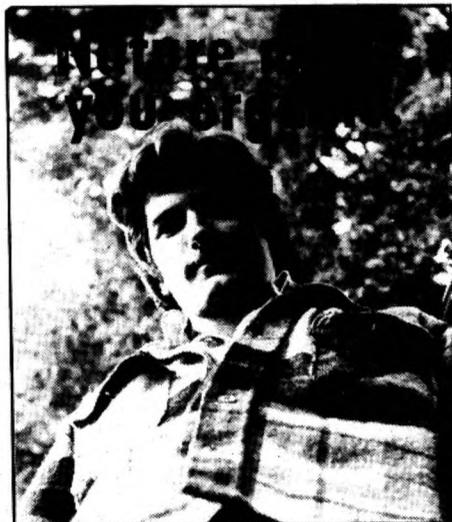
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together and have beautiful small vacations, which include sex. I live with a lover, and he lives with his wife. Our special friendship is no secret to them, though we don't talk about it much. Lately some of my gay friends have been getting after me and telling me this special friendship is wrong and that we should move in together and be real lovers or else give each other up. All four of us are happy with the way things are. Why does it have to change?

As I have said in this column many times, we live in a society that is pathologically dedicated to conformity. It may eventually be the ruin of our civilization. The zeal of the super-conformists has killed and damaged too many gay people already. For centuries straight people have been telling us it is wrong to be gay. They have filled our ears with destructive advice. It would be a shame if gay people now joined in that chorus of destruction. You have resisted being told how to live by straight society; you can resist being told how to live by gay people. Conformity does not suit the needs of any individual. We need some rules of society to live together without hurting one another unduly. But, when a relationship is satisfying to two people and hurts no one else, there is no one who has the right to tell you it's wrong. Joe McCarthy and Adolf Hitler used conformity like a whip, but neither of them was very happy. I always feel best when I listen to MY inner truth.

Dear Don,
I just read a book in the college library that really laid it on about how sick homosexuality is. And my prof says the guy who wrote the book is a real expert. Any comment on that?

The world is full of experts who are all too willing to make judgments about other people and the way they live. Writing a few books and earning your living in a particular field do not make you an expert. Any person who has been gay all his life is more of an expert about gayness than is a person who has never experienced being gay but has written about it. Those anti-gay books usually are mere opinion or predicated on shaky premises. Read carefully and look for the proof. It is

not there. The supposed evidence cited is based on the assumption that being "normal," or following the current dictates of one's society, is mentally healthy. This is a bad assumption. Once you remove this assumption and read the evidence that gay is bad, you will find the evidence crumbles. Ask your prof to steer you to Evelyn Hooker's research. Hers does not rest on prejudicial assumptions. Not surprisingly, it supports the notion that we are natural and emotionally sound people who need apologize to no one for our gay identity. □

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dining

LE DOMINO 17th & Florida, SF 626-3095

We're delighted to report upon another look (with several to follow) that this totally French establishment is still a fantastic dining experience. When I reread my comments from November, I cringed at expressions such as, "a salad so light it could be inhaled," and "an absolutely perfect evening." Well! It not only holds true but has even gotten better. The "simply best mousse I have ever tasted" had surprising tiny flecks of fresh orange rind in it this time around and so on. Le Domino is not one of the best gay restaurants in town—it's one of the finest French restaurants on the West Coast.

BADLANDS 4121 18th St., SF 626-9320

Back to reality, we had a single experience with Badlands that was, frankly, disappointing. Dan, our incredibly handsome and intelligent waiter (who, I understand, has a short story in this issue), did the best he could with suggestions, but the total effect was heavy with huge quantities of food that worked against the dining grain making it uphill all the way. The atmosphere of this excellently located establishment (Market/Castro) is heavy—with little light (kerosene lamps on each table turned low), dark brown vinyl plastic tablecloths, and a large, dim open-hearth fire.

An excellently flavored Greek lemon soup began the meal, which was too heavily cornstarched and thus filled, rather than pleased the palate. A superb sourdough bread just wouldn't leave us

alone. I groaned when two gigantic pork chops Vienna (\$5.50) appeared out of the dimness. I tried, but simply couldn't get into them. The menu quoted that they were "simmered in a delicate apricot sauce," and in spite of the two moons of apricots sitting on top of the meat surrounded with a year's supply of fresh parsley, there wasn't any flavor; not of pork nor of apricot—and the brown gravy looked delicious but also lacked any distinguishing taste—good or bad. I knew I was eating pork, but the

flavor had all departed, leaving heavy texture rather than, again, taste.

Billy had the Schnitzel Holstein (\$5.25), which was a breaded veal cutlet served with a light brown sauce and topped with an egg and capers. Again an enormous quantity of food minus any particular flavor beyond the butter/oil in which it was browned. His brown sauce seemed to come from the same pot as mine, which we knew it hadn't but try to prove it by mouth alone. In embarrassment we requested

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a doggie bag.

Dessert was out of the question, since we were long stuffed and almost crawled out after a respectable coffee. This is not what a fine dining experience is all about, and we marvel that the Badlands can serve so much food at so little cost. The menu is vast with exciting items such as shrimp Bombay (\$6.25), clams marinara (\$4.75), Greek chicken (\$4.25), and paella (\$6.50). Our suggestion would be to concentrate on fewer items. Most items on this menu are cooked to order, and, assuming it's a fact, we can't imagine what happened to the flavor. We'll try again.

HOMBRE
2348 Market, SF 626-1163

Folsom Street arrives at Market! The Hombre is a strangish combination of two worlds combining the best of both. We went there for a restaurant experience but because of the arrangements ended up having a bar experience. The long rectangular room has on one side a bar and two yards away along the other wall are seven round tables set up on platforms, giving an impression of being behind the bar, observing the customers. Nice.

How delightful to observe a room full of real people, most of whom have long passed their terrible twenties and into the Jung period of mastering their inner selves. Quite a bit of leather with motorcycle helmets and "colors" being used for convenience and decor. Even more business suits, indicating this as a very popular place to stop off after work.

There were six items on the menu including the daily special. The most expensive was a New York steak at \$4.50 with the daily special at \$3.15, which was—get this—charbroiled medallions of filet mignon, baked potato with a side mountain of fresh sour cream, and a healthy portion of the freshest steamed asparagus. Just the right combination of items to satisfy and excite. The beef was done to perfection, tender, with black on the outside and pink on the inside. A cream of celery soup began the evening, followed by the freshest of salads dusted with oil and vinegar (John's cheese dressing was perfect) and a so-so bread which seemed out of place with the high quality of the rest of the items. Dessert featured an honest-to-God homemade pecan pie

with a peak of whipped cream and very good coffee.

What Hombre lacks in specific restaurant ambiance it makes up by blurring the lines between drinkers and diners. It is an amazing combination of friendliness and very relaxed eating. Good people (*real* people), good food (*real* food), and honest presentation will bring people in—by 7:30 on a Thursday night every table was occupied as were the bar and pinball areas. Goodby, Missouri Mule—hello, Hombre! □

—Ambrose

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POEMS BY ADRIENNE L. PARKS

SISTERHOOD

*A dyke with almost virgin eyes
catching at the worlds complexity
catching and vomiting
when the moon is full.*

*Like a northwesterly,
building wind and wave power
as it skips and the land breaks
called islands
and shudders at the thought of dying down.
She cannot control what nature has a say in.*

*And so the dyke with almost virgin eyes
must pioneer herself to hold up
to stand simply
without crutches
to plug the holes which the sea creates
preventing stains, correcting fallacies
saving drowning sisters
with her virgin eyes.*

DYKEDOM

*The decisively dyke in me made me do it.
And will make me do it again. And again.
I will drink from the cup,
my insigniaed cup of words,
until there are no more.
The undecidedly dyke in me makes me pull on my
boots
when I'm depressed
though
I almost always
wear them anyway,
but when I'm doing
my dyke thing
with dyke things
and we all pull together
but the words don't come
I slowly climb
my barefoot steps
to wade through
my closet
to find my boots.
And the words come.*

NIGHT TIME

*In the dark belly of the lonely night
by the vacuous light of a 60 watt bulb
an eye leapt open
but not in fright rather in visible meditation:
shadows long, branches sway
the thin curtained shimmers parted say
that this is one of many nights like this.
In the dark belly of the lonely night
ascetic asthetic celibacy
til eyes lay in harmony and grace understanding,
visible presence of friend
helping friend
sister sister
grow through the shadows of the now cold light
in the darkest of bellys on all lonely nights.*

THE WRITER

*Here comes another play, folks.
I can feel it comin' on.
I sense my characters
talk to them
get to know them outright ;
It's like a highschool reunion—
nobody knows who anyone is
but the point is to remember.
My characters embarrass one another
love hate are stupid in all of the wrong places
but nonetheless they live
turn their heads
the wind rustles their hair.
They scratch They squar
They read George Eliot and Marianne Moore.
They think and feel and taste of love when they can
But I am a cruel mistress and I weave their lives
with reality so they cannot partake of love too
often.*

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I I S V W P N V S R L
W I L H E R C U L E S
N E V O H T E E B H E

The hidden words listed below appear forward, backward, up, down or diagonally in the puzzle. Find each of the hidden words and box it in as shown.

Achilles	James (I of England)
Alexander	Lawrence (of Arabia)
Aristotle	Napoleon
Beethoven	Peter (the Great, Russia)
Caesar (Julius)	Plato
da Vinci	Sappho
Hammarskjold	Virgil
Hercules	Wild Bill Hickok
Homer	Winckelmann

Hey — How About a Little Cooperation!?!

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE OWNERS
AND MANAGERS OF
DALLAS AND FORT WORTH GAY BARS

Community News wrote to every gay bar owner/manager in the Metroplex offering to cooperate with gay businesses in Dallas/Fort Worth. We sent you a sample complimentary copy of our publication and offered to publicize your activities, run features and pictures on your "personalities" and report on other news of interest to bars and those of our community who support them (all at no charge to you).

More than a month has passed, and *only one* bar has even bothered to respond (although each letter contained a simple "yes-or-no" questionnaire and a stamped envelope in which to mail any response).

We can only hope that your lack of response and interest does not reflect a lack of concern for the gay community and the people (we assume) who put their money into your pockets.

Because we have had no response from you to our initial contact, our staff (limited though it is) will now begin the time-consuming task of trying to visit each of you personally to determine your interest, if any.

Please let me remind you that *Community News* is not published for profit and is not published to benefit anyone except those people who are members of the gay community. It is published by a coalition of members of Dallas and Fort Worth gay organizations as a service to the gay community in this area.

Community News will somehow continue to be published with or without your cooperation — but we sincerely believe it would benefit us all to work together. We want *CN* to represent you equally as it strives to represent all elements of the Dallas/Fort Worth "Gay Scene."

We're trying to help. Won't you cooperate with us?

Gayly,

Allen Reid, editor



Allen Reid

12 / COMMUNITY NEWS / DECEMBER '74



theatre

THE RULING CLASS

A.C.T., San Francisco, California

As the season staggers into the home-stretch, A.C.T. has finally come up with a new production that pulls all the stops out and provides an evening so full of brilliant theatricality that once again the gold of this company shines untarnished. The evening was 100% director Allen Fletcher's with a good helping hand from star Rene Auberjonois.

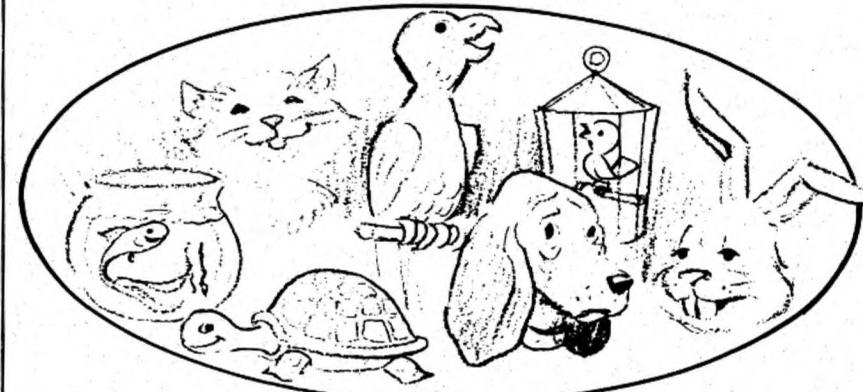
The three-hour-long script was an overwritten piece of simplistic obsession with "getting" the British upper class from an obviously middle-class author. (It was written in 1968 and had a film starring Peter O'Toole but never a Broadway production, for obvious reasons.)

The thirteenth Earl of Gurney, it seems, is totally insane and thinks he's God. His family arrange to take the fortune away by marrying him to a local tart and thus producing an heir, but he becomes "cured" from his God-is-love fantasy and becomes an upright member of society, which means he murders women a la Jack the Ripper while giving impassioned law-and-order speeches in the House of Lords. The point was old in 1968, and now it's simply tired and overdone to a San Simeon point. But the sheer theatricality of Fletcher's staging and ingenious use of scene-change tricks as well as Auberjonois' stellar performance of madness/sanity/madness keep people in their seats until the 11:30-plus final curtain.

It's this kind of huge cast, multiple levels of meaning (so much of this play is painful to observe and how upsetting it was to hear the laughter during its most painful moments), brilliant effects, and stunning professionalism that make ACT a San Francisco treasure, which deserves support. This season was freaky, and we all hope the lessons were well learned. □



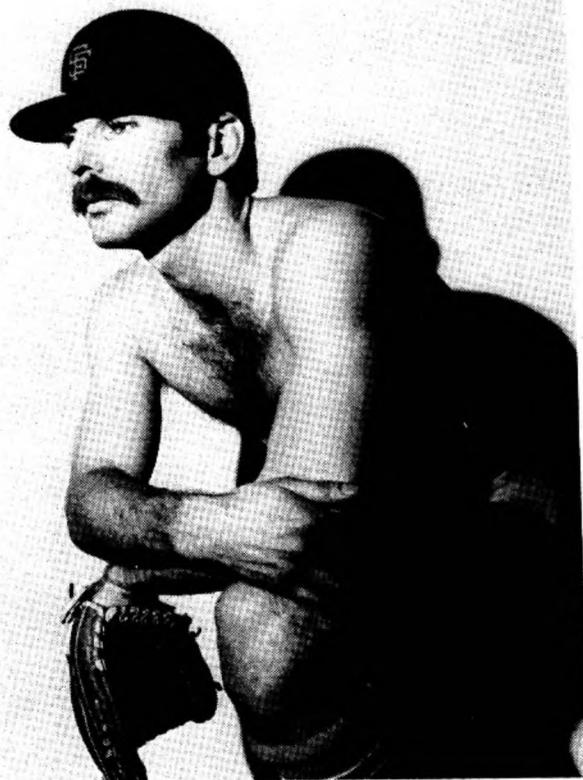
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GAY MONEY

A RESPONSE

by PAUL D. HARDMAN

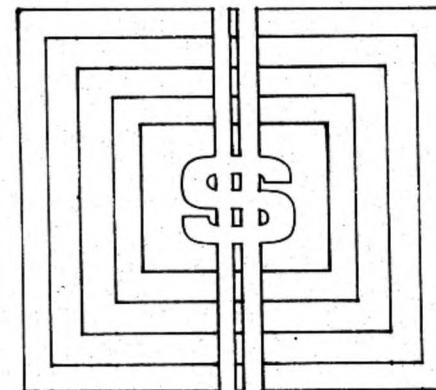
(The April VECTOR lead story by Frank Fitch brought up several questions concerning collection of funds for gay legislative causes, and in keeping with our policy of printing responses to all issues we invited Mr. Hardman's clarification of several points.)

THERE IS ALWAYS SOME QUESTION about the use and collection of funds whenever a drive is made in the community. For this reason, very strict procedures were set up by the California Committee for Equal Rights.

All money is deposited in a checking account under the name California Committee for Equal Rights. The name is registered with the City and County of San Francisco and is also protected by registration with the Secretary of State in Sacramento. No other person or organization may use the name or any part of the name to collect or to receive funds. No funds may be spent without the approval of the steering committee, and it takes two signatures to draw a check on the account. Dual account records are kept, and great care is exercised to account for every contribution.

In recent weeks one of the members of the committee set up his own fund-raising activities as a "gay lobbyist." Operating under his own name, George Raya, and also using the name "Equal Rights Fund," Mr. Raya collected money for his personal use as a lobbyist. Since he was also employed by the San Francisco Human Rights Commission, it was necessary for the California Committee for Equal Rights to request some clarification of its relationship to Mr. Raya and his fund-raising activities.

By mutual agreement, Mr. Raya will no longer use the name "Equal Rights Fund" to solicit funds for his lobbying efforts and personal support. Also, since it would be a violation of the City and County "Conflict of Interest" laws, Mr. Raya was asked either to function separately or to take steps to avoid any criticism of the committee by altering his relationship with the committee. All



these steps were taken by mutual agreement, and no suggestion of wrongdoing ought to be inferred.

