



**Mattachine Society, Inc.**

SAN FRANCISCO AREA COUNCIL

OCTOBER 1957

**mattachine  
newsletter**



## CONVENTION NOTES

The Fourth Annual Convention is now over. For those attending it was physically exhausting, but inspiring and intellectually stimulating experience.

Meeting delegates from the different Areas gave a wider perspective to the Society's work. When one's small amount of free time is almost wholly taken up with the thousand and one jobs needing to be done in one's own Area, it is easy to forget that other people are hard at work in other Areas all over the Country. As a result of meeting the other Area members, workers in San Francisco became more sharply aware than ever before that ours is a National and not purely local organization.

The descriptions of methods and procedures used elsewhere gave San Francisco members several ideas for things that could be done here. Already, as one immediate consequence, a special members' meeting has been held on September 10th, at which a committee, appointed by the Chairman and voted upon by the members, was deputized to thoroughly examine our present administrative set-up and make recommendations for reorganization.

Among persons present at the Convention was the Los Angeles Chairman, who described his Area's activities, as well as projects carried out in collaboration with ONE Foundation. An especially interesting one was a dictionary of medical, legal, and popular terms concerning homophilia in process of compilation.

The Denver delegate described the activities of the determined and extremely well-organized group started there recently. The Public relations Director of the New York Area, gave a description of their approach in trying to find a place for the special abilities and interests of each individual, instead of having the individual try to fit himself into the group as best he could. For those observing it was fascinating to note how it seems to be a basic instinct with him to pour oil on the troubled waters at the slightest sign of deadlocks or conflict, as he did several times at the Convention. The other members from the different Areas especially impressed with their degree of emotional maturity and willingness to serve.

Among the speakers at the panel discussion concerning "Must the Individual Homosexual Be Rejected in Our Time?" Dr. Harry Benjamin, the Endocrinologist, drew applause with the comment that, "We do not know what is normal in sexual matters, we only know what is customary." Later, in response to request from the audience he described the personality and work of Magnus Hirschfeld, the German Sexologist, of whom he had been a student.

Dr. Leo Zeff, clinical psychologist, pointed out that the homophile often rejects himself even more than society rejects him. Julia Coleman, M.S.W., brilliantly outlined the mutually damaging reaction patterns produced in the rejecter and the persons he rejects, while William M. Baker, M.S.W., among other things stated that society says in regard to the homophile, "Treat this sick child, make him well, then I will accept him - but in the mean time keep him out of my sight." Dr. Joseph Auerback, Assistant Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at the University of California, in the course of his part of the discussion, commented that Kinsey through his researches had made homosexuality a household word in every American home. He also felt that the formation and continued existence of the Mattachine Society and the publication of the spate of homophile novels of the past fifteen years plus other factors made him highly optimistic about things changing for the better for the homophile.

Complete reprints of the various talks of the people named and that made by David Schmidt, Chief Psychiatrist at San Quentin at the Annual Awards Banquet will be included in forthcoming issues of Interim and the Review, as will the names of the officials elected and the measures decided upon. If you as yet only subscribe to the Newsletter, we would heartily recommend your taking out one to the Review now, as you've been planning to do so long. There was such valuable material in the talks given that it was only possible to hint at in our limited area of space.

## PIT OF LONELINESS

From Monday October 28 through November 3 "Pit of Loneliness," a French film dealing with lesbianism in a girls' school will be playing at the Studio Theatre at 2436 Telegraph in Berkeley, three blocks from the main entrance to the University. As those who saw the film in San Francisco know, it deals with its theme with simplicity, sincerity and honesty

as only the European film makers seem to be able to do when handling subjects of this sort. Among the stars are Edwige Feuillere and Simone Simon. The story is based on the American novel Olivia and the screen play was written by Collette.

## LIBRARY NOTES

Recently received was Thin Ice by Compton Mackenzie. There is little that can be added to the review of the novel in the August issue of the Mattachine Review by Richard Meyer except that it is one of the few well-written pieces of fiction dealing with homophiles.

