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February 5, 1958

NOTICE TO ALL MEMBERS:

At the Monthly Business Meeting of the San Francisco Area Council held on January 30th, it was suggested a follow-up letter be drafted in regard to the 1957-58 Annual Assessment.

A \$6 per year assessment was passed by the SFAC at a Monthly Business meeting on July 25, 1957, and all members were informed of this action in a letter dated September 7th. This assessment covers a 12-month period from September 1957 through August 1958, and is for the express purpose of alleviating the expenses of the San Francisco Area only. Such expenses include rent and improvements for the Lounge, telephone, office supplies, postage, library maintenance, and all other general expenses incurred by the Area. All expenditures are discussed and voted upon by the Area Council at the Monthly Business Sessions.

This assessment need not be paid in a lump sum, but in any amount convenient to the member. Some persons pay 50¢ per month. Individual accounts have been set up, and each payment is recorded. In addition, any member of the Area is entitled to inspect the Area books at any time so that he may have knowledge of how the money received by the Area is used.

The success of the aims and purposes of the Area depends, in a large measure, on how well we, as members, support our Area. It is to your personal advantage to assist in keeping the San Francisco Area on a sound financial basis by honoring this assessment.

--The San Francisco Area Council

57th Issue-----February, 1958

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a sealed plain envelope.

JANUARY PUBLIC DISCUSSION LECTURE

The January public lecture consisted of talks by three San Francisco Area officials on different phases of the Area activities.

The Chairman of the San Francisco Area Council first explained that a certain amount of confusion exists concerning the Society, due to the fact that there are actually three different offices of the Society in San Francisco: The office of the National organization; the office of the Mattachine Review, official publication of the Society, and the office of the San Francisco Area, which includes the Bay Area as far as San Jose south, and as far north as Sacramento.

To illustrate this, charts were presented showing the structure of the Mattachine Society as it exists as a National organization; how it is headed by a Board of Directors and then broken down into areas, and finally into chapters. The function of the Board of Directors was described, along with an explanation of the duties of each officer. After this, a chart outlining the San Francisco Area and its chapters was presented and a like explanation was made as to the duties of the Area officers.

At the time of the last convention, the San Francisco Area was composed of five chapters which were then in existence, but inactive. Since that time three chapters have been reactivated, namely Alpha No. 109, Group Discussion No. 108, and Literary No. 110.

Alpha Chapter No. 109, the last to request reactivation, will be primarily concerned with the

Area orientation and educational programs for new members and/or persons who are applying for membership. It will concern itself with the executive duties of the Area and act as a general administrative unit.

The Chairman of the Group Discussion Chapter 108 explained that on November 1st, 1956, a group discussion group, called a Koffee Klatch, was formed as an unofficial adjunct to the San Francisco Area. It arose out of the need of persons working together in the Area to get together for the purpose of discussing their mutual problems so that they may be better able to understand themselves and others with whom they came in contact. No attempt was made to regulate the size of the group, and people came and went as they pleased. During the time he had acted as moderator of the group, the Chairman stated he had continually tried to keep from imposing his own will upon the group, and now it had gotten to the point where it operated on a non-directed basis.

At the time of reorganization, which took place in the Area last September, the Koffee Klatch group had promptly applied for reactivation as a chapter and the application had received unanimous approval of the Area Council. Since then the Koffee Klatch has continued as an activity of Group Discussion Chapter 108, and at the present time the Chapter is in the process of forming a smaller discussion-type group, or workshop-type activity which will concern itself primarily with the development of future leaders.

Mr. Jack Parrish, Chairman of the Literary Chapter No. 110 explained how his chapter had evolved from ideas which had been discussed with delegates from other areas during the National Convention last September. At that time the San Francisco Area was in the process of switching over to a policy which could be called a "member-centered" policy. Prior to then it had concerned itself with such general functions as the public lectures, the brunches and

dinners, and the assembly of the REVIEW. Now it was thinking in terms of each individual member, of trying to find some work or activity which would suit each person's individual interest and ability.

One of the activities planned for the Literary Chapter, Mr. Parrish explained, is a group of local members who have expressed a mutual interest in books, and planned to meet and discuss the more worthwhile of the flood of fiction which centers itself around the subject of homosexuality. It is expected that the Literary group will evaluate and review such literature and discuss its value in terms of self-understanding so that there may be brought about a better comprehension of the overall situation of the homophile group.

In closing, the Area Chairman gave a resume of what had been accomplished by the San Francisco Area during the past year. He stated that while at times progress seemed slow, the end results would indicate that there has been considerable forward accomplishment. He expressed the need for encouraging professional interest in the Society in the form of employment counseling, persons qualified to assist with personal problems. In addition, he offered the suggestion that the members consider the reactivation of a graphic arts chapter as soon as possible, and other chapters as the need arises out of group interests; that it is apparent there are persons interested in various arts and crafts and hobbies, and that these interests can be developed through sharing with others. In his opinion the San Francisco Bay Area could support a library and recreation facility four or five times larger than the present lounge room. In the meantime, individual members should concern themselves with getting to know one another, building good public relations and especially work toward dispelling unfair criticism and overexaggerated rumors. He stated that he felt by working together and giving careful consideration to each person, his individual interests and potentials, the Mattachine Society can become a valuable public-service organization, and that membership in the organization can be a valuable asset to each member.