The California Committee for Equal Rights felt it was necessary to clarify all aspects of its fund-raising efforts, and in keeping with its policy of openness, all problems relating to its operations will be made open and public. The committee has been receiving good cooperation from many people all over the country. Small contributions have come from as far away as North Carolina. We respect that grassroots effort and will continue to safeguard the principles and motives of the committee members and the hopes of those who contribute.

It should be noted that the fund-raising drive that was started for Mr. George Raya by Mr. David Goodstein in the *Advocate* recently is in no way

connected or associated with the California Committee for Equal Rights. It must also be noted that, whereas Vector did run an article on the efforts of statewide lobbying activities written by Mr. Frank Fitch, the article was somewhat misleading in that it gave the impression that S.I.R. had authorized a fund-raising drive and support system for some organization other than itself or the California Committee for Equal Rights. The California Committee appreciates the relationship it enjoys with S.I.R. and its president, Mr. Doug DeYoung, and hopes to minimize any confusion relating to these possible misconceptions.

The California Committee for Equal Rights is the formalization of the joint efforts of many people throughout our community. It is effective because it has been functioning for a long time though without a formal name, and people have got results over the years. No personality cults are encouraged, and most of those participating tend to keep a rather low profile.

The Committee is expanding rapidly statewide and has set up a new unit through Michael Flynn in Hollywood. Negotiations are under way for a unit in Los Angeles. The Committee feels that more can be done through widespread, close cooperation throughout the state than by any other method. There is more strength in unity, where each individual is respected for the contribution he or she makes. The Committee feels that the public should realize that there are a great number of dedicated people behind the scenes who make it all possible. We can only hope that the public will recognize the hard work of the unseen workers despite articles praising one individual alone for achievements that in fact reflect the work of so many others

BIKING

by VINCENT KING

"... BY 1975 THERE WAS ONE MOTORCYCLE FOR EVERY SEVEN AMERICAN HOUSEHOLDS. . ."

Some 700 people had gathered for the presentation of Academy Awards; they packed the hall with notables, not only from Hollywood, but elsewhere to honor their own. Those attending applauded enthusiastically as the year's highlights and nominated performers appeared before them. As in the past, the winners of the coveted statuettes expressed their heartfelt thanks.

And when the presentation finally drew to a close, most of those attending mounted their motorcycles and headed for the 527 Club in San Francisco for a coming out party for that city's newest bike club.

Lest you blame the typographer, the two paragraphs above didn't come from different articles. Academy awards (if not *the* Academy Awards) were presented as they have been for the past nine years in San Francisco. Under the sponsorship of the Barbary Coasters Motorcycle Club, these honored significant contributors to California motorcycle club activities within the community.

The Academy Awards show, presented every February, is merely one of the largest in a continuing round of activities that various community motorcycle and motorcycle-oriented clubs sponsor.

This assortment of parties, runs, performances, fund-raisers and the like had

its beginnings some 20 years ago in Los Angeles when a number of guys who owned motorcycles decided to form a club. Eisenhower was in the White House; American society was still feeling the aftereffects of an undeclared war overseas and a Red scare at home—and there were only 12,000 motorcycles that would be sold in the United States that year, most of them Harley-Davidson-built gas guzzlers.

The motorcycle "boom" promoted by Honda with its "you meet the nicest people on a Honda" campaign was years away.

Over the years following 1955, additional club organizing took place in Los Angeles and moved up the Coast to San Francisco. Easterners checked in, in 1964, with the startup of a group in New York.

But the "club scene" really began to expand in the late '60s, continuing to the 1970s, as steady increases in motorcycle sales and improvements in design made gays realize along with others that motorcycles are fun, practical, gas-saving—and sexy.

So much so that by 1975, for the population as a whole, there was one motorcycle for every seven American households. Within the community, cycle enthusiasts had managed to organize clubs in North American cities from Montreal to Miami, Hartford to Honolulu. And one club watcher was counting more than 80 clubs continent-wide.

But despite the relative popularity of motorcycles today in a society that has been described as a "car-chauvinist," there remains a lot of confusion about what all this organizing is for and what its accomplishments are—particularly among people who are not part of what is called the South-of-Market scene.

It is called South of Market or the Miracle Mile—that's Folsom Street between 6th and 14th streets—because that is where the action is for those who dig this scene. Just how miraculous it may be is open to question, but that's the name they give it.

What the bikers *don't* do may help as much as anything to clear up the confusion. They don't sit around and talk about compression ratios all the time. Neither, self-appointed expert on Homosexuality David Reuben to the contrary do they "lure other homosexuals to their apartments, trapping them, and torturing them." Reuben's first book *Everything You Always Wanted to Know about Sex but Were Afraid to Ask*, adds the above uninformed opinion to its treasure-trove of misleading information, distortions, and outright lies.

One way to measure the activity is to take a look at what went on during the last big bike weekend in San Francisco.

Several clubs coordinated their activities to entertain and amuse out-of-towners, as well as locals.

The festivities began Friday night, February 14, when the Constantines invited about 500 of their closest and dearest friends to join them in a Mix and Match party at Seamen's Hall. For a \$5 contribution, those attending could feast on a gourmet buffet, dance and socialize. This last feature was aided and abetted by a club gimmick. As guests entered, they received either a small bolt or a small screw. The idea was to find out whether somebody else had a bolt to match the screw and vice-versa. Those who could make the match won doorprizes.

The next afternoon the Inter-Club Fund of San Francisco conducted a blood drive to increase the amount available to members of the South of Market community at the ICF account in Irwin Memorial Blood Bank.

Later that day SIR President Doug de Young introduced Assemblyman Jon Foran (D-S.F.) to a constituency he hadn't met in such circumstances before as the two met with members of California motorcycle clubs at a cocktail party.

That evening it was time for the Academy Awards. Included was a presentation of club "colors" (flags), segments from performances given on club-organized camping trips ("runs") over the past year, and the presentation of the awards themselves. While some of these might be considered dubious achievements—like handing out a statuette for Best Food on a Run, for example—try feeding 150 people under wilderness conditions sometime.

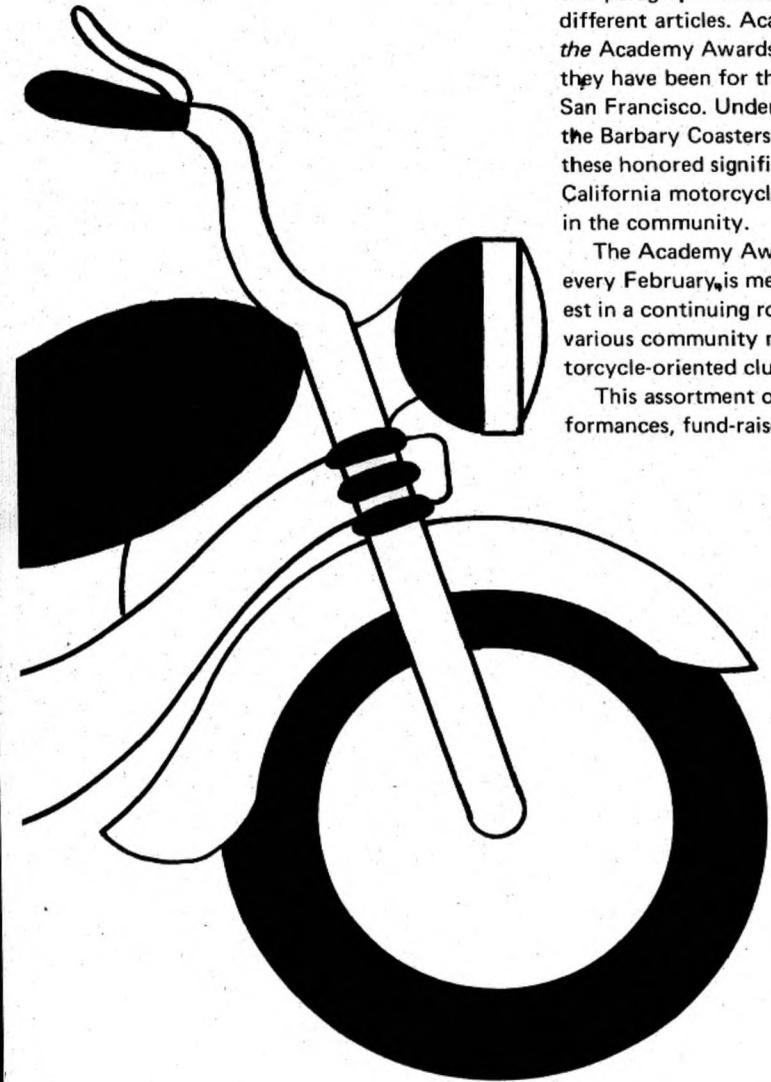
Sunday dawned bright and crispy as people met at Febe's for the start of the Recon M/C's Winter Field Meet to be at suburban Millbrae. There, riders vied with each other in various tests of proving proficiency and skill, including precision steering and the ability to keep their machines upright at very slow speeds. A quiz on geography (using motorcycles) promoted the planned Transamerica run scheduled for July. The run will leave San Francisco, journey to New York City, and return.

Later that day winners received trophies for their skill. Sunday evening was left for one to just do his own thing.

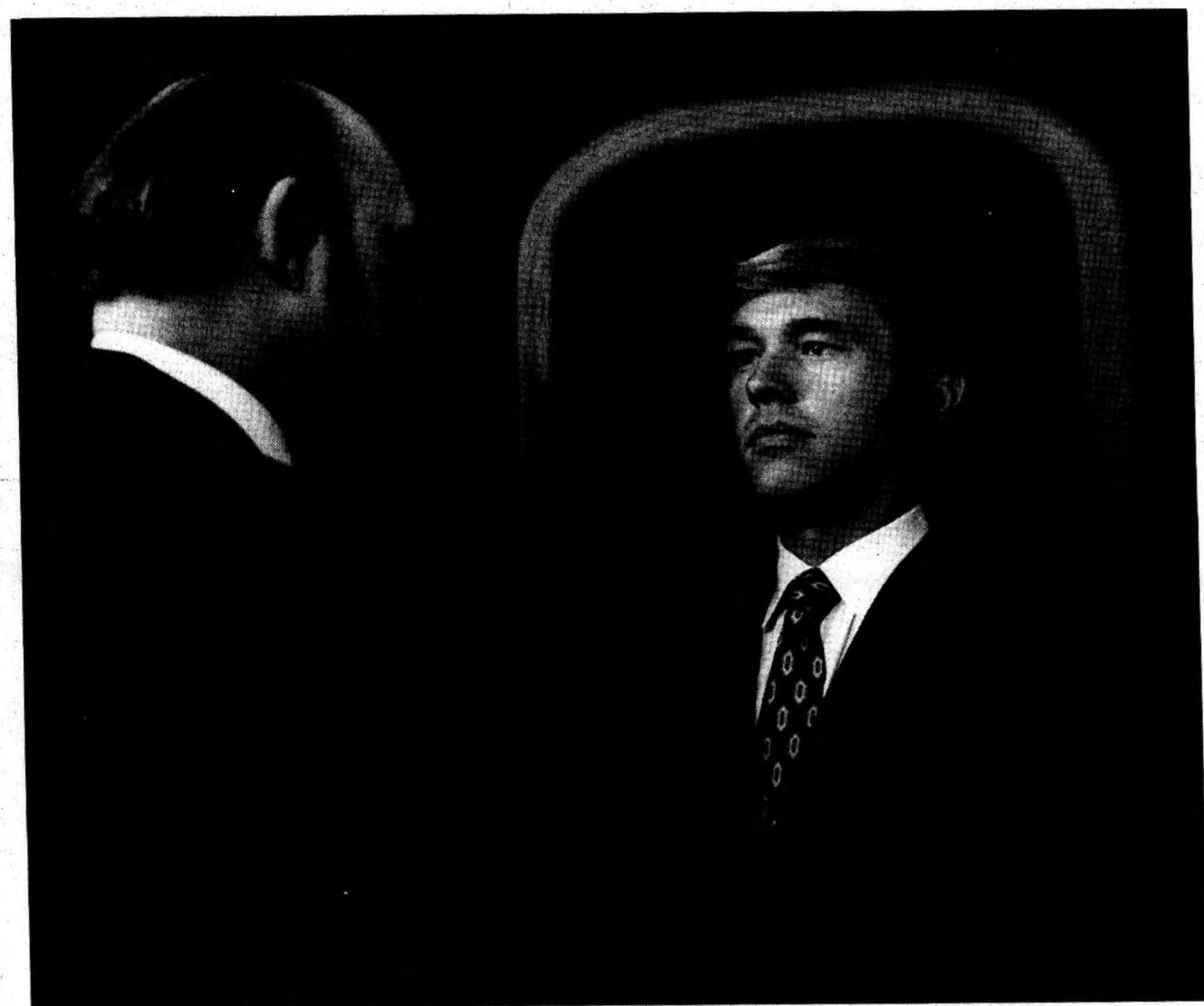
By Monday, the survivors were being hosted by the Cheaters at the 527 Club. Beer flowed and hot dogs disappeared as the weekend's last event took place. Many in the group from out of town were busy saying their good-bys as the reality of a job 400 miles away the next day intruded on the socializing.

By 4 p.m. it was about over—a weekend to be remembered—even if you were too tired to start it all over again the next Friday.

An echo of the big weekend did come back the following Saturday in the form of the San Franciscans' Fifth Anniversary Party at the 527 Club. A pleasant evening of food and friendship for that group's invited guests, but not so much as to wear you out. □



OVER THE HILL AT FORTY?



After forty, a man turns to his inner world.

NOW BECOMING COMMONLY realized, the lot of the older person in American society is difficult, unenviable, and sometimes highly painful. Ours is a youth-oriented society. Advertising, employers, popular stereotypes all conjoin in asserting that youth is the ideal state. In older cultures persons who have reached maturity occupy a valued and significant place in the community. In ours those who have reached middle age are compelled to retire as soon as is feasible and older persons are bundled out of sight as much as possible.

For women, the situation is especially difficult. A constant barrage of propaganda bombards them from all sides, assuring them that, unless they have the face, figure, and skin of a teen-ager at the age of fifty, they've in some obscure, mysterious way failed. The clear implication of the advertising media is that women face social opprobrium and ostracism unless they retain a young look. Fortunately, women's liberation movements are introducing a counterbalancing note of sanity and realism into the situation.

So far, there is no definitive body of research on the subject, but the experience of members of the G40 Plus Club, a San Francisco association for gay men forty and older, is that after women the next group to suffer the most from being older is gay men. The worship of youth prevalent in gay male American society means, all too often, that after his early thirties the gay man finds himself regarded as on the shelf, superannuated, and, in a curious way, nonexistent. It is as if gay society were founded on the assumption that all in it will be gloriously and ecstatically young eternally and those who aren't young are rejected, largely unconsciously, as if they had committed some major sin.

In theory, the situation ought to be easier in the Bay Area because of the greater freedom here. However, the report is unanimous—here the intolerance and discrimination are even worse than they are elsewhere. Why this should be so is not known.

The G40 Plus Club exists for two purposes. First, to combat the loneliness incumbent upon reaching forty and past among gay men. For this purpose we are providing special interest groups so that members can mix with other members in a more relaxed, human way than the means usually open for gay persons to socialize, e.g., bars and baths. Second, we are collaborating in various community projects to remedy the older gay's situation and to amass data on the subject so that this can be done efficiently. We are also working with groups known to us, such as the Wednesday Forum. Shortly, too, we hope to be able to collaborate better with the lesbian groups since it is the club's feeling that the present gap between gay men and lesbians is deplorably weakening to our movement as a whole.

Grey is Good!

Already we are experiencing benefits. We find that it is a myth that all older gay men have a fixation upon the sexual attractiveness of younger ones. Several in the club find that their perspectives are changing; they have become aware, as never before, of the value of inner depth and are able to communicate rather than to be fixated upon the externals usually valued in American society. There is something enormously exhilarating in being in the company of a fair-sized group of well-ripened men of forty and up who are rich in experience and gusto for life. It is definitely a myth that people are unable to enjoy themselves after forty!

It is our belief that "grey gay is good."

We feel that there is no reason why the period from one's forties on shouldn't be the richest, most fruitful one in a person's life. According to Jung, up till forty a person is preoccupied almost totally with mastering his external environment and with finding himself. The troubled state that adolescence usually is in our culture is notorious. After forty, so Jung suggests, a man turns to mastering his inner world. He no longer is focused upon finding who and what he is; now he has a fair idea of them and can concentrate upon exploring his inner potentialities as he never did before. The club is attempting to lay the groundwork for doing this.

Likewise, there is an urgent need for mutual understanding between the younger and older generations of gays. One hears young gays criticize the older ones for their incomprehensible conservatism. Simultaneously a fair amount of the older gays are disconcerted by the sweepingly self-confident, all-inclusive radicalism of some of the younger gays. What the younger ones are ignorant of are the terrorizing, intimidating conditions under which gays came to maturity as late as ten years ago and the realities that made them become cautious and conservative. It is essential that this gap in understanding be bridged; both sides have much to give the other and each needs the other.

