

# Flourishes

Bulletin of the University of Virginia Gay Student Union

Number One

September 1973



When all your rights  
become only administrative  
rights; when you must bow  
with bowed eyes to be asked  
to submit in their man-  
ner, to think like them,  
to give their own  
sense, to give the fruits  
of their own labor...

Then surely it is a  
braver, a surer and firmer  
thing, to be a rebel in soul  
and deed against such  
circumstances as those than  
fairly to accept them as the  
natural lot of man.

Mr. Roger Tammant,  
A gay teacher...  
(Statement from witness,  
awaiting execution,  
June 29, 1916)



## Gay Oppression is Hiding...

The Gay Student Union will hold regular membership meetings, beginning September 13, 1972, on every alternate Thursday evening at 9 P.M. Meeting dates include September 27, October 11 and 25, and November 8. These meetings are held in the formal lounge of the Sodley Foundation, across from Memorial Gym, at the corner of Thickett Street and Louis Mountain Road. All meetings are open to the public.

MEMBERSHIP is utilized as an irregular medium by members of the GSU for mutual discussion to the heterosexual community which is the University of Virginia. The mere appearance of anyone's name in MEMBERSHIP should not be taken as an indication of that person's sexual preference. Address all correspondence to the U. Va. Gay Student Union.

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...Gay Liberation is feeling Free

# the year ahead . . . .

By Michael A. James  
President,  
Gay Student Union

I remember well the first meeting of the GSU I attended back in March of 1972. If I remember correctly, there were five or six of us then — and a pretty nervous lot we were (or at least I was). Incidents from that year stand out vividly in my memory. It seemed impossible to conceive of an organization like this in Charlottesville — indeed, some overzealous members of one unnamed fraternity, armed with rocks, bottles, and a real shotgun, sought to prove that it would be impossible. But the Union survived and matured. Its great achievement of that first truncated year (March-May) was simply existing. The next year fell upon us in a rush. It was the year of recognition by the Student Council, of funding battles, of speeches and radio shows, of a convention at Rutgers University.

And all the while we grew stronger.

This year the GSU faces the task of maintaining the momentum built up last year. Able leadership and the interest created by the funding controversy make the task doubly difficult, doubly important. This year is the crucible which must indicate whether the Union shall continue to exist as a strong and vigorous organization. There is much to be done, and with the co-operation of the University community much can be accomplished.

We hope to obtain office space in Miller Hall as a permanent home for the GSU lending library. Interest has been expressed in a "Hotline" phone counseling service; it is my thought that WTJU-FM may be amenable to sponsoring periodic visits by members for call-in shows. A permanent liaison with the Counselor's Committee on Sexuality should be initiated. The Speaker's Bureau shall be maintained and strengthened.

Meetings must be vitalized — strictly administrative meetings must yield to programmed meetings. Also possible is a forum, hosted by the GSU, on positive and negative aspects of homosexual lifestyles; if co-sponsored by the Jefferson Society, truly University-wide interest may be sparked. An event like this should be broadcast or taped by WTJU.

Finally, revision of the GSU constitution has become necessary. Two major options are open: 1) revising it in such a way as to conform to the "clarified" Board of Visitors guidelines, then reapplying for funds; or 2) abandoning hope for fair funding and devoting the GSU to a political course (which, emphatically, has never been the policy in the past, either de jure or de facto).

The decisions, of course, lie with the membership. □

# Hand-holding: tender, beautiful

by ARTHUR EVANS

My lover (Jay Schraeter) and I usually hold hands when we're together in public. We've been doing this ever since we first met, a little over a year ago. During that time, we've encountered a wide range of reactions—from support to open hostility (including hostility from other Gays).

The worst fuck we've ever run into was in Jay's old neighborhood in Brooklyn, N.Y. Young, straight toughs used to hang out on the corner and make catcalls as we passed by. Whenever this happened, we would respond in kind, answering verbal abuse with verbal abuse.