All too often with so many of them one is compelled to say, "It's not a good piece of writing, but it does capture this-or-that phase of homophile life." Sir Mackenzie's book, however, can be unqualifiedly praised in terms of its literary quality. He has that quality of mellowed, well-ripened humanism so often found among British writers, there is no attempt at sensational violence, everything is exactly enough and no more than that, and the characters are all believable.

The whole thing is so well done that it is not till the end that you realize that it is his view that the best thing that could happen to Henry Fortescue, the homophile central character, was to die. In terms of the character, Mackenzie is right. To further his political ambitions, Henry Fortescue restrained his deviant sexual tendencies for over twenty years. Then when his ambitions were not fulfilled he gave them complete release.

He became involved in sordid entanglement after sordid entanglement, upon one occasion being black-mailed, upon another being picked up by the police. And, as the writer implies, it is extremely unlikely that he would have altered his way of life for anything or anybody, so that even worse would probably have happened to him.

Any other ending would have been a false one. But surely there must be some sort of a middle road for the homophile between the active expressions of his instincts and their repression? While his problems in achieving balanced emotional relationships are greater than those of the average heterophile, to argue that they are insurmountable is to condemn over four per cent of the American population to lifetimes of perpetual bitter loneliness.

A description of one of the characters of how a member of the House of Lords was tried in the early 1800's on the charge of accosting a policeman and acquitted brings to mind the query just what sort of traditions are transmitted from generation to generation of homophiles? What sort of unwritten beliefs and recollections are passed on from the older ones to the younger?

For example, those remembering back to over thirty years ago say that in those days there was very little fraternization in the way there is today. They say too that relationships lasted much longer because it was harder to make contacts.

Each generation of homophiles apparently has its own patterns. There seems to be a certain amount of evidence to suggest that the presentday homophile is tending to cultivate less extreme mannerisms, partly it is suggested because the greater amount of scientific knowledge of homosexuality helps him to keep from believing that he is completely unique and alone in the world.

Where did so much of the argot and the terms used come from? We know the origin of the word buggery and sodomy, but where did so many of the other terms originate? Cory attempts to trace that of the word "gay" in The Homosexual in America, but to no avail. Some suggest that Variety has had much to do with the coining of such terms, in its reviews of female impersonators and other acts since vaudeville days but no one has ever investigated the matter. Most certainly terms periodically originate in homophile circles, along with clothing fashions, and then become popular in heterophile groups. The word "mad" is already fairly popular among sophisticates and the word "gay" is sometimes seen in newspaper accounts of investigations.

The whole matter is worthy of research by a group. There should be some sort of attempt to record the recollections in this field by those whose memories go back to the late 1800's and the 1900's before they are forgotten, as well as finding out what the traditions are in different areas of the country. In this field as in so many other aspects of homophile life, practically nothing has ever before been investigated. It is no wonder that so many homophiles seem to have an urgent need to understand themselves.

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

OCTOBER 3rd - Public Discussion Meeting, Friend's Center,  
1830 Sutter, 8:00 p.m., Speaker, Clarence Bates, Clinical  
Psychologist, Hypnosis and Self Adjustment

OCTOBER 11th - Koffee Klatch, Moderated Discussion Group,  
618 Octavia Street, Apt. 11, 3rd floor, 7:30 p.m.

OCTOBER 20th - Sunday Brunch, Bob's, 570 Page Street,  
Apt. 12, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

OCTOBER 24th - Regular Monthly Business Meeting,  
Mattachine members, S.F. Area Council Office, 693 Mission,  
8:00 p.m.

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NOVEMBER

November 7th - Mary F. Paiva, R.L.W., Counselor

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“ . . . FRIENDLY READER; ; TRY NOT TO SPEND  
YOUR LIFE HATING AND BEING AFRAID.”

Stendahl, Introduction to Lucien Leuwen