As much as anything else, however, the primary aim of the G40 Plus Club is to bring to other older gays a sense of hope and the belief that they *can* do something to remedy the present painful and difficult situation existing for them. While purely a local Bay Area organization, we welcome inquiries from all persons in other places and will do whatever we can to work with those attempting to set up such groups in their own areas. The labor of doing this is considerable, but we can testify that the rewards are well worth it.

For further inquiries, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to the G40 Plus Club, P.O. Box 6741, San Francisco, California 94142.

ASHAMED

HOW GOOD OLD DAVE NEWTON BECAME A RADICAL GAY

A MELODRAMA IN ONE ACT
by DAVE NEWTON

TO BEGIN WITH, YOU SHOULD know that for the first thirty-one years of my life I was an authentic, closet-queen homosexual. Not by choice, of course; it's just that after three decades in a relatively large Midwestern city I had not discovered that there were other men in the world "like me." Until, one October evening walking innocently across Boston's Esplanade, I found that there was, indeed, at least one other homosexual in the world!

Eight years later, I had become a fairly typical Boston Homosexual. . . meaning that I was sucking and fucking at every opportunity, enjoying every moment of it, and not for once realizing that there was any political or social content to the life style I had adopted.

Then, on a trip to the West Coast last fall, I discovered quite by chance that there was more to the homosexual world than I had realized. . . newspapers exclusively for "gay" people (whoever they were). . . churches catering primarily to homosexuals. . . political action groups fighting for their (my?) rights. . .

For one who had lived through Stonewall and the First Year of the First Coming that followed, this new world of the homosexual struck me like a lightning bolt. I had to know more.

As an intellectual and a free-lance writer, that meant only one thing: a book on the subject.

So, in November of last year, I started interviewing. . .

every gay group in the country that I could get to and that would talk to me. . . three dozen of them as of this date; almost fifty individuals; in lots of states. . .

and I began to learn about gay liberation, and what it means.

One thing I learned about is the oppression of gay people. Everywhere I went I learned a little bit more about how we lose our jobs, get thrown out of housing, face arrests for "crimes" that were never committed, face brutal

attacks by sadistic cops and homophobic straight people,

and lose the two things we can't afford to lose: pride and dignity in ourselves, simply because of our sexual orientation!

From all that I heard and read and saw, I decided that our society is terribly sick. I already knew that in my head from my studies in technology and society, but now I knew it in my guts, too.

The first part of the conversion was easy, then. I guess I still had enough human feelings to think that no society should be as insanely cruel to men and women as ours is to homosexuals. So I had to stand up for homosexuality, as a homosexual, for gay brothers and sisters who couldn't come out themselves, for that simple reason.

But there was a lot more For some reason, I don't remember ever having had pangs of conscience and burdens of guilt about being sick/evil/bad just because I liked other men better than I did women. On the other hand, I never thought that being homosexual was anything "special," anything "better" than being heterosexual.

But it is. . . something very special, very different, very much better, or so I believe.

For one thing, we stand a much better chance of developing an honest, authentic personality than do straight people. Of course, we don't always pull it off, but the potential is there.

It's so easy for a heterosexual to be a "man" or a "woman" in our society; we're bombarded from the moment we are born to the moment we die with cues about "man-behavior" and woman-behavior."

Boys wear blue; girls wear pink. Men become doctors; women become nurses. Men are dominant; women are submissive. Men suffer and endure, women suffer and weep. Men say "fuck," women say "golly." And on and on and on and on.

And at the core of the whole male role and the whole female role is that one simple, basic rule on which everything is based: *men fuck: women get fucked.*

So, as soon as we know we're gay, we realize that the straight-man or straight-woman mask just won't fit us, and that nice, simple, stereotypical personality eludes us. We can't "be," as our straight brothers and sisters can, simply by listening to society's teachings. What we are to be in this world becomes, for all homosexuals, far more complex than putting on a mask provided to us by society.

So as males who can be gentle and can get fucked ("they're not REAL men") and as women who can be strong and self-sufficient ("they're not REAL women"), we're forced to build our own personalities, OUR OWN, not society's, and we have the chance to find a "real me" that just doesn't come to many people in this society.

What this also means is that, in many of us, intellect and emotions are just a bit more sharply honed than they are among heterosexuals. We've had to observe just a bit more carefully, think just a bit more critically, decide just a bit more intelligently than heterosexuals have had to. . .

. . . we're a crafty and self-reliant lot!

It's no wonder the straight world is afraid of us. It should be! It's thrown us out of the mainstream of everyday life and forced us to survive by our wits to develop certain special skills and special ways of looking at the world—a situation very few "straights" ever find themselves in. What response can the straight world expect from us but a critical analysis of its way of life?

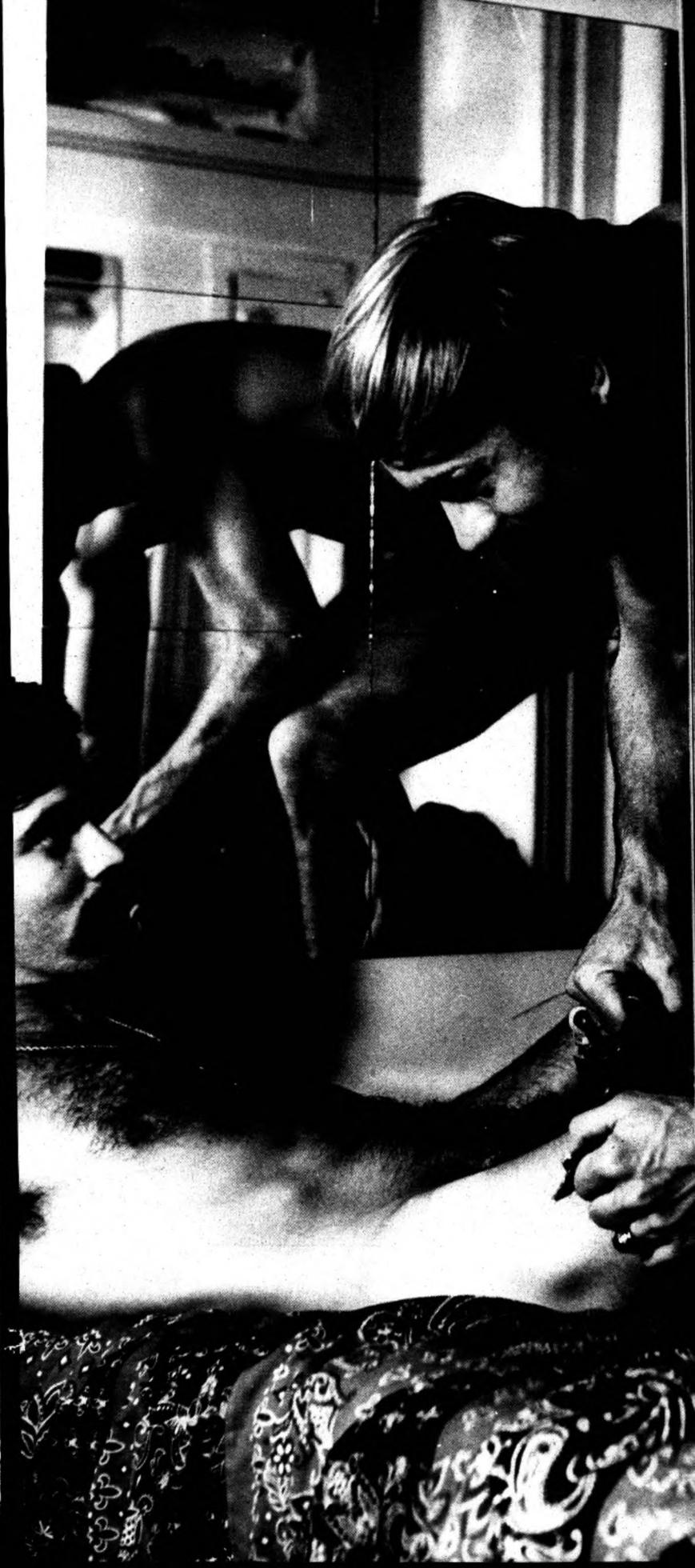
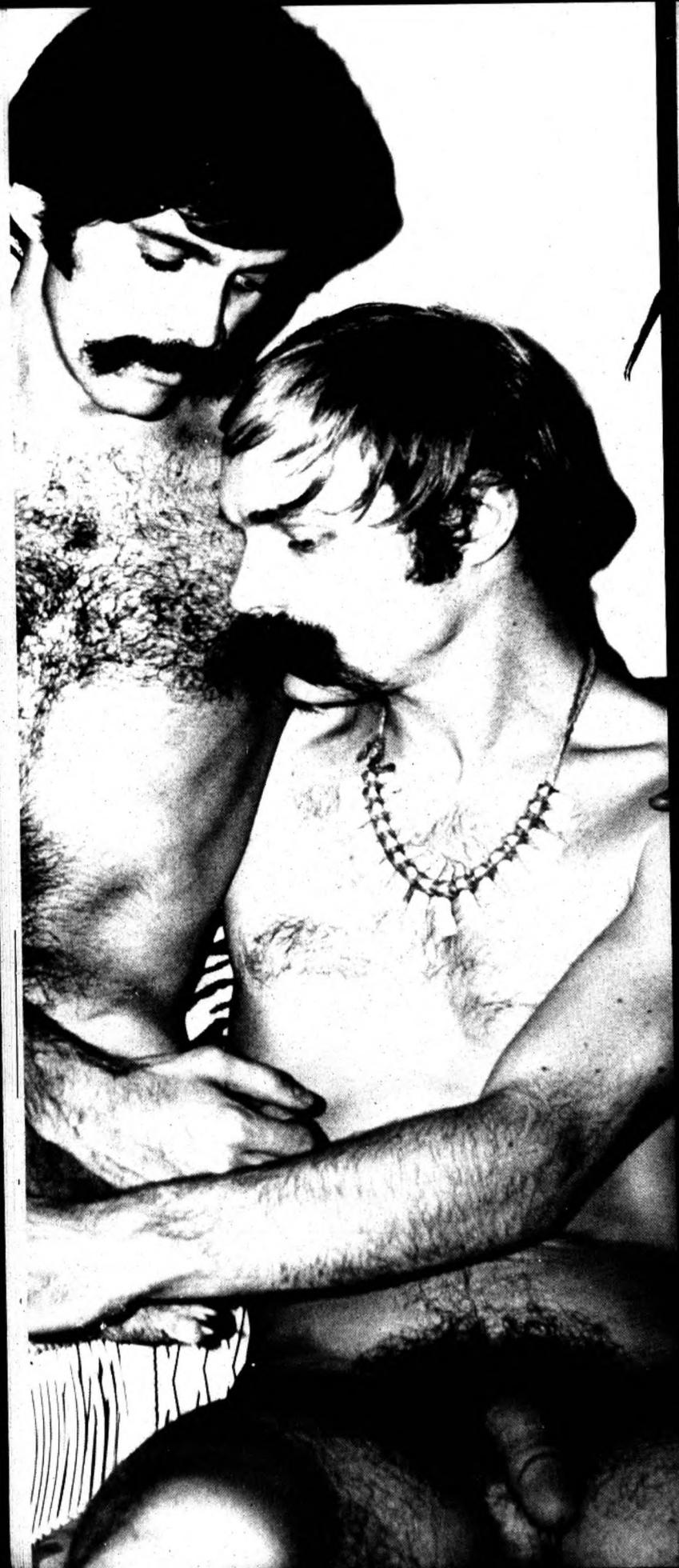
Ashamed of being gay? Hell, no! I'm proud that I've been able to make myself what I have. I'm proud that you, as my brother, have an opportunity "to be" which few of our straight friends ever will be able to imagine. I'm proud that together—you, I, and all our brothers and sisters—have a message and a mission for the straight world. . .

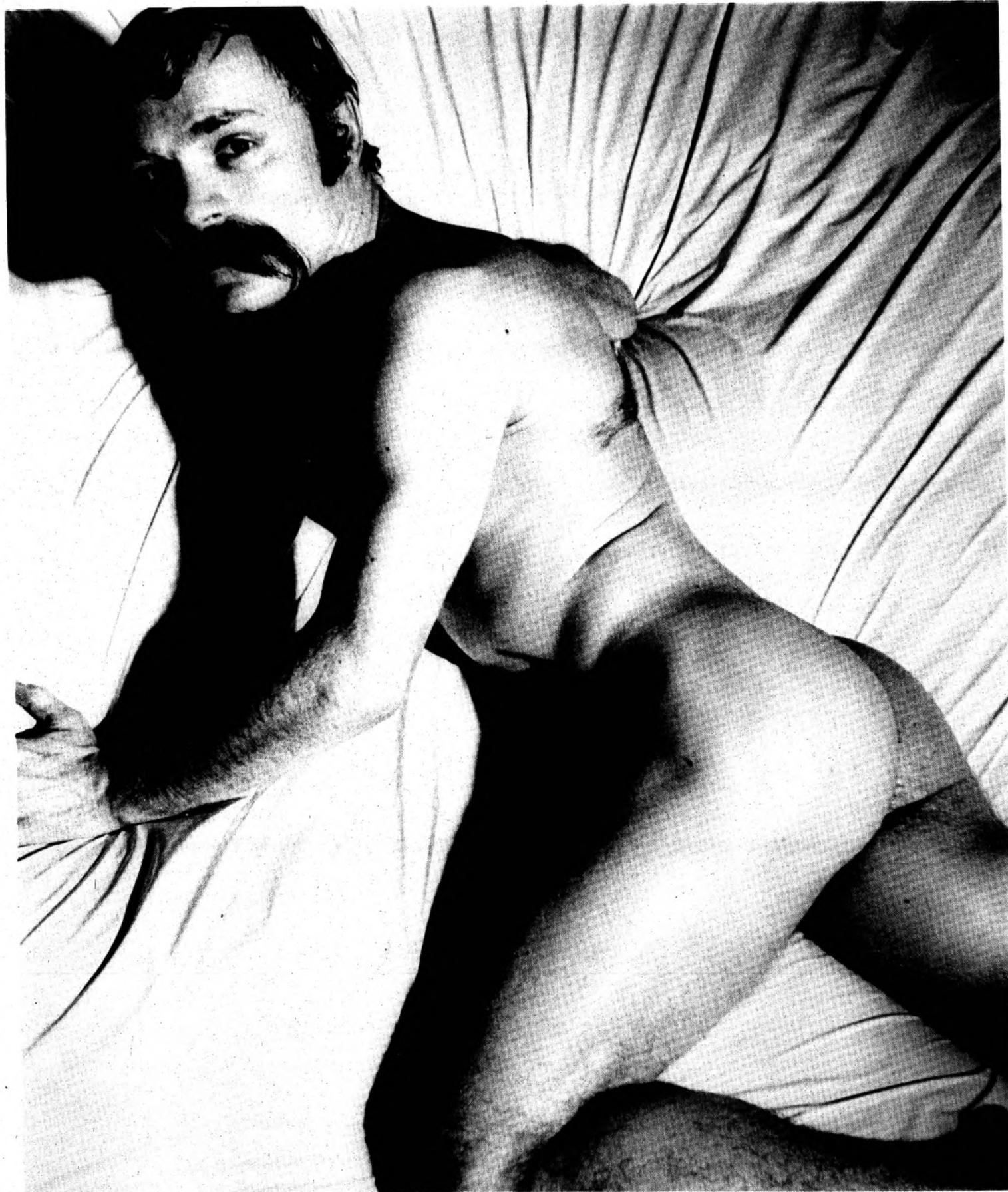
It's a message of love, and I'm not sure the straight world is any more ready to hear it now than it was 2,000 years ago. But it is our destiny and our opportunity to keep repeating the message. □



BEDTIME STORY

PHOTOGRAPHY BY RICK JARRETT





UNDERGROUND IN NEBRASKA

by ARTHUR D. FOOS

WHAT IS IT REALLY LIKE TO be gay and live in Nebraska today? Being in the heart of the Midwest, far from populated areas and large gay communities, I am often asked this question. I reply that I'm sure it's like being gay anywhere else, but is most definitely a unique life style. Gays in rural communities will best identify with my story. Nebraska has a sparse population and, naturally few gays. The only visible gay community exists in the two largest cities, Omaha and Lincoln. Omaha has several gay bars and a new M.C.C. congregation, Lincoln has two mixed bars and a new gay coffee house. There's a Gay Liberation organization on the University of Nebraska campus, which prints its own newspaper called *Gayly Nebraskan*.

But what about here in the Western Panhandle and all of the area between? There is gay life here and in almost every small town, even if it consists of only a few gays per town, only barely visible to the hetero eye. The subculture of gay is underground. Most gays are forced by circumstances to continue to play the dual role of straight/gay. Out of my close circle of friends I feel I am the most upfront because my job is not jeopardized since my employer and his wife have long known I'm gay and care only about my work performance. Their acceptance and defense of my life style has been important and a positive influence on my own liberation. The general attitude of people here (few of whom

are aware of what gay is all about) is one of rejection and at times vocal opposition about gay themes in movies and TV. The restaurant/lounge where I work has a long-haired male and female bartenders. One of our very 70's female bartenders is married with three children and very aware of what gay is all about. We have openly discussed it with her and she frequently complained, "We women never have a chance to hustle any of the good-looking males since you gays move on him faster than we can."