Once, for example, one person in a group of five or six yelled, "Hey, faggots," as we passed by. We immediately turned in our tracks and walked quickly toward the group. We responded loudly (and menacingly). "You have something on your mind, fella?" Their jaws dropped open—shocked, no doubt, that gay people were really standing up for their rights. One of the straights in the group ran away, and another said with obvious embarrassment, "I didn't say nuthin'." We were prepared to fight, if necessary, and they knew it.

In making this kind of response, we weren't trying to prove that we were "real men" or any such thing (on the contrary, we both dislike straight concepts of masculinity). We just wanted to let them know that we had as much right to walk down that street as they did and that if they hassled us, we'd hassle back.

Although we we're scared, we knew that if they got away with doing a number on us, they'd think they could do it to any gay couple (and probably would). We wanted them to think twice before they hassled other gay people in the future.

Straight toughs are not the only people who get upset at our open hand-holding. There are many gay people, too, who don't like it. Hand-holding Gays are sometimes accused by other Gays of "flaunting" their homosexuality, or at least of showing off. Some Gays even think

that public hand-holding is sexist, because (they believe) it's using the human body to make a political point.

In my opinion, these gay critics have really missed the boat. When gay people hold hands in public, they're not flaunting their homosexuality any more than hand-holding straights are flaunting their heterosexuality. If straights have the right to do it, so do we. It's a simple case of equal rights.

Besides, if you really believe that Gay is good, how can you get upset when Gays hold hands? The only way the argument of these critics can hold water is to assume that although gay may be good, straight is a little better. Jay and I don't buy that!

These gay critics make another mistake—one that's even more serious. They assume that public hand-holding is simply a political tactic. True, hand-holding does have political implications (because of straight prejudices, by the way, since if straights didn't degrade Gays, hand-holding would never be an issue in the first place). But hand-holding is far more than a mere political tactic. It represents an open expression of feeling and tenderness between people—a very basic human thing.

To explain what I mean, I think we should remember that gay liberation means more than the right to gay sex (although that right is very important). It means the right to express all our gay feelings, especially feelings of warmth and respect toward members of our own sex.

Straight culture says we should restrict such feelings only to members of the opposite sex. But we Gays should know better. We should know that men can be tender to other men, and women to women. We should also know that physical contact (as in hand-holding) is a very precious and beautiful way of expressing and strengthening these feelings of tenderness.

People can't just turn their feelings on and off at will, like the flame on a gas stove—although many Gays try to do just that. Some Gays spend the better part of each

working day worrying about whether other people will find out that they're gay. They spend a lot of energy deliberately trying to hide their feelings. When the time does come to express their gay feelings (like during the weekend at a gay bar), they often find that personal relationships turn out to be disappointing or bitter. They find that they can have one furtive fuck with another, but very little emotional warmth or tenderness.

But what do they expect? After all, if you spend most of your time worrying over how to hide your feelings, you're not likely to be the type of person who is good at openly expressing feeling. No, it's as if healthy people strapped themselves in a wheelchair all week only to discover that they had trouble walking on the weekend.

People who want to have feeling relationships with other people must nurture and sustain their own capacity to feel. Holding hands with other gay people helps strengthen our capacity to feel for other Gays (and for ourselves).

This need to express warm feelings is basic to all people, both gay and straight. I remember once when Jay and I were walking together near Prospect Park in Brooklyn. A very old straight-looking man approached us and started to give us the strangest look. I thought to myself, "Oh God, not another confrontation." But he just wandered on past. I heard him mumble under his breath, "I wish I had somebody to hold by hand."

Once you break the ice, public hand-holding seems like a perfectly natural thing to do (which it is). You begin to wonder what all the fuss is about. After all, isn't it odd that some straights can actually be moved to violence by the mere sight of two men or two women holding hands?