BOOK REVIEW SECTION

GAY BAR

by

Helen P. Branson

Misleading Impression

Frankly, it was impossible not to approach this book without a certain amount of discomfort. As is well-known, there is no one so respectable as the reformed rake. What is not so well-known is that usually the persons who object most strongly to anything that smacks of "queerness" are homophiles.

The title of Mrs. Branson's book gives a misleading impression of its quality and contents. Instead of being along the lines of, say, Call House Madam or A House is Not a Home, it is simply a sincere and honest account of an unusual type of work by a person who happened to drift into it by accident.

Whether one likes it or not, the gay bar is an integral and important part of life insofar as many homophiles are concerned. It is here they can mix more or less freely, with at least a superficial appearance of friendliness and sociability.

There have been several attempts by writers to describe such bars in recent years, as in the Homosexual in America, The City and the Pillar, and John Horne Burns' The Gallery. Mrs. Branson's account, however, is the least over-sensational and the most authentic that has so far appeared. Her obvious integrity as a person is a factor that helps to keep her from giving a highly-colored account of a subject difficult to describe objectively.

Her bar, of course is not typical of such bars, though apparently she does not stress the point out of professional courtesy. She keeps a close watch over her people, makes sure that none of them gets friendly with someone whom she does not know, lis-

tens to their troubles, scolds them when they need it, sees that they do nothing on her premises that would bring them into trouble with the law, and makes them take every possible precaution while they are away from her. Despite its humor, the cartoon of her on the cover as a bespectacled mother hen furiously protecting her chicks is more in truth than in jest.

She makes no bones about not being perfect, and that you either like her or you don't. She can be ruthless if she has to be. The owner of any bar must be extremely careful, and so must she, no matter what her personal feelings may be in regard to whatever situation arises. She cannot afford to take chances.

Her description of herself as a bouncer makes one regret not being able to see her do it. Small angry women are generally more terrifying than others, perhaps because of the intense energy with which they lose their temper. It must be an impressive sight to watch this tiny, five foot four woman in her fifties ferociously charging down on a disorderly patron.

This is a simple, unpretentious book that is unlikely to accomplish any world-shaking changes. However, it fulfills its function, which is to tell as honestly and clearly as possible about one person's knowledge of a major facet of homophile existence and contains much that may be of value to the reader. Owing to its lack of graphs, statistical studies or references to erudite German tomes with titles twenty words long, it will not impress too many professional people in the medical and legal fields, but it could be used as a means toward better understanding of homosexual problems.

Dr. Blanche M. Baker's extremely informative introduction makes one wish that she would write a full-length book. Interestingly enough, Doctor Baker follows the Ford-Beach theory that homosexuality arises out of the "mammalian heritage" shared

by man in common with all other mammals; whereas Mrs. Branson believes the origin to be from bad parent-child relationships encountered during early childhood. It is to the credit of the publishers that they have not attempted to compel the two writers to agree.

--Jack Parrish

Ill-disguised Pity

It is difficult, try as I will, to feel that I am being very objective about this book. The good will with which I try to approach it is constantly dissipated by what I read. Its inconsistencies are numerous, its main virtue a sort of wry humor, usually aimed at embarrassing someone.

The author of GAY BAR makes herself out to be a sort of "belle collector," a phenomenon that has never presented a very attractive picture for me. These "b.c.'s" are middle-aged women who surround themselves with a coterie of young male homosexuals from whom they demand instant obedience and unswerving loyalty in return for a "love" which is compounded by one part of ill-disguised pity, two parts of submerged loathing, a goodly share of aggressive domination, and more than a dash of castrating sympathy. By playing the role of "understanding mother," they prevent the homosexual from coming fact to face with the problems his own mother implanted in him. The sole difference between the two "parents" seems to be that the belle-collector looks upon her "boys" sexual activity with a more indulgent eye.

If the author of this book, Helen P. Branson, is not the typical belle-collector, the only way in which she disqualifies herself is that she does not pay her minions to remain faithful through gifts of food, liquor, clothing, jewelry, and theatre tickets, use of her automobile and home, or any of the other devices by which the more-usual collector maintains her court. With sound money-making bravado, Helen makes them pay her!

Near the end of this slight and not very important volume about one aspect of life in the homosexual world, a bar in the Los Angeles Area, Helen P. Branson says, "I have no answers to gay problems." This is a remarkable blend of candor and insight from an author whose book is prefaced with a sententious and self-consciously learned introduction which bristles with all sorts of theoretical answers to the basic "problems" of homosexuality.