With the sparsity of gay males available in our town, we don't hesitate in making our wishes known to any likely prospect who wanders into the bar. The Hustler in all of us gets some practice. If we don't succeed in scoring there we take to the streets late at night. We have a Broadway, but street walking is not allowed late at night. Cruising by car is at times successful, but is watched closely by local police who take down descriptions of cars and license numbers for lack of anything else to do.

Our life style is low-keyed and we don't make ripples except on nights when we let our hair down and camp it up. We have had a few confrontations with young non-gay males who are not very tolerant of us. Although I dislike confrontation, I am glad for the experience. I can readily empathize with those in the vanguard of Gay Liberation. These few minor public scuffles, along with the usual staring, whispering, and malicious gossip, have been the mainstay of the campaign against us here.

One very reliable source for meeting new gay males in town as been in the groups (from California mainly) who have played at the club where I work. Every opening night of a new group has found either myself or a bevy of my friends in the front row by the stage eyeing every male to catch the certain flip of a wrist, the twinkle in the eye, the special hints of gayness. If we get even the slightest vibration, we pursue with full vigor. We invite them to our table for a drink, and apartments for an after-hours party. Our average has been high using this overture.

In summary, attitudes in a conservative, dyed-in-the-wool Republican, small-town Nebraska are like granite. They can be changed only by time and force like water wearing upon stone. In the meantime we living here strive to be as happy as possible given the circumstances. Every day sees a minor or major breakthrough on the national scene for Gay Liberation and people's liberation. Every day sees a small victory here, too, as we gain more awareness of what our life style is, as people accept us on a one-to-one basis, instead of lumping us all together under one label. It's an experience living here—one that at times makes you laugh, at times makes you want to cry, but, difficult though it may be at times, make no mistake that gays are alive and thriving here in the land of tumbleweeds, sand hills, cattle, and irrigation farming. Just as the hearty pioneers who once settled this land forged new frontiers on the unclaimed land, so will we chart new courses in gay living in the future. □

Two Tales of Pin Chinn

by Damon
deWinters



Someone Else

WHEN SOMEONE ELSE WAS caught eating bread and butter, the Magi Straits took him away and cut off his nose. After that, when some of the people saw him, they would laugh and scorn him. They would call him bad names, and some would throw stones at him. Therefore, Someone Else traveled from place to place at night searching for something to eat among food that was discarded and left to spoil.

Sometimes the Magi Straits would watch Someone Else rubbish about in the garbage. They would make strange sucking noises with their mouths, then they would begin to grin, finally they would burst into laughter. One night they decided to catch Someone Else in a trap. They took a great piece of bread and covered it with a thick layer of butter because they knew that was Someone Else's favorite food. They put the bread and butter near the place where Someone Else came to eat, and just beneath it they placed a great steel trap with strong jaws lined with sharp, cruel teeth. Then they hid in the shadows and waited. Before long, Someone Else came out of the darkness to look for food. When he saw the bread and butter, he was very happy, for he hadn't had any of that for a long time; but as he reached for it, his foot slipped into the trap. Its sharp teeth dug into his flesh and splintered the bones of his ankle. He cried out in pain. The Magi Straits howled with laughter and grunted their approval.

Someone Else pulled at the chain and tried to free himself. The more he struggled, the more deeply the trap dug into his flesh. He tore at the trap with his hands, but its teeth cut his fingers. Soon his hands were covered with blood. His clothes were soaked with sweat. Still he struggled with the trap. He felt along the chain, dragging the trap after him. Finally

he discovered where the chain was tied. It was beginning to get light, and he could see the knot. He tried to untie it, but the knot was very tight, and it soon became slippery with his blood. He worked frantically. The light became stronger. By the time the sun appeared over the horizon he had untied several links of chain.

The people of the village began to leave their houses to work in their fields. Many of them stopped to watch as Someone Else struggled to free himself from the trap. Some of the people hated Someone Else because he liked bread and butter and were glad to see him hurt. Some did not care and continued on their way. Some had sympathy for Someone Else but did not help him. Even most of those who secretly shared his desire for bread and butter did not offer him their protection. After all, they thought, it was happening to Someone Else. One or Two sought to question the Magi Straits, but he was thrown into a black carriage and carried away.

More and more villagers stopped to watch. Someone Else was soaked in blood. His eyes were wild and sweat ran into them. He pulled at the knot. He could feel it begin to give. Then one Magi Strait threw mud on the knot so Someone Else couldn't see it. Another threw dirt in his face. Someone Else pulled at the chain, but it held fast. He twisted in the trap. "Mother!" he cried. "Mother!" he whimpered. Suddenly the trap snapped against itself, cutting completely through his ankle. He stumbled forward and fell among the garbage. The Magi Straits descended upon him with clubs.

Among those who watched Someone Else was a young man named Fair-Minded. What he saw greatly troubled him, and he left the village that very day. He stayed in a great forest and lived by himself. The more he tried to understand what had happened, the more troubled he became. Finally he decided to seek help.

Fair-Minded arrived at Pin Chinn's house just before dawn. He looked for a comfortable place to wait in, for he did not want to disturb Pin Chinn so early. Then he caught a glimpse of someone already working in the garden. Fair-Minded went to the garden and knocked on the gate. A disciple came to let him in. He conducted Fair-Minded to a small bench nestled among some

rocks and invited him to be seated. Presently Pin Chinn approached the bench, bowed to his guest, and said, "I see you are troubled."

"Yes," said Fair-Minded. After a long silence he said, "I wonder if you could tell me the causes of suffering."

Pin Chinn hesitated, studying Fair-Minded carefully; then he said, "To be condemned by those without experience. To be judged by those without understanding. To be governed by those without compassion. And to live without love."

Be Gone

When Fair-Minded returned to the village, he told the people what Pin Chinn had said, and they began to question what had happened. The people gathered in a great body and sought to examine the actions of the Magi Straits. From among the common people one man, named Summum Bonum, had been elevated to a high position to arbitrate impartially between the rights of the people and the authority of the Magi Straits to determine the highest good for all. But the sympathies of Summum Bonum became unevenly divided, dwelling chiefly with the Magi Straits. When the people tried to question the Magi Straits, Summum Bonum treated them with such discourtesy that they became incensed against him. He became so arrogant the people changed his name to Be Gone and wanted to elect Another One from among themselves and put him in Be Gone's place. They asked him to yield his position, but Be Gone refused and sought to frustrate their wishes in devious ways. When this was discovered, a wave of discontent swept across the people and they were then even more convinced that Be Gone should go.

The Magi Straits and Be Gone locked horns with the people in this dilemma, and it seemed as if the conflict could not easily be resolved. Finally the people and Be Gone and the Magi Straits

decided to ask Pin Chinn's advice and to follow his judgment. And a great assembly proceeded to his house.

When Be Gone and the Magi Straits and all the people stood before Pin Chinn's house, Be Gone knocked on the door. Presently Pin Chinn stood before his guests.

"The cares of power seem to rest heavily upon your shoulders," observed Pin Chinn politely. Be Gone nodded curtly and said, "I have these questions upon which you may advise me." He turned toward the people, and in a loud voice he said, "When does a ruler act wisely? How does a ruler enforce proper conduct? How should a ruler punish those who disobey?"

Then he said, lowering his voice, "When does a ruler lose the power to govern?"

"When a ruler is merciful, he finds the patience to act wisely," said Pin Chinn. "The manner of conduct the ruler sets for himself is the greatest inspiration he gives to his people. The ruler who holds the well-being of the people in his heart has little to fear of disobedience. And finally, the ruler loses his power when he loses the love of the people."

Placing his hand softly upon Be Gone's shoulder, Pin Chinn said, "If the reins of power tear the flesh from your hand, relax your grip. Now you must trust to being governed more gently than you have ruled, for only power that is guided by compassion can endure." □

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LAUREL PARK

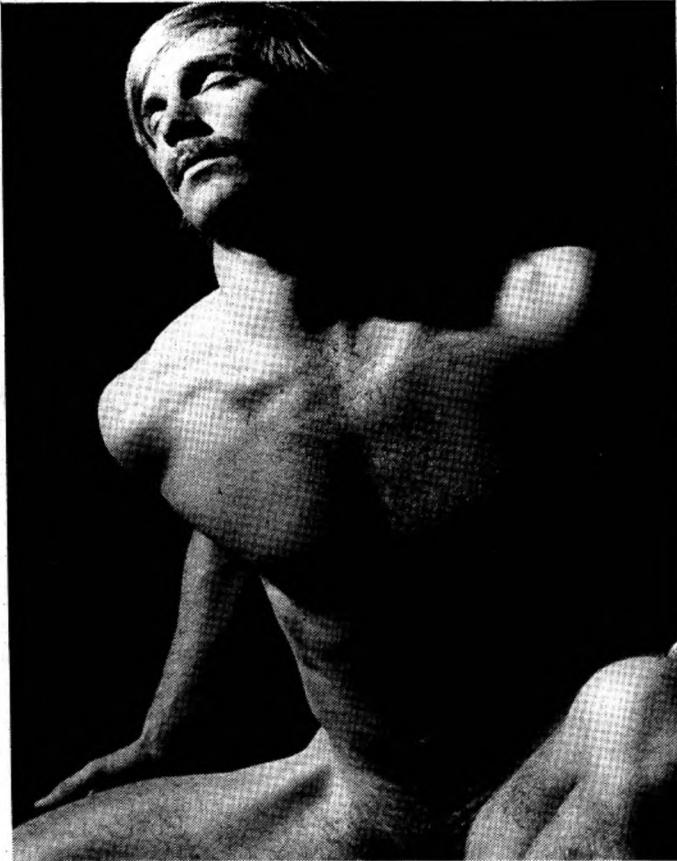
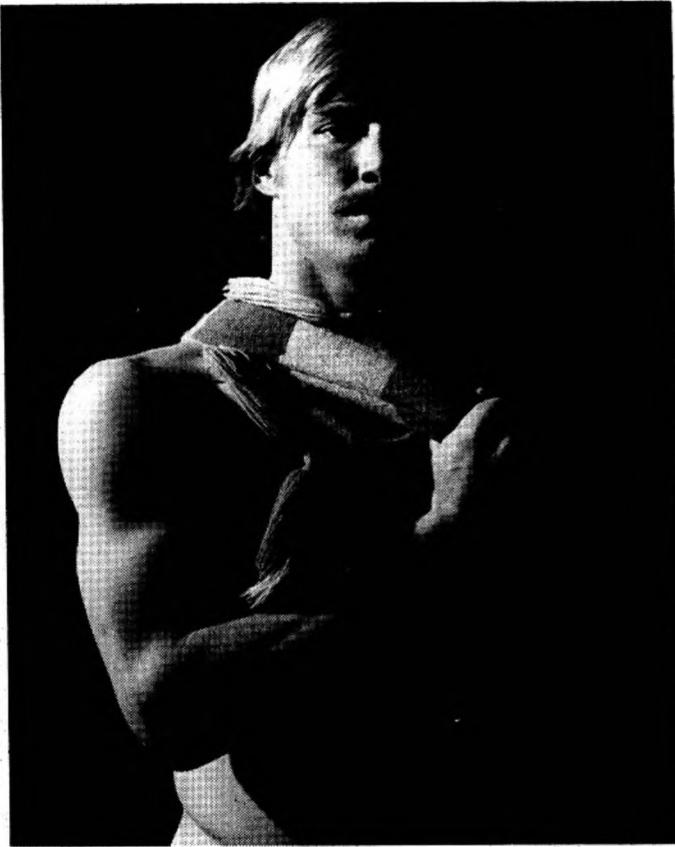
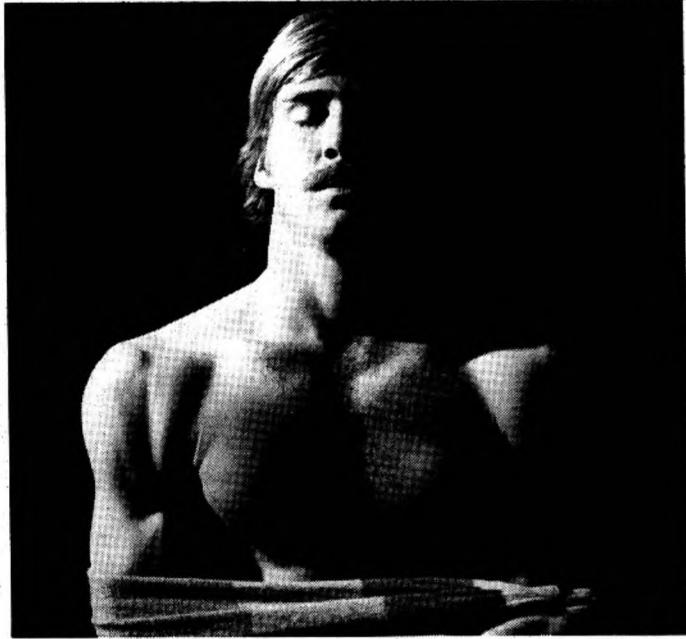
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SHADOW PLAY

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meditations on drag



by NORMAN DAVIS

ONE OF THE CHARACTERISTICS of a gay men's bar is the evident concern for their appearance, by the patrons. Gays have probably always been aware of clothes somewhat more than have their straight counterparts, and indeed it is commonly presumed that gay men dominate the apparel design industry. Fads and fashions in the straight world have long been created by and spread by gays. Within my own recollection this goes back to saddle shoes, penny loafers, wide-lapel jackets, and the return of bell-bottom pants. Even straight men have adopted the styles and haircuts once considered by them suitable only for us "fairies."

In the not too distant past it was common practice to wear green on Thursdays to proclaim one's gayness. This was esoteric communication, certainly, but, if we were less open now, as a community, we would still be telling one another about ourselves in some such silent communicative way.

Add to this catalogue of body trimmings, such facts of life as leather wear, dolphin pins, single earrings, sequins, Levi's, etc., and we begin to bridge the gap between gay and straight in that all people are concerned to some extent about their appearance, and about the image or role they wish to project.

Dress is communication.

Communication is what takes place when Person A conveys information to Person or Persons B. Without B, no communication takes place.

In the matter of drag, we have to examine carefully what we mean in order to avoid confusion; some terms

that are casually used interchangeably are in fact quite different things. Transvestism, cross-dressing, and drag are not synonymous, if we really think about them. Simply wearing the clothes of the other sex is not necessarily drag.

Transvestism I define as the need for, or practice of, dressing in garments ordinarily pertaining to the opposite sex, for one's own satisfaction and pleasure, without regard to sexual orientation. Again it is widely believed that most transvestite men are quite heterosexual in orientation. That transvestism as a

subject has been considered an appropriate element of Gay Liberation is for this reason alone totally inconceivable. Only if homosexuality is defined as a gender identity disorientation can "TV" be linked with it, and this definition of gay is not acceptable to those of us who know better.

Cross-dressing is at another level and is simply the wearing of the other sex's clothes. There need be no attempt to complete the image or attributes of the other sex, and always one is manifestly aware that the cross-dresser is a man in

a dress or a woman in tee-shirt and chinos. Cross-dressing is sometimes a political statement, sometimes camp, sometimes a joke, and often simply a matter of comfort.

Communication is not an element in the case of "TV"s, unless one views the effort of the mind and body to respond to the needs of the spirit as some level of communication. However, with cross-dressing, communication is often an important feature.

Coming then—finally—to drag, we can see that communication has become the salient point of the activity. Drag, itself, as a concept and behavioral act, is so large in scope that it has become serious professional show-business. Such people as Charles Pierce are no longer drag queens, but artists. The *intent* of the deed, the kind of *communication*, is what distinguishes between the female impersonator and the female impressionist. Non-militant lesbians often can accept a female impressionist as an exponent of an art form, while the impersonator elicits all sorts of angry responses. At the present level of women's/lesbians' liberation, it is understandably difficult for them to see drag, in any form, as anything but a put-down of women. But to many truly liberated lesbians it is equally difficult for them to see that the pants-suit/wrangler/chino/plaid shirt scene is in fact cross-dressing, if not drag. It has been going on openly and with full acceptance for so long that it invariably angers them to hear of an instance where some petty-minded businessman has prohibited the wearing of slacks by his women office employees. Pragmatically, it is beside the point that this same businessman does not explicitly forbid his men to wear a blouse and a skirt.

On the contrary, the garden-variety drag is attempting personal communication and hardly ever anything else. The great majority of gay men have never cross-dressed or dragged and never had desire to do so. For some, however, drag provides a means of self-expression in a way not ordinarily available. Halloween, New Year's Eve, Mardi Gras, and an occasional ball or pageant create the context for this expression. They may wish to be admired, or only to feel pretty. They may be tired of playing butch. They may want nothing more than to "try it once." For many young males who drag, it appears to be an

emphatic statement about the socially-defined femininity that they feel within themselves. Far from being an insult to women, it is the compliment of attempting to suppress their own maleness as distinguished from person-ness.