What must go on in the minds of people who can't stand the sight of members of the same sex showing tenderness for each other? What does that say about their own attitude toward members of their sex? Or about their attitudes toward themselves? And they call us sick! ☐

... YOU ARE  
A CHILD OF THE  
UNIVERSE...

... YOU HAVE  
A RIGHT TO  
BE HERE...

# COMING OUT:

BY STEVE BROOKS

The other day I found myself walking down the street thinking about a Certain Fine Person I had been lucky enough to meet the previous weekend. We had seen a lot of each other during the intervening days and I was recalling joyously the marvelous times we had had together. Wonderously I recalled how he had touched me with his fine slender fingertips and a rich warm glow had proceeded from the place he touched and suffused my body with an incandescent radiance the likes of which I had never felt before.

I had lain in his arms, my face close to his, and had felt the most incredible "high" it has ever been my pleasure to know. A pure, undiluted joy I didn't know was possible to feel enveloped my brain and I was soaring, soaring on light contacted wings of happiness far above the yachts of sadness and frustration that had hitherto been the feelings I had poorly known. It was a marvelous, not to say miraculous, moment.

Then, on the street, an incredible thought startled me out of my reverie.

"Steve," I said to myself almost out loud, "being gay is beginning to come natural to you!"

Indeed. "Beginning to come natural." After all these years. Here I am at thirty; born in the Roosevelt years; rose to brilliant puberty in the (ugh!) Eisenhower years, having lived through the Great Assassination(s) and the Johnson/Nixon years denying myself and denying pleasure to myself, and now, now, being gay was beginning to seem natural to me. How marvelous. How rich the possibilities of life now seem. How barren they once appeared.

## a personal view

A desert became an oasis. And I, perhaps, am on the verge of becoming a complete human being...thanks at least in part to another (wonderful) human being. A year ago I was a miserable specimen, barely existing, living on the fringes of life. Afraid to face my own shadow, afraid to accept myself as I was, afraid to think about the future ahead. Then I found the people at C.A.A.

I hope the foregoing does not strike the reader as either incredibly sentimental or unbearably tragic. My prose might seem a bit on the purple side to you, perhaps a little too "Hollywood" to suit your taste. My lover and I ride off into the sunset together and live Happily Ever After. Music up and out. Curtain. A little too good to be true, perhaps? And yet it is true, however melodramatic I might make it sound, every living word of it. And if you are gay, as I am, and it hasn't happened to you, I hope with all my heart that it soon will.

I believe that being gay can be a positive way of living, that it should be embraced with gusto like any other positive feelings we have as human beings, and that love is love regardless of where it comes from and whom you share it with... deeply, one would hope, and with no reservations. Rationally, but with committed hearts, let us try.

And let us try, hard as it may seem, to love our oppressors as well. I mean that most sincerely. It will do us good, regardless of what it does (if anything) to them. Hate and fear are sadly part of the human condition, and perhaps it is safe to say that they will always be, although it is not outside the realm of possibility that they can be alleviated somewhat. The homophobic may not make your list of the "Ten Most Admired Persons", but need I point out that he/she is human, too (with a full complement of human weaknesses and frailties)? If perhaps we can understand what makes this person "tick" and try not to hate her or him for their lack of insight, perhaps we shall gain some measure of insight into ourselves, and love ourselves better, also. That, it seems to me, is the most important ingredient in life.

"TRY IT...  
YOU'LL LIKE IT!"

Gay Student Union  
P.O. Box 3640  
University Station  
Charlottesville, Va. 22903



And what about our parents, our straight friends and neighbors, our teachers, our employers? Can we live the life we justly choose to live and still not estrange ourselves from them? Hopefully, yes, but we ourselves must live our own lives first. Happiness is too important and too evanescent a commodity to be denied purely on the basis of what someone might think.

And yet, as I write these words, I realize how difficult it is to live by them. I "confess", if that is the right word, that it is difficult for me to be "out" at many times and places and under many situations. Perhaps this is partly because I see myself as a human being first and gay male second, though, of course, that is not incidental. I identify with all kinds of people and can empathize with most of them.