It is one thing to be an eclectic, borrowing from any thinker who has a contribution to make toward the clarification of one's own theory and working hypotheses, but Blanche M. Baker, M.D., Ph.D., who wrote the introduction, seems less of an eclectic than a mental vacuum cleaner, picking up any rag-tag and bobtail of theory that she comes across, in her effort to "understand" homosexuality. With Kinsey, she regards it as one of our mammalian heritages. But this does not negate her embracing Gavin Arthur's theory of "The Circle of Sex," apparently an arcane schema involving the yang and yin aspects of the Chinese tai-gitu. Nor can she ignore Jung's anima-animus concept. She gives short shrift to Bergler or Matthews' theories - apparently simply because they are "anti-homosexual" - but ignores Harvey Cleckly's book in the same vein. Perhaps her vacuum cleaner did not come near a copy of it. But she is rather strongly pulled toward Cerminara's recently expounded reincarnation theory, a bent that might well lead her quickly to Scientology, which we understand is becoming increasingly preoccupied with "past lives." She apparently is not acquainted with, or blithely ignores, the fairly common psychiatric findings that the "I am a woman in a man's body" theory is a simply rationalized way for the neurotic male homosexual to try to cope with his guilt-feelings concerning his sexual activity - a simpler matter to determine with a little probing of one's patients than is reincarnation, whether one uses "reverie" or not. And her final plea for gay bars as a social outlet for homosexuals who have

"so few private homes and social clubs available" is specious indeed; as a psychiatrist it would seem that she ought to realize that doors are barred only to the homosexual who neurotically lets his sexual preference color his whole existence, instead of keeping it where it obviously belongs - exclusively in the sexual sphere.

From the viewpoint of book design and printing it does not appear that Pan-Graphic Press has been any more fortunate in its initial adventure. The volume looks as though it had been run up by a local weekly newspaper editor; perhaps a cookbook printed for a local Ladies' Aid Society served as a model. Let us hope that their next publication won't be the reminiscences of a psychiatrist entitled, "To Whom the Belles Told" - one book of this sort is enough!

--J. Hjalmer Jacobson, Ph.D.

AGREEABLE DISAGREEMENT

The January Koffee Klatch held by Group Discussion Chapter 108 opened with the reading of a brief description of a London "Gay" pub, from the viewpoint of the central character of the book. Following this, the group discussed the feelings of guilt and fear in relationship to homosexuality, both from the aspect of each being a separate emotion, or that the two emotions may overlap or grow out of each other.

The often used and often heard term "self-acceptance" was examined and an attempt was made toward clarification. The point was brought up that the term sometimes almost comes under the classification of a dirty word. Substitutions such as "self-knowledge," "knowing yourself," or "having a positive awareness of self rather than a blind acceptance" were considered.

Other discussion during the evening centered around the subjects of Law and Justice, and one of the participants, who has spent considerable time in Europe, made comparisons of the legal situation in the United States in contrast to the European situation.

SOME RECENT BOOKS

REMEMBER ME, a new, absorbing treatment of the perhaps unhappiest monarch of modern Europe: Ludwig II of Bavaria, is a fictionalized biography that deals sympathetically with the handsome young crown prince suddenly become ruler. His relations with Richard Wagner have always intrigued musicologists, and the author, David Staction, follows the accepted belief that Ludwig saw in the great composer the fatherly love that he lacked elsewhere.

LORD BYRON'S MARRIAGE: THE SECRET OF ASTERISKS, G. Wilson Knight's explosive book in which he states that the great Romantic poet was bi-sexual.

A DIVIDED LIFE, the new biography of the later poet, A. E. Houseman, in which his life-work is explained by his deep attachment to his friend M. J. Jackson. Houseman, for the most of his life a scholarly recluse, was something of a mystery to the public which had greeted his lyric and bitter lamentation "A Shropshire Lad" with over-whelming enthusiasm. One of the most interesting fragmentary pieces reproduced from unpublished notebooks was written at the time of Oscar Wilde's arrest and imprisonment, when Houseman was an unknown clerk:

"Oh who is that young sinner with the handcuffs on his wrists?
And what has he been after that they groan and shake their fists?
And wherefore is he wearing such a conscience-stricken air?
Oh they're taking him to prison for the colour of his hair."

All the above-listed books are available from VILLAGE BOOKS, 116 Christopher Street, New York, 14. REMEMBER ME - \$3.50 -- LORD BYRON'S MARRIAGE \$5.95 A DIVIDED LIFE - \$4.95. Please add 15¢ postage for one book; 10¢ additional for each additional book, up to 50¢.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- February 14th - KOFFEE KLATCH - 463 Dubose St.
8 p.m.
- February 16th - BRUNCH - 1848 Pine Street
10 a.m. - 2 p.m. - \$1.00
- February 23rd - Coffee and Conversation
(informal get-together)
64 Culebra Terrace - 11 - 3
- February 25th - DAUGHTERS OF BILITIS - Public
Discussion - 8:15 p.m.
Studio 30 - 465 Geary Street
Mrs. Bernice Engle, research
associate of Langley Porter
Clinic will speak on the latest
trends in the law - obscenity
charges in Kinsey and Howl cases,
and the Wolfenden Report.
- February 27th - SFAC BUSINESS MEETING - 8 p.m.
Area Council Lounge
693 Mission Street
- March 6th - PUBLIC DISCUSSION MEETING
1830 Sutter Street - 8 p.m.
The National Executive Secretary
of The Mattachine Society, Inc.
will report on the Semi-Annual
meeting of the Board of Directors.