What of the drunken ass who puts on his wife's dress and hat to entertain his guests, lisping and gesturing exaggeratedly? What kind of cross-dressing is this, if not an open insult to gay men?

What of Joan of Arc, banishing the camp followers and dressing like a man while leading her army? Cross-dressing or drag? Political statement? An insult to the clergy? Did she know why?

What of Marlene Dietrich, singing her way through a rathskeller in suit, tie, and fedora? Drag? Or merely a complement to her contralto?

What of Chevalier d'Eon, for decades an emissary of the French court, sometimes as a man, sometimes as a woman? His cross-dressing was so effective there were even men who had slept in the same bed with him who swore he was a woman. Yet he was not, as a physical examination proved after his death.

What of Hatshepsut, female Pharaoh of Egypt, who dressed as a man and wore a false beard? Cross-dressing for political necessity? No, because everyone was well aware she was a woman. Why, then?

THE PERPLEXION OF CROSS-DRESSING, GENDER FUCK, FEMALE IMPRESSIONISM, FEMALE IMPERSONATION, AND JUST PLAIN DRAG IS NO LONGER A SIMPLE CONSIDERATION

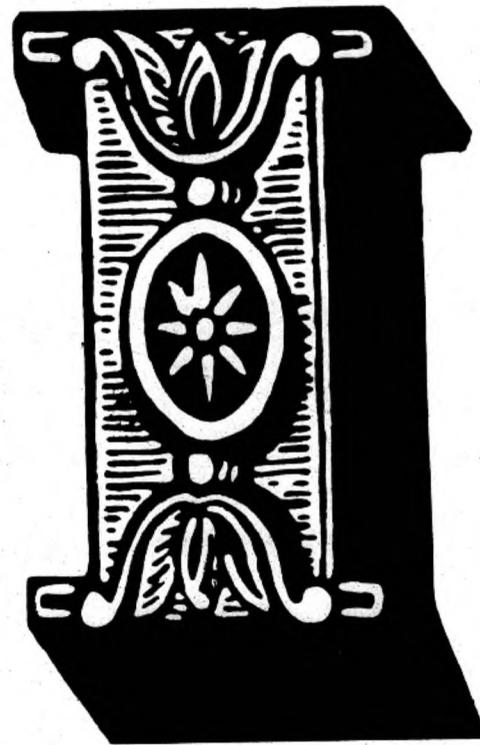
What about gender-fuck? Is this bisexual drag? Does it insult women? Does it insult men? Do women dress this way, ever? Why? Why not? If not, should they?

Only one thing is really clear: when we put on our clothes, we assume an identity, conforming with our concept of what those particular clothes mean to someone else. We want to have a certain look. The actual meaning inferred by those who see us may be totally at odds with our own meaning. It is unfortunate that some men who drag

do not realize or understand that some women insist on a monolithic conception of the intent of men who drag, and impute to those men a universal will to insult women. It may well be that a man in drag is responding in some way to a subliminal anti-feminine impulse implanted by the straight-white-male-chauvinist-redneck-pig society. It may also very well be that slacks, pants suits, shirts, rope-belts, wallets and cigars, as worn by and used by women, are a subliminal projective expression of the need for equal power and independence deriving from that same society.

One can only hope for more and better communication and greater freedom of expression for all people at all levels. It is distressing to see Gay Liberation groups at odds with one another. Men see anti-drag feminists as attempting to define how men should dress, and regard this often as an attempt to usurp group power. Women, I believe, insist that men are mocking women by trying to appear as women, and behaving simultaneously in ways that women regard as a travesty of womanhood. Problems such as these are not solved if the parties involved shut off communication and duel at forty paces with dirty words and cat calls. We have, after all, nothing in common but our homosexuality; we must emphasize what will bring us together and play down those differences of social concept, such as drag, that tend to divide us. It can be done; many groups are working with men and women together on issues that affect us all. The contribution of women to civil and gay rights is enormous, often accomplished in spite of the fumbling of well-meaning men who did not understand.

It is worth the effort for each of us to stand before a mirror and, either actually, or in our mind's eye, see ourselves dressed in the clothes of the opposite sex. Ask yourself why? Or why not? Thinking about it seriously, rather than simply parroting the rhetoric of our gender, we can perhaps begin to raise our own consciousness on the subject. Whether we change any opinions or notions we may have is less important than whether we understand on a gut level that how we dress is a matter of expression and/or communication. Though clothes do *not* make the man, who we are determines how we look to the world around us, and how it will interpret who we are.



First Person Singular

A SHORT STORY by
DAN WESTERGARD

YOU KNOW THIS REALLY IS getting heavy on my head. I really like spending time with you. I really do. It's... well, I don't think I'm together enough to offer myself to another person. I've never met anyone like you before. You really are wonderful. You make me stop and think about my trip—really look at what I'm doing. I just want to get it together now. I don't want to get involved until I feel I have something to offer another person. If I did though, I'm sure it would be you."

"I know. I'd be a nice place to live, but you don't want to visit here."

"Don't joke about it. I really mean it. I've thought about us living together,

I really have. You're just about everything I've ever wanted. It's just that I don't want to hurt you, and I'm afraid that I will."

"Hurt me? I think you're more afraid of feeling guilty. I just hope you don't believe that line you're giving me, because it's bullshit. It's okay if you don't want to get involved; that I can understand—I've seen that movie, too—and if you want to give me reasons, I'd love to hear them, but at least have the courtesy to be honest with yourself. So this isn't it. So what? It's what's happening. Just know when you meet the right person you aren't going to hassle this shit. That's when it's really serious, when you don't even think about making excuses for not feeling like you always thought you should. What you will be feeling will be so right it just won't matter. That's when you realize it isn't serious, it's only natural. Love is just that—what is happening, not what should be happening. Sometimes I think the beauty is in knowing that it happens for as long as it needs to. Like walking through a garden and picking the flowers. They die. It's part of their beauty, until you learn to experience them firsthand, by watching them grow, taking care of them, and seeing them every year. It isn't just the pretty bloom but what makes it bloom, the whole trip. You learn more each time, until you have your own garden. You can't help what isn't. So stop trying."

It was the last time that Hugh and I talked. He thought I was making fun of him; I wasn't. It was just that I'd met someone who made me realize it was okay to feel that way.

His name is Doug. I met him at the baths. The place you never meet anybody, and he was there. Just as I got to the baths and changed, I saw him. There was something about his presentation, his carriage, you knew looking at him walk he liked himself because he got off to other people. A person, and glad of it. I followed because he looked at me. Lost him, figured it was fate, and found someone in the orgy room who wanted to suck my cock. Loved that and would have been more than happy to reciprocate, but he wanted to suck my cock. Then a third joined; so I got my wish. I came and my friend went. I bumped my way out of the maze and saw Doug again.

He looked. I wondered if I could come again so soon; worried about getting another erection, and remembered that I had just come; so my cock looked bigger anyway. So I turned and went back toward the orgy room. He followed. I stopped. He stopped next to me and stood there. I began to doubt. He moved to the other side of the room. I followed. He stopped short and turned. I couldn't hesitate and reached out toward him, waiting for him to give me a sign. He reached back. We went to a corner. After more exploration, he offered me a joint and his room. At that point I liked the idea of either or both equally. Getting into each other tipped the scale in favor of his room. He turned out to be one of the nicest persons I'd met in a long time. With that status—I liked what I was feeling. He didn't sweep me off my feet; just showed me that, if I wanted, it was possible to stand alone in the air. He put me there. I could stay or not, as I chose.

The sex was good. I was a little surprised about how into it I had been. Here was someone who came to the baths to have sex; I came to have sex. We had sex with no games. I liked it. It meant getting into the other's head just enough to enjoy what was happening. Nothing nosy, just knowing what to do by doing it. It was good.

I stayed in his room for most of the night, thinking about my own. I sweat a lot when I sleep with someone in the baths—the rooms are small and close—but he felt good; so I stayed. In the morning as we exchanged numbers he told me that he lived in Bakersfield and was going back soon. We said good-by.

That was on Tuesday, and I went to work that night in the restaurant. I worked smiling. Having him give me his number felt good; it showed in my face. He called work. It pleased me. Each little thing that happened was enough. If he had just called, I would have been pleased, but he had wanted to see me. He was going to be in town until Thursday. I was busy all day Thursday anyway; so that was out. That night turned out to be the most convenient. My place was closer than the place where he was staying. He'd come by about 12 and pick me up when I got off work. There was no

question about wanting to. I did.

He came at 11:45, and we left. Looking back on seeing him there, I remember how pleased I was. I now know why. If he had tried to impress me with the fact he was just a laid-back guy, there could have been nothing more perfect than how he was dressed. Nothing! No flannel, faded denim and Earth Shoes; but an old shirt (with an undershirt), Levi pants with material in the seams, and a green corduroy jacket. Not put together, just what he had on. His clothes. His trip. He was there; that was the important fact. There was no way I could not like his naturalness. Open, so open, all the usual trips about uptightness were gone. There was no room for them, not if I wanted to enjoy now. That was it; with him the now was always attractive. I wanted that, just the comfort of what was happening. Of course, that wasn't what I was feeling then. I was just happy to see him. In review I understand how I felt. Some people like reasons, I like understanding, being able to get across to someone else how something felt. Sharing.

Outside the restaurant we walked toward his car. He asked if I wanted some beer. I was pleased to think that he thought I drank beer. I was amused to think about telling him I didn't drink. Usually it was a job I dreaded. I mean, most people can't handle me not drinking; they feel it's a value judgment of their drinking. I told him I didn't drink and waited for the reaction. He asked if I liked ginger ale, like that, not joking, just wanting to know. I loved it. Even now I smile, thinking about it. He told me he knew a good brand. We went to the all-night grocery and got some.

We went to my apartment. He liked it. Looking at the books and toys, he asked if I was into fairy tales. I thought about lying, but didn't. It turned out he was, too. We smoked. We had sex. We talked. The safe ground around each other grew. We explored. It didn't matter who fucked who. It was good. Neither had to give up his own identity to the other. We had only to grow and enjoy. We did. He asked if I was into snakes. I didn't know. He told me about his pet boa. His birthday was coming up a week

from Thursday. I remembered. I liked knowing when it was. He stayed the night.

The next afternoon, which was Wednesday, we split and I went to work. I had his address and knew I'd go down to see him or at least send him a birthday card. He came to the restaurant that night with a friend and had dinner. I was pleased. He asked if we could get together that night. I said no. I was tired. So we said good-by and talked about me going down the next week. I didn't think I would but knew I would one day. It gave me pleasure to think about seeing him where he lived. I liked holding on to the feeling my thought gave me.

Thursday was very busy; I was having my chart done that day and going to a concert that night. The reading was very good. The concert was excellent. I felt good and was charming. I laughed, enjoyed the company I was in, and thought about the note that I found in my mail box after I got home with my chart and before going off to the concert. It was so simple. Just a few words. Doug had got a small designing job and was staying up through the middle of the following week. He wanted to get together again. I felt good about that. The guy who was picking me up for the concert had phoned saying he was going to be late. I waited. The phone rang again. It was Doug. He asked if I had got the note. We talked for a while. He asked me when we could get together. For the first time that I can remember, I didn't worry about his losing interest if I couldn't see him that night and I couldn't. In fact, I wouldn't be able to see him until Saturday about 10. I had to work that evening. He said he'd meet me at work. So Thursday was a good night. I expected nothing and enjoyed what was happening.

Friday went by. On Saturday I was supposed to phone Doug during the day. I tried. No answer. About 9 he was there. One minute I was talking to a customer, the next I was walking toward his smile. It felt good to hug him, it felt better to be hugged by him.

He waited in the bar while I worked. I finished. We left. The night was clear and beautiful, almost warm. We could hear the firecrackers of Chinese New Year. He wanted to take me for a drive. I asked to go to the ocean. Over the Golden Gate Bridge and to the left is a

lookout point, which I had never been to until that night. A view so incredible it takes your breath away. We smoked a joint, sitting outside the car on a sleeping bag, while in the car next to us two young couples drank and fucked. He explained that one of his greatest dislikes was radios playing in nature.

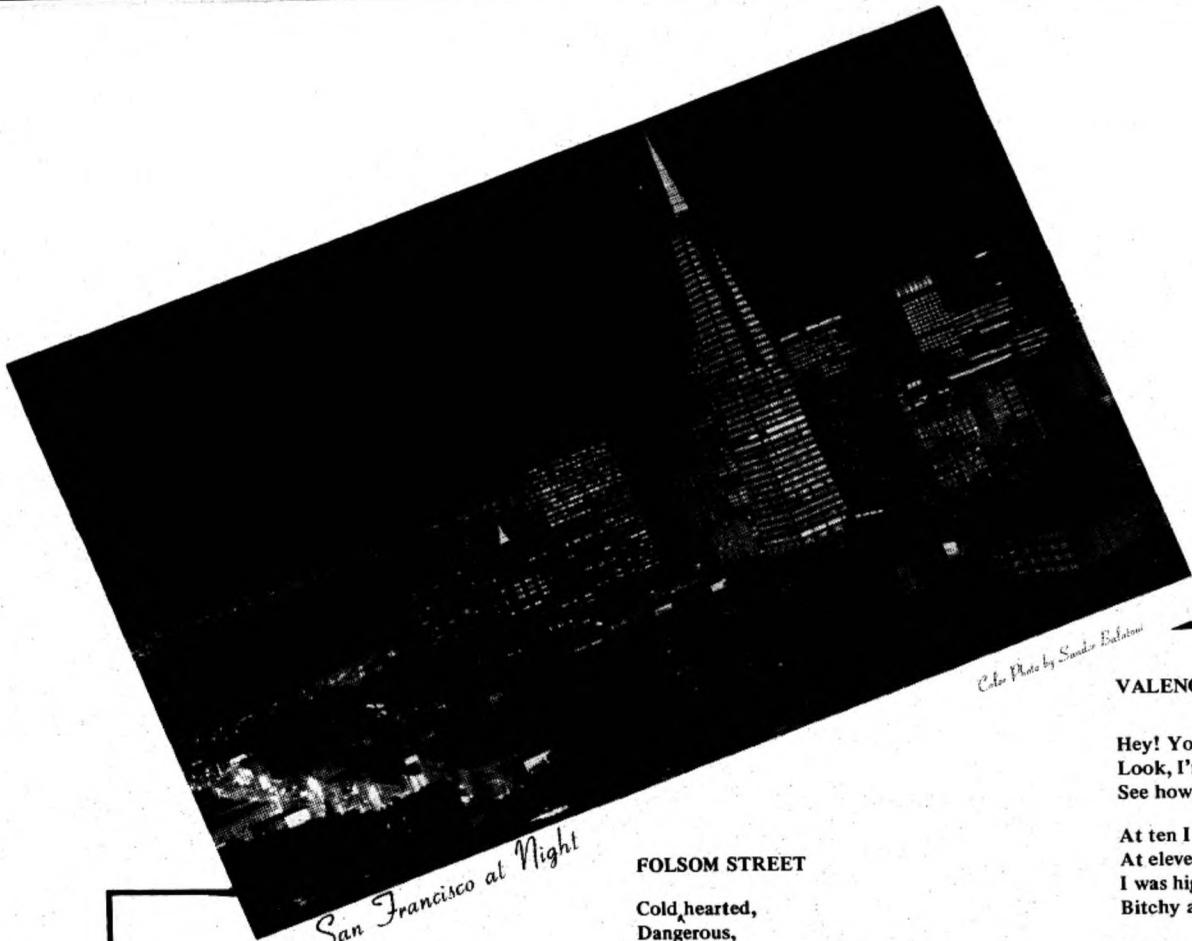
We recrossed the bridge, walked around Chinatown and went to an all-night restaurant. We went home. We balled. We talked. We slept. Sunday afternoon I got to live out one of my oldest and tenderest fantasies; we read the Sunday paper in bed. With the back of my neck resting against his cock, I looked at the show section and the funnies, while he read the editorial pages. We both looked at the front page, but neither of us read the sports section.

We spend all of the next days together as much as possible with both our schedules. I had all of Thursday off, and since it was his birthday we planned an outing at the beach, followed by dinner. Two of his friends went with us. It was the local nude beach. I'd never been. We balled on the beach with one of the friends looking on. At first it bothered me, then I just let it all be part of what was happening. I mean, here was this man I wanted who wanted to make love. If someone wanted to watch, so what? I now understand why people go to jail for what they believe in. I'm not ashamed of loving. I hope I never will be again. On his birthday I got the present. Liberation.

We walked. He had to piss. I asked if he could write with it. He did. There in the sand was my name. I laughed. The incident was funny in its implications, but it touched me with the warm feelings that make it nice to remember. We had dinner with two of my friends and went to a show.