I have friends and acquaintances of all kinds, with many points of view, many products of many different environments and conditions of living, and I want to continue to know these friends as long as I can. But still the question must be asked: do they really know me? And it must be answered categorically: no, not unless they know that I am gay.

I really don't believe in total separatism, at least not for me. I believe people

must try, however falteringly, to "get along" with one another, to coexist in society, to try to understand and respect each other's goals of living even if they do not espouse these points of view themselves. This is an idealistic philosophy, I know, and one that can make life harder than perhaps it has to be, but maybe someday it will pay dividends.

It is my hope, to close this "letter from my soul", that someday society...not just this society, but all societies...may come to realize how much it stands to gain by truly encouraging diversity among people (as opposed to what it may say it espouses). And more importantly, perhaps we shall all someday come to learn the true lesson of variety-in-all-things: that there is more than one right way to live, more than one right color or race or sex to be, more than one right life style for an individual. There is more than one right creed or philosophy to believe in. They can all be right for the person who lives by them, and that includes not only Smith and Jones but we ourselves. Let us hope that before time runs out we can learn to see this truth. And in the meantime, let there be love and peace and joy for us all! ☐

(Reprinted from Gay Alternative)

## EDITORIAL:

# THANKS, FELLAS!

Until last December the Gay Student Union was almost unknown, ignored by University news services, and belittled by the Administration.

Then, by dramatically opposing a Union request for modest Student Council financial aid, three people catapulted the GSU into glaring prominence: Christian S. White, founder of a John Birch Society affiliate on campus; Alexander Simon, then head of the University Republican Club; and William Hurd, an officer in ROTC. The funding battle lasted four months and the Union won every round, until the homophobes — desperate to save face — dragged the case out of student control, and achieved their goal.

They won the battle, that is; the GSU clearly won the war. The result of the controversy was unlimited free publicity for the Union, publicity which forced the entire University to recognize the important and legitimate roll of the Union. Membership swelled to record heights, and the Union is vastly the stronger for the struggle.

Messieurs White, Simon, and Hurd surely merit at least token appreciation for their valuable services to the GSU. The editor of FLOURISHES therefore suggests that the Union adopt, at once, a resolution formally presenting certificates of gratitude to these worthy gentlemen. ☐

# news & information

(Reprinted from Interchange)

## MARYLAND GROUP WINS COURT CASE AGAINST UNIVERSITY

The Gay Student Alliance of the University of Maryland has won a precedent-setting court case against the Maryland Board of Regents after the Board denied it \$250 in funding. On April 28 Judge James E. Miller of the Fourth District Court for Maryland ruled that the Regents must appropriate the money if it is available.

Henry F. Leonig, the American Civil Liberties Union volunteer lawyer who represented G.S.A. said the decision means that "any student organization has the right to be treated equally and fairly regardless of its nature." Because the decision was handed down in Federal court, he said, it should provide a precedent for other campuses around the country.

G.S.A. has not yet received the money it requested because of a legal technicality. The Attorney General of Maryland, whose office represented the University, has ruled that the budget request must be again submitted to the Board of Regents. Leonig has protested this move in a letter to the court. This issue has not yet been settled.

The court case resulted from events of last summer and fall. G.S.A., then called the Student Homophile Association, requested \$250 from the Student Government Association from S.G.A.'s 1971-72 budget. The funds, the smallest request of any of the thirty organizations which requested money, were to be used only for informational purposes--a library, publicity releases, and an annual symposium.

For the first time last year the Board of Regents reviewed S.G.A.'s appropriations. The budget committee of the Board recommended that the S.H.A. request be cut from the budget, the only organization so affected. Louis Kaplan, Chairman of the Board, was quoted as saying, "We have received hundreds of letters objecting to that kind of funding. We made no moral judgment."