He was leaving the next day. We got up early and had breakfast together. We said good-by. He wants me to go down. I want to. I'm planning for that now. Now—that's his gift to me.

My gift to him? There have been many people I would have been willing to die for if they wanted proof of my love. He is the first I've been willing to live for, not bind myself to him or him to me. Just knowing that two people can share time together in that way, no matter how short, is worth living for. It produces growth. That's my gift.



Color Photo by Sandra Bullock

Scenery poems by Scott Faversham

POLK STREET

We smile,
We drink,
We talk.

We like opera,
The same movies.
We've read this;
We've read that.
Love her - hate him.
Love him - hate her.
"A bit of thyme is the secret -"
"When I was in Greece -"

We'll share a bed tonight,
But it won't last.
We both know that -
Don't we?

FOLSOM STREET

Cold hearted,
Dangerous,
Maybe cruel -
But young;

Arrogant,
Ill-mannered,
Uncouth -
But handsome;

Uncultured,
Insensitive
Crude -
But male.

Dare I try
To make it with you?

AT THE BATHS

In the steam room
You emerged from the mist
In beauty.

I saw your fine limbs
In the shower -
Your sleek back,
The intrigue of your sex.

But this pile of bone
And flesh and muscle
Now lying beside me
In the darkness
Of this tiny room -
Can this be what I saw?

VALENCIA STREET

Hey! You - or you - or you,
Look, I'm smiling now.
See how friendly I've become?

At ten I was rude,
At eleven I was curt.
I was high by midnight,
Bitchy and mean by one.

But in a quarter of an hour
The bar will close -

I'm friendly now,
I'm smiling now,
I'm not so choosy now.

Hey! You - or you - or you -
Don't let me go home alone -
Please - !

MARKET STREET

The tattoo,
The scar,
The smile blended
With a sneer.

Heavy jacket -
Denim - boots.
Sidelong look,
Shock of hair.

Bottle of beer,
Country tune.
Heavy fingers;
Ash tray heaped.

Past Market Street
A sad hotel,
A dingy room,
A sagging bed -

Waits.

Amazing

San Francisco Chronicle Wed., Nov. 27.

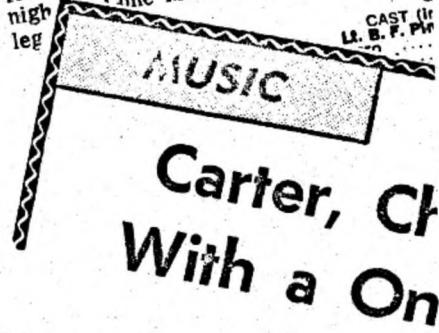
Chamber Music At Its Finest

By Marilyn Tucker

Four musicians with talent to burn presented an elegant program of chamber music in the Carter Performing Arts series Monday night at the Mountain College.

Opera
At 8

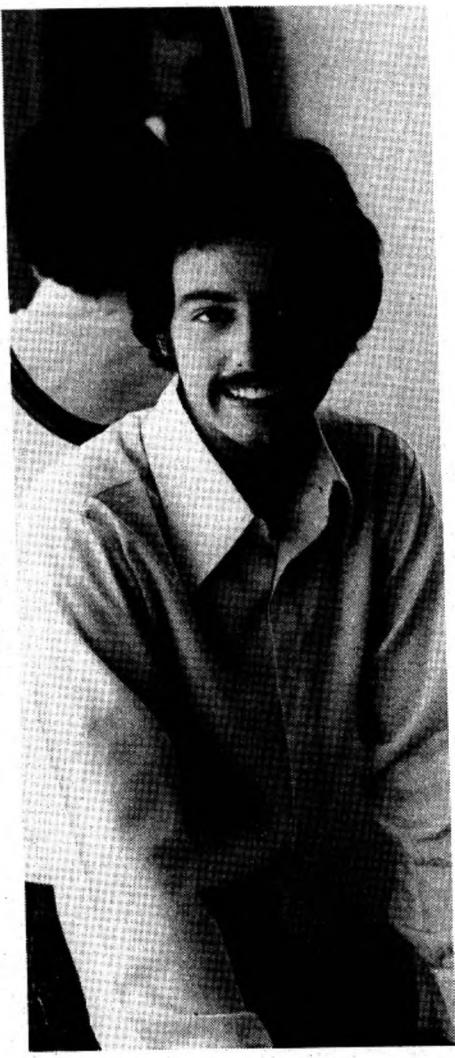
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THE DICTUMS of the Old West still apply in some cases, but would you believe, the viola?

Philadelphia James Carter came West three years ago to join the San Francisco Symphony, straight out of the Curtis Institute of Music. He was a still a student.

By Alexander Fried
James Carter, a fine new young violinist in the San Francisco Symphony, evidently loves chamber music, and in collaboration with pianist Marilyn Thompson, aims to present this and other sorts of music under the aegis of Carter's Arts.



Jimmy Carter: Doin' It

AT AGE TWENTY-THREE JIMMY CARTER SEEMS TO HAVE IT MADE. He plays viola with the San Francisco Symphony, gives recital tours all over the country, wins competitions, has his own chamber music series, and is deeply in love with his adopted city—San Francisco.

"What a place! I'm really spoiled by the physical aspects of this town. Walking down the street I bump into things just looking at the guys and it's incredible being on that stage. Audiences are gorgeous! Sometimes it's hard concentrating on the music if the piece is long and slow. I'd much rather be sitting *out there* with somebody!"

Carter is in his fourth year with the symphony and for two years was the youngest member of any major symphony orchestra in this country. He moved here from his native Philadelphia, fresh out of the Curtis Institute of Music, one week after winning the audition for Seiji Ozawa (and turning down a position with the Philadelphia).

"The job seemed perfect and it's still really good for me. I work eighteen and a half hours a week; the pay is good, and I can be me without hassles about being gay (even though symphony musicians are notoriously straight). Almost all my colleagues know about my sexuality, and only a few older up-tights object. Music is music—who cares who I sleep with? That's my business."

Those hours with the symphony include rehearsals and concerts, but Jimmy says his real work is away from the Opera House and into his own recitals.

"This year I have been my own manager and agent, and it's tough doing the backstage work of publicity, booking, travel arrangements, and fighting with other players. I want to play and practice and have time to relax and screw around, too. I love to dance (Cabaret and occasionally Buzzby's), and just being outside wandering around

feeding my fetish is terrific. Oh, yeah—that's dark hair and mustaches. My friends tease me, but at least it's an honest stereotype. I guess I should carry around a box of hair so if I see a cute guy without one, I'd just whip it out. I've had mine since I was 14—it's a great prop."

Critics seem to get off on Curtis' recitals, and his reviews have been outstanding in terms of critic enthusiasm for his art.

"Yes. They say I have 'sophisticated elan.' I love being in front of people, and really try to give them a good show.

Boring recitals are death. So, if I can, I work it so that there is much more than good music to hear. Fashion has a big part to play—color coordinating, etc. Also the interplay between the players—if we like each other and are getting off on the music—and having fun. It's bound to be contagious."

Carter's next recital is May 17 at

Lone Mountain College Theatre in San Francisco. He says the audiences are a "real trip."

"One dizzy friend said mine was the only recital he had ever attended where he had slept with everyone there, including the performer. I hope for his sake that it was an exaggeration, but I doubt it!"

Jimmy sums up his life in fairly blunt terms.

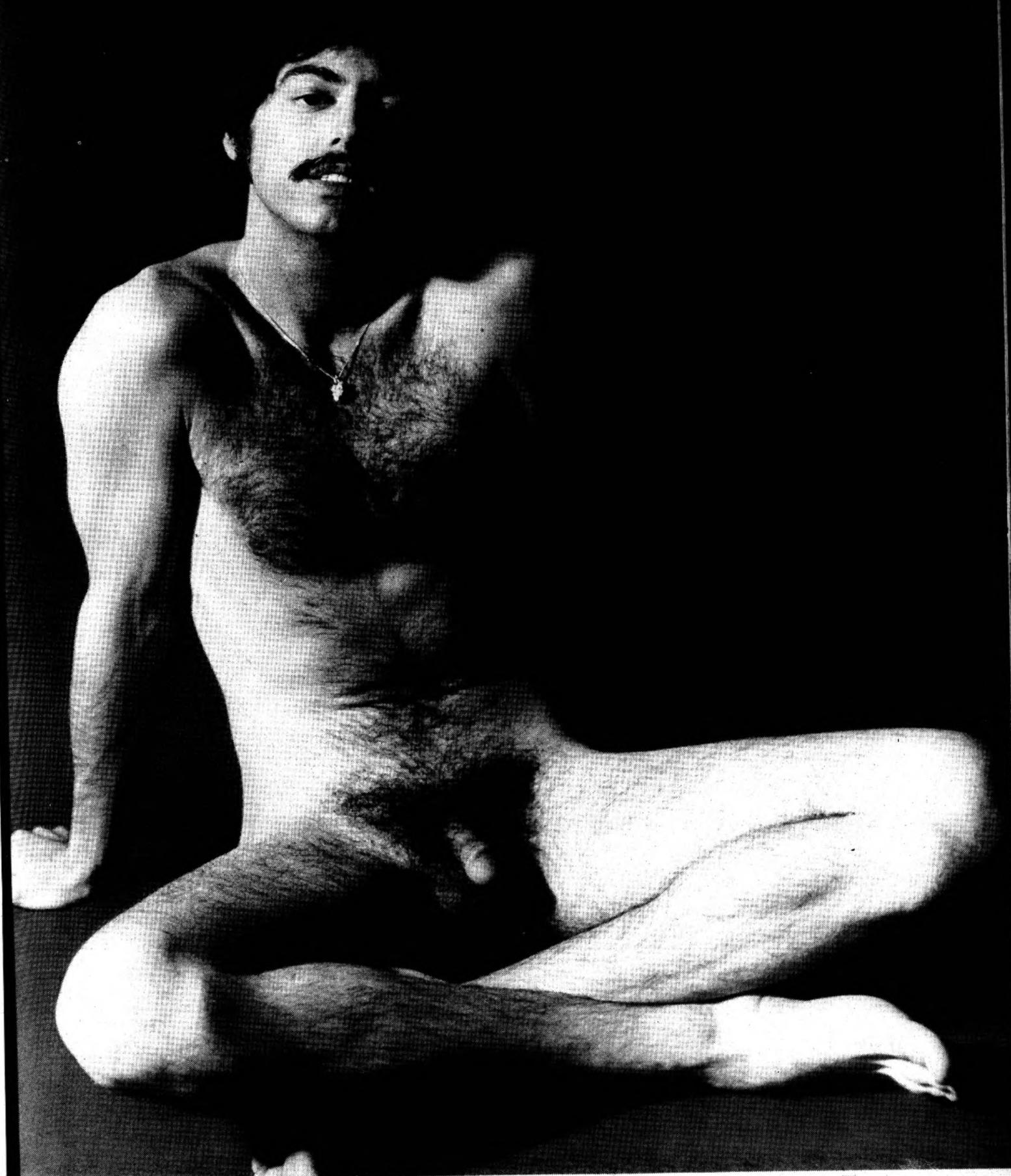
"I'm a lucky guy. My parents are great, I like my job, I enjoy what I am doing career-wise, and I haven't been hurt badly in relationships with other men. I'm the "lover type," and, frankly, I'd like to have one, but I have a high energy level, and I can see where it might be hard to cope with me. But I can still hope for one! Optimism and faith are me (at the risk of sounding like a religious commercial). My goals are set, but I hope not too overpowering

to let me sit back and enjoy a lot more than music, friends, and sex."

That energy level is very apparent in talking with Jimmy. He seems almost obsessed with the need to be busy, and always accomplishing things. Somebody has to *do it* and it might as well be he. To *exist* is contrary to the way he views life—he has to *live*—and enjoy it.

"I live in a jungle of plants surrounded by antique clocks, books, a good stereo system, a crazy talking parrot and a mad talking parrot in a gazebo next door, and a *barage* of friends. I think the neighborhood is used to my practicing by now and also looking up to see me sawing away in the window, where I can watch the world as I work."

With Jimmy, you get the impression that if something happens to the world, he won't be very far away. □



(The following short story is the fourth part of a five-part series. It is complete within itself. The first part, REASON, appeared in the February VECTOR, followed by EROS and COMPASSION. The final installment, LOVE, will conclude in the June issue.)

HANK AND I WERE GOING TO play paddleball in the Base Gym, but he wanted to stop in the weight-room for a minute to look around. A mammoth executioner of an airman was pressing a hundred and fifty pounds without even straining. All he needed was a black hood over his black face to go with his socially acceptable enlarged muscles. Across from him, another man was trying to reach the same obscene

straight, jutting, undeniable noses. Of course that day I was looking at Hank without passion. He was simply a collection of tendons and tissue, some of it tempting, some of it not. Indeed, his legs were overly thick; he shouldn't have worn shorts.

Hank grabbed the handle on an elastic rope from the wall and pulled it out. "Bet you can't do that," he taunted. "Not with one hand."

I went up next to him and took the handle out of his hand; I pulled it out even farther, saying nothing.

"Pretty strong, huh?" he teased.

"I've had to be, in more ways than one." I tapped his behind with my paddle, lightly.

"I didn't think fags were very strong," Hank said, pulling another elastic rope

way it's going to have to be?"

Hank giggled. He actually giggled, the first time I had heard that silly sound from him.

"Is that what you'd like?" I was surprised at myself for not having thought of this before. "Is that your bag? Rape? I suppose you think that it's not your 'fault' if I hold you down and screw the be-Jesus out of you, huh?"

"Let's go play paddleball," he said, making a loose trapeze swing back and forth.

Next door were the paddleball courts. Ours was newly painted white, but the lines on the floor were faded. I watched Hank wind the paddle's strap around his wrist carefully. He put on a sweat-band next.

"Do you know what C.C. really

"I have only Sundays off, you know that. Not enough time. Besides, you've become too much of a challenge now."

"Did you ever think of settling down, with somebody permanent?"

A joke sprang to my lips, but I aborted it. "I've considered it, yeah. I've also rejected the notion."

"Why? Wouldn't you like to have a lover?"

"Sometimes. I had one once."

Hank looked expectantly at me. "And?"

"Love kills, as much as it thrills." I slammed the ball up into the ceiling. "There's a poem for you. Scribble it on a wall somewhere."

"You don't seem yourself today," Hank faulted me.

"We're always ourselves. In fact, we can't ever escape being ourselves. That's the sad, blamed truth."

"Do you want to serve?"

"Yeah, I'll serve!" I felt spite draining down into my racket as I whacked the paddleball into a corner; it didn't rebound behind the serving line.

"One bad serve," Hank gloated.

"You're very competitive, aren't you, my boy?" I took out my handkerchief and mopped my neck, which was loose, perspiring already.

"You don't seem as funny today," Hank criticized.

"Not everything is funny. Some things are downright unfunny." I hit the ball and it rebounded past his head.

"Wow, are you trying to kill me?" he congratulated.

"I've considered it. It's one way to get on top of you. Except that I'm not much into being a necrophiliac."

"What's that mean?"

"Forget it. Your mom and kid brother wouldn't know either. By the way, how old is your kid brother?"

"Six."

"Yeah? That old? Has he come out yet?"

"He's not going to come out," Hank answered with a frown.

"What's he afraid of—crabs?"

"Now you seem more like yourself," Hank banged the paddleball past me, scoring.

"What is my regular self—somebody you can take for granted? Somebody you

Wooing Wooing

THE ARGUMENT FROM FORCE
by DANIEL CURZON
Part 4

proportions, but he was only halfway there.

"We ought to come over to use the dumbbells sometime," Hank grinned at me. He had his shirt off, and the fine hair on his chest looked metallic.

"I leave in two months. It's hardly worth the effort, is it?" I responded. "Besides, dumbbells leave me cold." I gave him a flinty eyeball.

"Is it really only two months to go?" he said, letting his paddleball racket suspend from his wrist by the strap. He looked at himself in the full-length mirror on the one wall.

"Sad but true." I examined his handsomely-constructed frame; it was his nose I liked best, I decided; I like

out farther than mine.

"What's a fag?" I said icily. "I don't know any fags. I only know people. Some of them okay, some not."

Hank seemed oblivious of the fact that he had been insulting. "I just thought they weren't as strong as regular guys."

I shrugged my contempt. "You've been misinformed, Hank buddy. I guess I'll have to beat your ass one of these days."

He peered at me with a strange expression in his dark-brown eyes. "I like to see you try!"

I let go of the elastic rope, which sprang back into its slot on the wall.

"Do I have to rape you? Is that the

stands for?" I said quietly, squeezing the taped handle on the paddle.

"You told me."

"I tell you everything, Hank. And I'd tell you *anything*, you know that?"

"What's it stand for?" He took a practice swing at the skinless rubber ball.

"Champion Cornholer."

He started to giggle again, but restrained himself. "Where'd you get your big strength all of a sudden?"

"It must be from re-absorbing all my sperm during the past several months." I let my bitterness lie easy on my tongue.

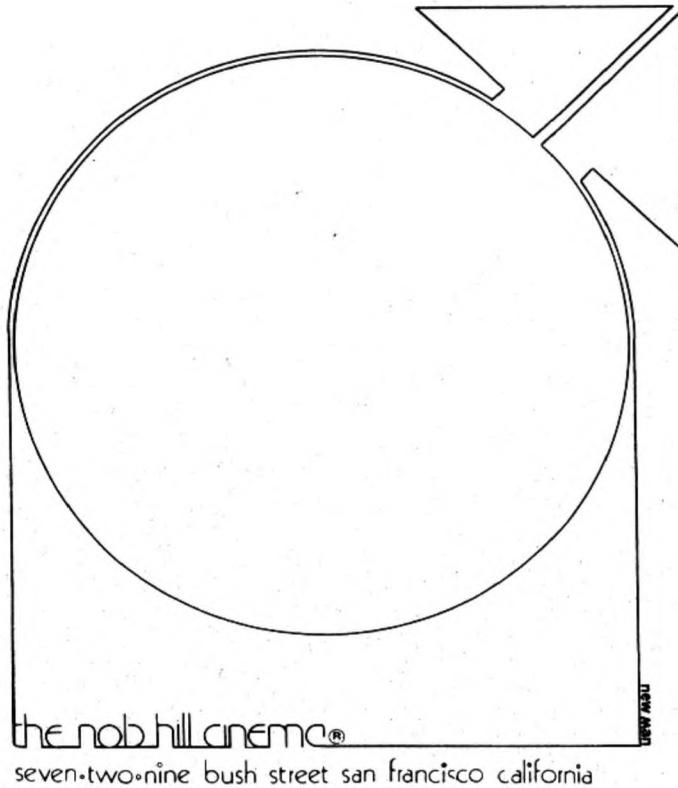
"You could go down to Bangkok."

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can fuck around with for as many weeks and months as you like?" I stood in the center of the court, squeezing the ball out of shape.

"Hey, what's the matter?"

"I'm fed up, that's what! Fed up!"

"I let you give me a haircut the other night—and a back massage."

"Just what are you trying to do to me, Hank? That's what concerns me. Are you a tease? Are you some sort of fucked-up sexual basket case?"

"You're not being very nice."

"You haven't been very nice yourself. In fact, you've been very cruel!"

"But I told you that I think it's important to give love—that's what sex means." Hank bounced the ball rapidly with his racket, grim.

"I wonder if you really believe that I'd almost accept it, banal and poop-headed as it is. But I think you enjoy playing hard-to-get."

"It's not a game."

"You've made it into a contest; it's become a matter of wills—yours versus mine."

"I just want to be your pal and talk to you. I like to talk to you."

I swore. Then I grabbed Hank and shoved him against the nearest wall.

"You coy bitch!" I pressed my whole weight against his torso, then held the racket over his head. "If you move one inch, I'll brain you!"

"C.C.!" Hank breathed, afraid to move.

"How much longer are you going to torment me? How much longer do you think I'll put up with it?" I held the racket between his ear and his skull, tapping it dangerously.

"I'm not just an easy lay!" Hank's mouth was within kissing distance.

"You want me to woo you, is that it? You act so 'manfully,' and yet you want to be wooed like some titless virgin!"

"Men always go away after they get what they want."

"You're saving it for your wedding night—tell me that next! I dare you! I dare you!" I pressed the racket on his temple and reached down to his groin and seized the front of his white shorts.

"I'm bigger than you," he threatened.

"I'll knock your brain out and squash it." I squeezed his cock, knowing that I was hurting him. "Do you make smart-

ass remarks to your buddies about me, eh? Is that what you do for kicks? You tell them about the old queer who's panting after your ass!"

"I don't sleep with anyone—it's not just you! Hank looked terrified.

"Take your clothes off!" I ordered.

"You wouldn't!"

"Take your goddamned clothes off. Now!" I used the handle of the racket to choke off his wind for a moment.

Hank let his hands rest limply on either side of his body. "You'll have to rip them off then."

I let him go, flinging the paddleball racket high into the air; it landed with an ugly smack. "Why are you making me do this? It's only the body—just your willing body—that I want." My voice was hoarse.

"I'm sorry, C.C. I can't. There's something inside me that... that can't get things together."

"You'll come out someday—fully, I mean. Promise to send me a postcard when you do?" I wiped my sweat on the wall.

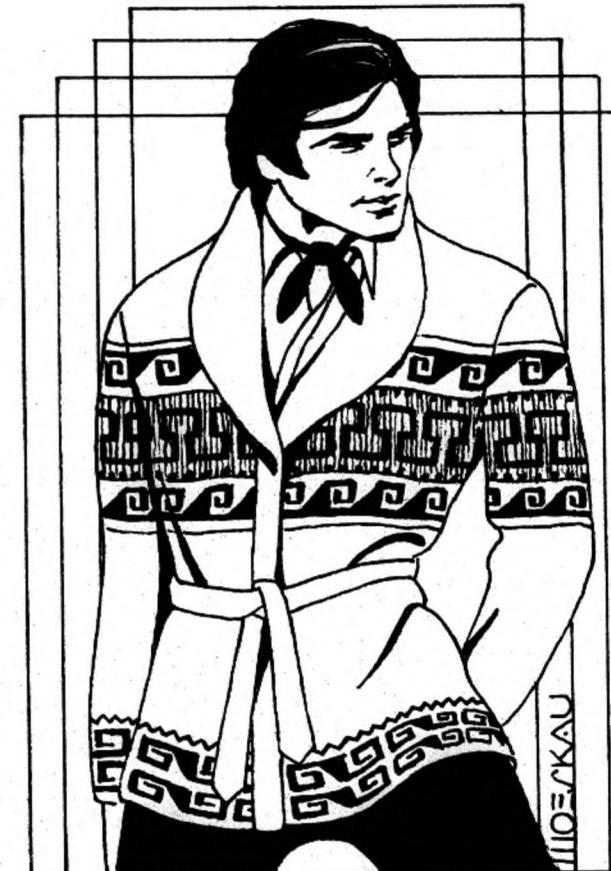
"Still friends?" he asked, holding out a hand.

"Yeah, still friends." I shook it. □

(This series will conclude next month with Part 5—THE ARGUMENT FROM LOVE.)

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 8 pm SIR Open Meeting & Open House 4th Wed, every month—Programs vary. Open to all.
 FRI: 8 pm Conversation Group. Topics vary. Open to all.
 7:30 Rainbow Deaf Society, 1st Fri, each month—in sign language.
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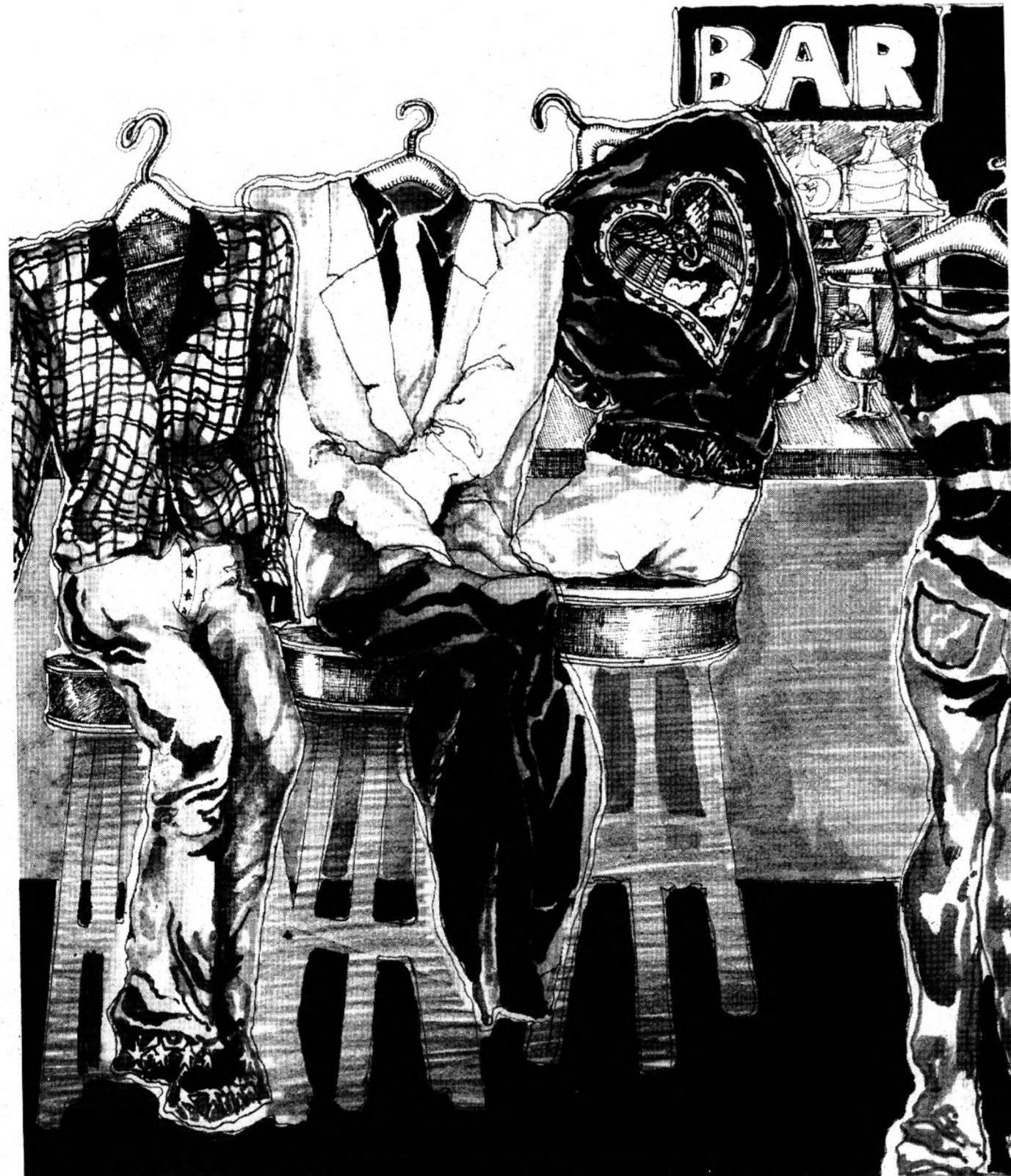
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WHAT'S WRONG WITH GAY LIFE

A Short Story by DANIEL CURZON

THE BOOTS WERE LAST. HUGH pulled them on, then snapped the straps. He stood up from his bed and adjusted the bottoms of his black pants so they'd fit snugly around the boots. He tucked in his denim shirt one more time, wondering whether he should tighten his belt buckle one more notch. It would make his waist look smaller, his shoulders wider. He decided not to, since he'd feel uncomfortable later when he'd had several drinks and they'd begun to bloat his stomach. He got his blue, dark-check lumberjack coat out of his closet, left the bottom and two top buttons undone—had an idea, and unfastened the top of his denim shirt so that some of his curly chest hairs would show. He considered changing the lumberjack coat, knowing he'd worn it to the bar last Saturday. Still, it was his sexiest one, and that number from Chowchilla he'd picked up a couple of weeks back had commented on how much he liked it.

Hugh combed his beard one final time in the bathroom, making sure the brown hairs hid the little harmless-but-ugly eruptions on his chin that had developed in the past few days. They didn't show unless you moved the hairs around with your fingers. He stared at himself in the mirror, smiled experimentally, and went out to his car. He looked find. The bar'd be packed. He was horny as a hoot owl, and it was his night to hoot with the boys.

They were checking ID at the door, and Hugh felt a little flattered that the policeman asked to see his drivers license. The cop didn't even seem to notice that the ID showed that Hugh was long past twenty-one—thirty-eight in fact. He moved into the ocean of loud music and cigarette smoke, making sure his boot heels didn't slip on the floor and make him fall on his ass. What a comedown that'd be! He looked back at the cop, who was checking some nelly types that had pranced in. At least the cop wasn't arresting anybody. Still, his presence sobered the nelly types, it seemed to Hugh, at least until they got well within the bar and started carrying on with their friends.

At the pool table over in the corner that guy from Chowchilla, the one who'd liked the lumberjack coat so much, was playing a game by himself. He was wearing a winter cap that made his hair puff out on both sides, different from the last time. He noticed Hugh looking in his direction and put his eyes down. For an instant Hugh was upset. So he doesn't want to repeat. The guy from Chowchilla rested his cue and made a pretty hard shot. But he didn't even look up to see if Hugh had noticed.

Doesn't want to repeat with me, Hugh shrugged, his feelings injured more than he acknowledged to himself. *And he's the guy sho said we'd drive up to San Francisco or down to L.A. together sometime. Now won't even look at me,*

as if I'm about to rape him or something Well, I can drive it alone. I'm not helpless. We didn't really have that much to say to each other anyhow. All he wanted was to pump me about I.R.S. regulations so he could file and get some tax money back, that's all. You'd think I was a walking brochure or something. Hugh didn't like the guy's new cap and puffy hair, anyway.

"What'll you have, Hugh?" the bartender, Toomey, asked, mopping the bar, pushing some peanut shells onto the floor. "Same?"

"Yeah."

The bartender put the rum and Coke in front of Hugh, who took out his wallet to pay, finding his freshly laundered pants so tight he had trouble extricating the wallet.

"How's it going?" the bartender asked, not waiting for an answer, since some other customers were rapping for service at the end of the bar.

"Oh, not so bad. . ." Hugh had started to say, letting the words die as the bartender disappeared. He blew some smoke away from himself, and a man with hamster eyes and too much nose looked over from the next stool and gave him a dirty look.

"Sorry," Hugh said, blowing the rest of the smoke the other way. *God-damn non-smokers are getting too self-righteous these days!*

He propped one foot up on the rung of the barstool, opening his jacket so



that his crotch would show to advantage. He was getting himself aroused, the blood flowing, or whatever it was that sent those prickles of warmth through you. He looked over at the dance floor where a couple of dozen men were shaking their bodies at one another. On the far side of the room the lesbians were playing pool on their own table or talking in little groups. Hugh wondered briefly how lesbians made out in the bars. Did they cruise a lot? He'd never seen them staring at each other, like the men did, but then he hadn't paid all that much attention. He reached up and surreptitiously undid another button on his denim shirt hoping nobody saw him do it.

The tape-recorded music changed to a quieter number, and most of the dancers evacuated the dance floor. Only three couples remained, holding each other possessively. Probably new lovers, Hugh thought, smiling indulgently at the small circles they made as they concentrated on their devotion to each other.

Hugh turned his head, wiping a loose hair off his upper lip, surveying the available men. They were all facing the straight line of the long bar, in twos and threes, most by themselves. He wondered which one he'd wind up in bed with. He half-dreaded the two or three hours ahead and took a drink of his rum and Coke. First the eye contact had to be made, then the small talk, then the lead-in, then the pitch about spending the night together, then the dutiful drive to his place or the other guy's. If only there were a different route from the bar instead of the same old one, right through the same old center of Fresno.

He felt at the eruptions under his beard. They weren't venereal, he knew that. Maybe herpes or something. Wasn't that the word? Herpes. Her-peas. Something like that. Ugly name. If they didn't

go away in a week, he'd have the doctor look at them. He touched them, checking to see whether anybody noticed, but nobody was looking in his direction at all. Hugh sat on the edge of the barstool, letting his crotch stick out. Nobody looked over.

He finished his rum and Coke and ordered another one. The bartender, his lip split from a cold sore, smiled at him as if to apologize for not talking more, but he didn't say anything.

"How's business?" Hugh asked, friendly.

"Better since the cop's been coming." The bartender pointed at the policeman.

Hugh played with the barstool.

"Why's that?"

"Didn't you hear?"

"Hear what?"

The bartender paused, tempted to say nothing lest he cut down on his business, but at the same time proud to have a story to tell.

"Last week—last Monday—these two guys come in here, played pool for a while, then started whacking away on the customers."

"Whacking away how?"

"With their pool cues! Must have hit ten or twelve guys. Some had stitches."

"Yeah?" Hugh was impressed.

"Who were they?"

"Don't know. The cops caught one of them, though. That's why they've been checking ID ever since, cause some of the guys that got whacked didn't have no ID's."

"They hit you?"

"Naw, I hid in the back room."

Hugh felt contemptuous, but said nothing, just meditated for a minute. "Just hauled off and hit 'em with their pool cues for noth-

ing?"

"Sure did! Couldn't have stopped 'em. Couple of looneys, I guess." The bartender excused himself to wait on somebody else.

Hugh turned around toward the front door and looked at the cop. So he was protecting the gays from the bashers. That was a switch. He noticed that the policeman was bit-assed and as chubby as a pregnant woman. *He's supposed to be protecting us! Crap! If it weren't for that gun, he'd get his head cracked open, too.*

Hugh put his thumb in a rear pocket, hooking it, striking a pose like a tough farm guy he'd seen in the I.R.S. office one time. He threw out his chest when a not-so-bad-looking guy twisted on his stool to see Hugh better, not giving himself away too much, however. But when Hugh saw him full-face he was disappointed. The guy looked cross-eyed or something, sort of prissy-lipped, too. Hugh didn't look back again.