This recommendation was protested by the S.G.A. legislature, Madison Jones, the S.G.A. president, the professional staff of the student activities office, and many of the university's counseling center staff, as well as S.H.A. itself.

When the Board of Regents meeting was held September 17, all this support was in vain. The Board approved the recommendation of its budget committee, and it flatly refused to state their reasons for the denial of funds to S.H.A.

In defending the University's action, Ms. Estelle Fishbein, Assistant Attorney General of Maryland said that the Board of Regents has the right to give or withhold funds in whatever manner it may so choose. It could not answer to each group who asked it for money.

Leonig argued that the Regents' action was blatantly discriminatory. Money had been denied simply because the organization was composed of homosexual students.

Openly gay candidates ran in student body elections at two large university campuses this spring—Ohio State and the University of Minnesota. The following news stories describe the results:

#### University of Minnesota [The Advocate]:

For the first time in the 121-year history of the University of Minnesota, a student body president has won re-election.

Gay activist Jack Baker, 30, handily defeated challenger David Truak, 3035 votes to 2617. Student senator Kathy Sims received 1399, and there were 252 write-ins.

Baker achieved his nearly 42 per cent of the vote on the campaign theme, "Student Control of Student Concerns."

Gay issues were scarcely mentioned during the seven-week campaign.

With 43,000 students, the University of Minnesota's Twin Cities campus is the largest of any single campus in the nation. Voter turnout in the Apr. 5-6 election was 7441, nearly 25 per cent more than the number which elected Baker student body president 12 months earlier. That, too, was a record.

"It's a good victory," Baker said. "But it's a mixed one, since we lost the vice presidency."

Asked if his re-election were a victory for gay liberation, Baker said, "No, not this one. We won that issue a year ago. This is a victory for student control over student concerns."

#### Ohio State University [Columbus Gay Activist]:

Perhaps the title of this article should be "How You Win Even If You Lose." In the last issue of the Gay Activist, we reported that Sue Vasojinder, co-coordinator of the Gay Activists Alliance, was running for vice-president of the student body at Ohio State.

The elections were held April 10, 11 and 12--and Sue and her running mate, Jeff Lapalater, placed third out of the nine pairs vying. But although she didn't win the elections, we feel that Sue won something equally as important.

Being involved in a large number of speaking engagements, debates and newspaper interviews, Sue had the opportunity to bring out the issue of Gay people and the problems we face both on campus and in the community.

"I feel the elections gave me a valuable insight into the attitudes of the students at Ohio State," Sue said. "Being a Gay candidate made a lot of people open their eyes to the idea that Gay people do exist in this community and that our needs and aspirations can no longer be ignored." □

# NO COMMENT...

PHILADELPHIA DAILY NEWS

WEDNESDAY, MAY 14, 1975

## 2 Hand-Holding Coeds Get Closet Mentality

PALO ALTO, Calif. (UPI) — Two neatly high school girls who held hands, embraced and occasionally exchanged an affectionate kiss in the school during a three-week experiment were snubbed, scolded and threatened by their fellow students.

Boys quit dating them, girls they knew walked on the other side of the corridor, and a few threatened to beat them up.

Marilyn Stryer of Stanford, and Mari Gunn of Los Altos Hills, both 17-year-olds at Gunn High School, said

they conducted the experiment to test the tolerance of their peers. They said they sought to avoid any sexual connotations in their relationship, but the students nevertheless took issue to be lesbian.

"THEY'RE A LOT of plastic people," Miss Stryer said. "It was an education. The younger generation is supposed to be so open and tolerant."

The girls said that about a month ago, they happened to hug each other in a burst of camaraderie when both hit on a particular idea at the same time. They found that nearby students were shocked.

They decided to run an experiment with the approval of their family life teacher, Tom Frankum.

Miss Stryer said, "I can really sympathize with gay people and the pressure they're under in everyday living. I can see why there are so many closet homosexuals."