A couple of people over from Hugh, some queen tried to kneel on the barstool and fell off, and there was a commotion, with a lot of queens making funnies and slapping at each other. Hugh couldn't follow the gist of the episode, but he wasn't much interested anyway. They were so nelly he immediately dismissed them from his mind. He ordered another rum and Coke and, when he got his change, accidentally dropped a dime on the floor. Yet he didn't bend down to pick it up because somebody might think he was worried about a goddamn dime or something. He stubbed out his cigarette and immediately lit another one. It was getting hot in the bar, but he left his coat on because it made him feel better.

He was thinking about driving out



to the other bar, Marge's Lodge, but decided to hang around for a while. Maybe the action would be better out there. Sometimes it got pretty good. Like that time he'd picked up that truck driver from Visalia. Real good sex, though the guy was sort of naive. And hung, wow! As he was getting ready to go out to Marge's, Walt and Freddy came in. He hadn't seen them for a month; so he went over.

"Say, how's it going, you two!"

They looked glad to see him and shook hands. "What's happening?" Freddy asked. He had cut off his gray beard and looked about ten years younger, though sort of pale-faced.

"Can't complain. Yourself?"

Freddy nodded, and Walt said, "Damn recession's hurting the factory something awful."

"That's rotten," Hugh commiserated.

"Had to lay off five fellows."

"Yeah, that's bad," Hugh said.

"Been getting much?" Freddy teased.

"Can't complain," Hugh said. "How about you two?"

"We had a three-way with a football player from State couple days ago." Walt might have been lying. Hugh could never tell when he was being serious because he said everything with the same deadpan delivery. He looked about the same, cock, maybe a few pounds heavier, getting a little jowly.

"Get up to San Francisco lately?" Hugh asked.

"Been too busy," Walt said.

"We might go up in a few weeks," Freddy said. He was looking around, not paying attention to Hugh, cruising.

"How's things tonight?" Walt asked, gesturing at the dance floor.

"Nobody's asked me to dance yet," Hugh joked.

Things sort of quiet, huh?"

"Maybe they'll pick up later."

"Been out to Marge's yet?"

"Not yet. Maybe later. You going?"

"Yeah, probably. Freddy, you want to go?"

Freddy leaned over, confidentially.

"What you think of that one over there?" He nodded slightly.

"Which one?" Walt asked.

"The big one with the suede jacket that comes to his waist." Freddy flickered his eyes in the proper direction.

Walt checked the number out. "Naw, he's with somebody."

"Let's make it a four-way then,"

Freddy said.

"Naw, let's go out to Marge's. What d'ya say?"

"Okay," Freddy agreed, indifferent.

"You want to come?" Walt asked Hugh.

He started to accept, then remembered that he'd been doing this with them for three years, off and on. "Naw, I guess not tonight. We're getting in a rut."

"I see some ruts I'd like to get into," Freddy said, meaning the men at the bar.

Hugh didn't laugh because he'd heard Freddy make the same joke at least half a dozen times before. "We're caught in a bind of some sort, aren't we?"

"What?" Walt asked. He waved his hand, to indicate that the music was too loud to talk.

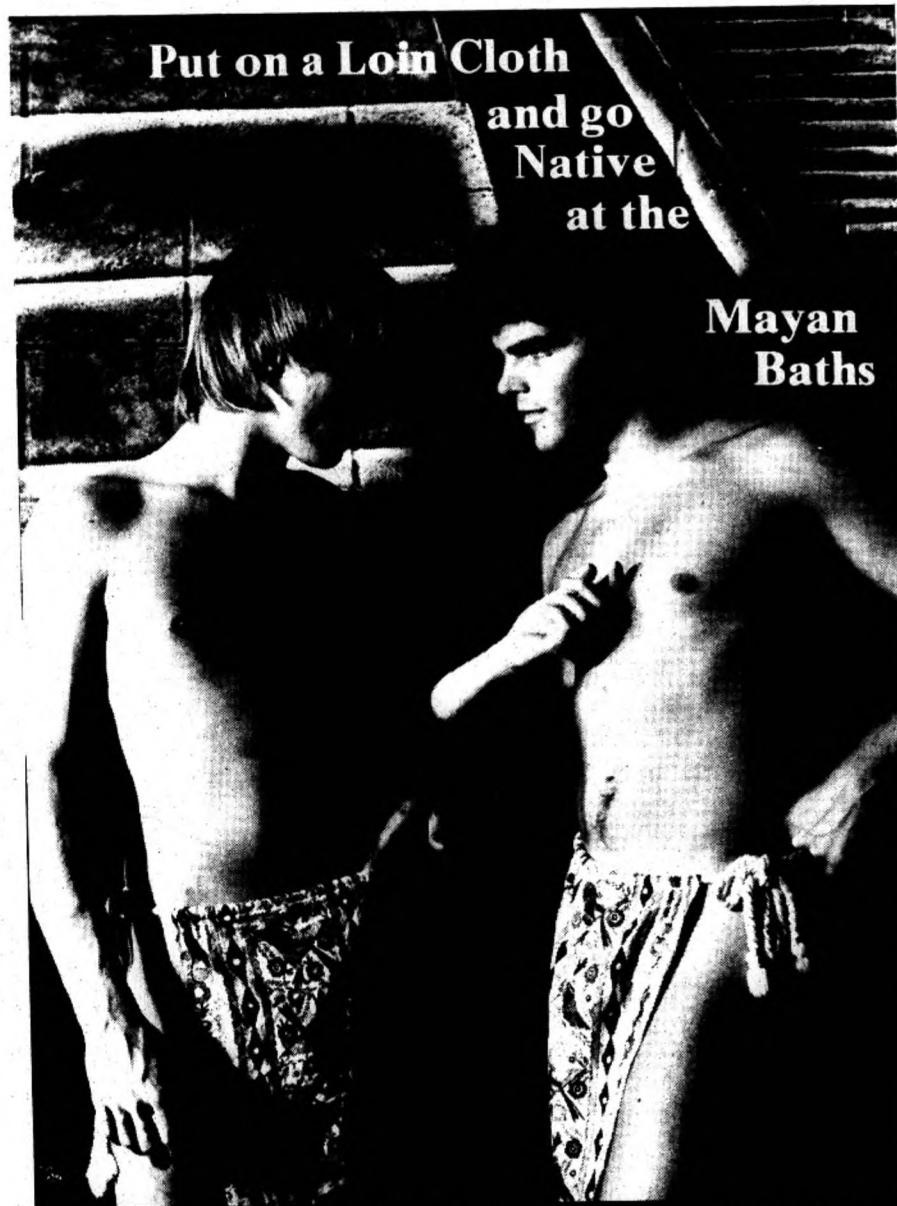
"We're in a bind of some sort!"

Hugh said more loudly.

"Aw, it's too loud to talk," Walt complained. "We're going out to Marge's. Come on, Freddy."

Hugh watched them pass the policeman, indifferent. When he looked back at the bar to order another drink, he noticed that a man in rimless glasses was cruising him. Hugh let his eyes jump off the other man's face. The guy was small, shabby somehow, with skin that was tired or loosened on his face, though he was dressed like a young man. Because the light was so dim, Hugh couldn't really tell how old the man was, maybe forty-five. He tried to imagine the body under the clothes, what it would be like in bed, and the thought didn't turn him on. He looked again at the man, who was staring hard at him now, emboldened by liquor, no doubt. Hugh hadn't even noticed him before. Had he been there all the time or just come in when Hugh was talking with his friends? He darted a look into the man's eyes and caught the look of interest. It was nice to be wanted, yes, that was nice. But no, not for a whole night. The guy was too skinny. His little bony body would hardly make a lump on the bed. Hugh surveyed him again. *He's probably a very nice person; only I don't want to go to bed with his personality.* Hugh moved to another part of the room.

In the men's room, a few minutes later, he caught the eye of a gorgeous number in faded Levi's and a Levi Jacket, with a droopy mustache, so sexy that Hugh found it hard to urinate. The guy was standing at the next urinal, taking too long. Hugh looked over and wanted to smile, but the guy didn't return his glance. They both stood there for a couple of minutes.



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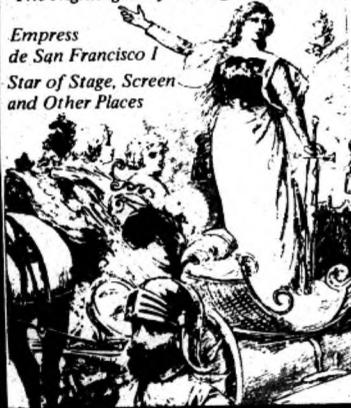
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May 11	"La BOHEME" Opera - JOSE	4:30 P.M.
May 14	MR. KALENDAR DANCE	8:00 P.M.
May 18	VAUDEVILLE introducing the NEW ROYAL PALACE CHORUS	4:30 P.M.
May 25	J. J. VAN DYKE SPECIAL WESTERN SHOW	4:30 P.M.

"How's it going?" Hugh finally said, pretending he had pissed and going through the motions of washing his hands.

"Okay," the guy in Levi's answered. He seemed sort of standoffish.

"What you up to?" Hugh asked.

"It's okay," the guy said, and left the men's room without looking back.

Hugh felt stung by the rejection.

Well, perhaps the guy's into leather or something. Hugh went out of the restroom and passed by the man in Levi's without acknowledging him. The guy was talking to some tall, nelly twit that Hugh couldn't stand. So, if he's hot for nelly twits, that's his business! Though how he could go to bed with guys like that is beyond me! Hugh shook his head and ordered a drink.

He was feeling good halfway through his last rum and Coke and noticed that the hunk in Levi's and the nelly twit weren't talking anymore; so he thought he'd give it another try. But, when he stared in that direction, the effeminate man, in a body-fitting white sweater with an oversized zipper, thought Hugh was cruising him and radiated a mouthful of smile. Jesus, Hugh thought, if I wanted a woman, I'd get me a woman! He felt a bit guilty about turning away so abruptly from the nelly twit, but he'd learned that was the simplest thing to do to cut off overtures before they got messy. He'd probably want to wear lace panties or something, and I'm not into that! Hugh consoled himself. He didn't look around to see whether the fellow had given up.

Around 12:30 he went back to the men's room, but nobody came in, and he didn't feel particularly sexy anyway.

A Chink asked Hugh to dance about one o'clock, and he did, but he didn't want it to go anywhere from there. The guy had a crooked face, with a pimply no-chin, and couldn't even dance very well. Hugh slipped a little on the dance-floor because his boots had leather heels, but he didn't lose his balance and nobody laughed. He caught several looking over his way, and so he knew he was doing the dance all right.

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Just before closing time Hugh noticed the handsome guy in Levi's go off with the nelly twit, and shrugged. *They deserve each other, I guess. To each his own.* He staggered slightly as he ordered another drink.

"Last call!" the bartender shouted, and those remaining in the bar—maybe two dozen—groaned and started making their plans for the rest of the night. Hugh picked out a slender number with a couple of days' growth of black beard who wasn't bad. The guy had on baggy trousers that didn't flatter his hips: that was all you could see, because he was sitting down, not far from the bar. Not great, but somebody you wouldn't kick out of bed.

Hugh stood against the metal post between the dance floor and the bar and held his eyes on the vaguely grubby but sexy guy. He seemed interested. At least he didn't look away, and Hugh leaned back against the post, sticking his hand inside his belt, looking his butchest. He crossed his legs at the ankles, propping himself up, and took a swallow of his rum and Coke.

"Last call!" the bartender reminded them. "We close at two!"

Somebody walked near Hugh, a no-ass guy with a kind of baby-step walk, and lingered, and Hugh suspected the man was cruising him subtly. But Hugh wasn't interested in the slightest. It was the one with the couple of days' growth of beard he was after. Now he was nice, really nice. And he was looking at Hugh.

Hugh leaned on the post, smoothing



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his beard. His gage was a bit unsteady, he realized, but nothing he couldn't handle. "Why don't we get together?" he mouthed toward the other guy, knowing full well that the man wouldn't be able to read his lips. *You like what you see? Well, come and get it!* The guy didn't move, but didn't take his eyes away either. Yet Hugh couldn't tell whether he was staring at him or at the dancers on the dance floor. Some of the lesbians from the other side were going home, singing and carrying one another past the policeman.

Hugh finished his drink and put both hands on his front pockets, emphasizing his crotch. God, he was getting horny. Shit, he was out of cigarettes, too.

He stared hard at the guy with the scraggly beard, who swiveled around the barstool and picked up his lighter and got up. But he didn't even look over to Hugh, posed against the metal post, as he left the bar.

After a moment of hurt, as if somebody had slapped his dick, Hugh took his hands out of his pockets, buttoned



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his lumberjack coat, and said goodbye to the bartender. It was two o'clock, too late to go out to Marge's Lodge. He walked out, saying goodnight to the cop, too.

He got home right away, because he didn't live far. He was in his pajamas and in bed by 2:12. By 2:15 he had come in the Kleenex he held under the covers.

But he didn't get to sleep until 5:30, maybe 6. □

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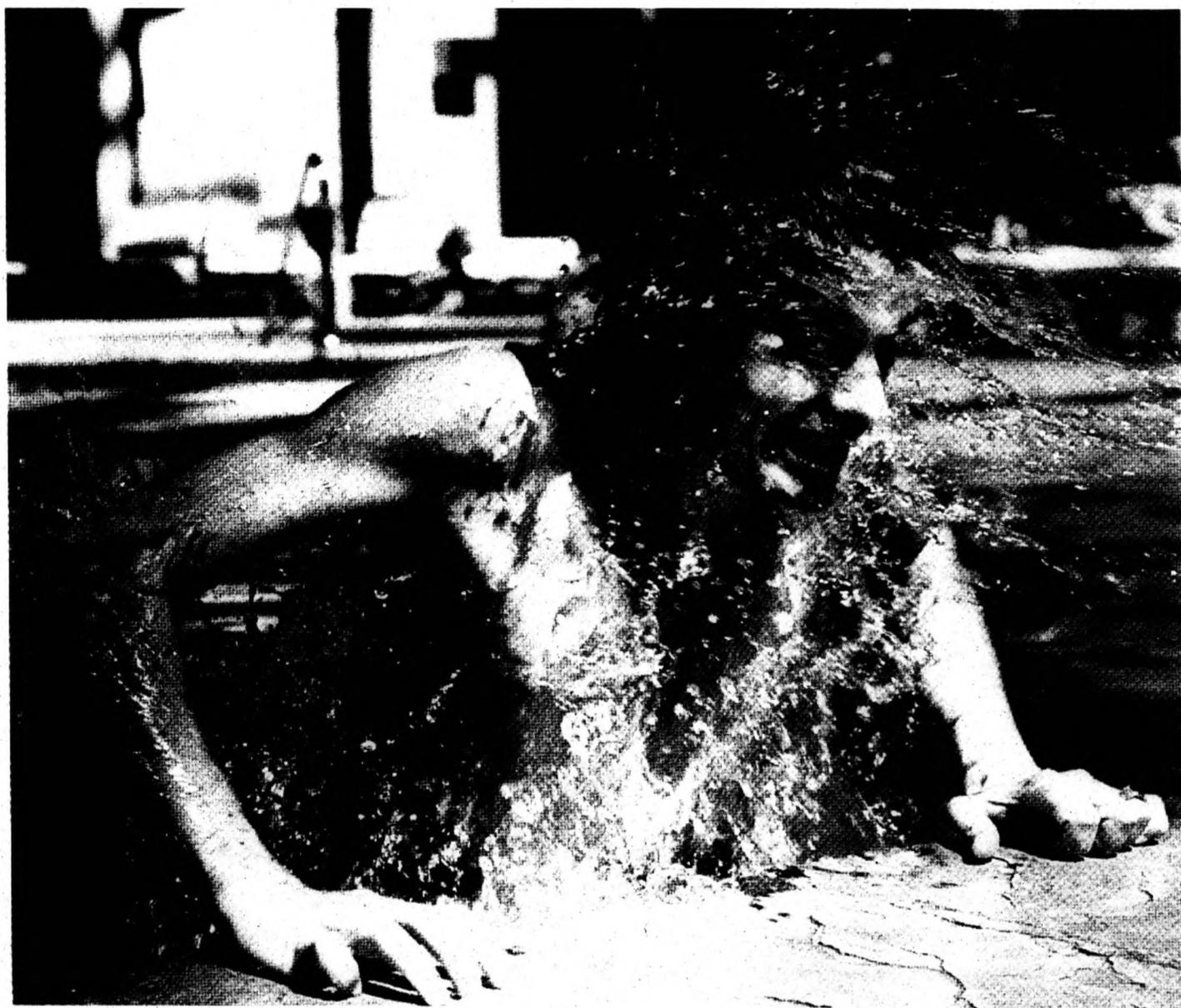


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