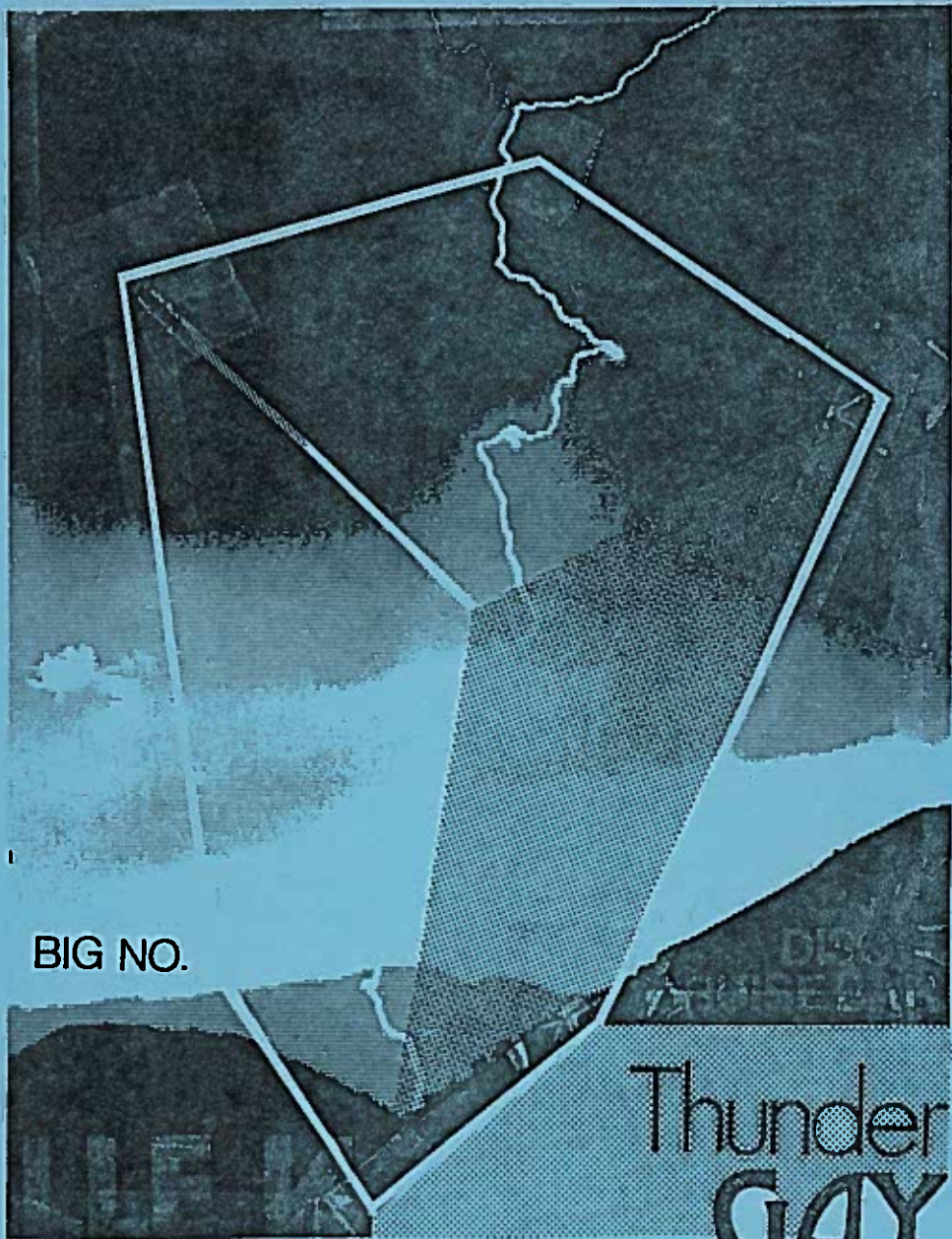




BIG NO.

Thunder GAY

First Anniversary Issue

April - May 1981

Thunder GAY

REACHING OUT

Thunder Bay (Special) - In an interview conducted on April 13, GTB president David Belrose says one thing the club members should be wary of is complacency. Should the attitude of *help isn't needed because things seem to be going well* surface, there is a danger of GTB stagnating or even collapsing. He says to keep this from happening, fresh ideas from both old and new members will help the various committees as well as the executive.

Several areas David cited are more input from women and getting more educational information to both the gay community and the community at large.

On the subject of women, David stated that he was very encouraged by the recent parties attended by a good mix of lesbians and gay men. He also says including women in such activities as educational speaking engagements would help show the diversities within the gay community.

EDUCATING OURSELVES

David went on to say that educating ourselves and overcoming self-oppression that prevents us from being able to function openly in the community should be one of the priorities GTB sets for itself.

David stressed the responsible way in which GTB has grown. Perhaps as a result, the group seems to enjoy a solid reputation in Thunder Bay.

David also says a *thankyou* goes out to all those who have helped the group in its first year. That help has brought GTB to where it is today. Continued and improved membership and support would make the goals and standards we set for ourselves flourish, grow and surely be achieved.

GAYS OF THUNDER BAY
Newsletter
April - May, 1981



Thanks to Doug and Bruce for the cover.

Thanks to Doug, Michael, Paul, Ernie, John, David, Angus and Kim for their contributions.

"DO YOU WANNA TALK ABOUT IT?"

GTB's hard working Education Committee is involved in a number of activities, both in increasing awareness of gays and gay issues out in the community, and helping increase gay consciousness within our own group. Many individuals have expressed a desire to share our personal gay experiences with each other. We can grow stronger from exchanging these experiences and discovering more of the common gay ground we share together.

To facilitate this, the Education Committee announces the launching of a "support group" series of evenings. Each gathering will focus on a general gay theme and will have a facilitator to help move the discussion along and encourage broad exchange. The format will be informal and casual. At least initially, the meetings will be held at the GTB office.

The first "support group" evening will be held Thursday, April 30th at 7:30. This first discussion will focus on "our coming out" experiences. Both younger and older gay people are encouraged to attend and blend our individual perspectives together. Could you be a "supporter"? Let's talk about it.

ESTABLISHING THE ALTERNATIVES

Hoping to help us set up a local gay youth group, Russell Martin, a co-coordinator of Gay Youth of Toronto, visited Thunder Bay on the weekend of March 26th-29th. Said GTB co-coordinator Rick about Russell's trip- 'Russell's trip was worthwhile and informative.' The day after Russ left for Toronto, a GTB meeting was held at which the group's objectives were more definitely decided on.

The main reason for the group's existence is a certain lack in the city of non-alcoholic social outlets for young (under 25) gay people. (Activities such

as swimming parties have already been successfully carried out- Rick plans to alternate social with discussion nights- so with meetings being held on the first and third of each month ((at 7.30 p.m.)) there'll be one social night and one discussion night every month).

Other social activities are to date undecided on; if you have any ideas about how we ought to go about jazzing up the social calendar, please contact either Rick or Laurence: meetings are held on the first and third Mondays of every month... 7.30 p.m.

Our non-social get-togethers will answer the very social purpose of discussing (for instance) problems with coming out. We want a bank balance of \$250; we plan to help GTB out with the rent; we want a certain amount of outreach into the community. GTB is a worthy cause...we want your support; we need new members of both genders.

COMMUNITY CENTRE

In the past year, Gays of Thunder Bay has established itself as an organization representing the gay population and a sense of community has begun to appear.

As our second year begins, we must look for ways to foster and support this sense of gay community. Our telephone line provides access, we are beginning to learn from each other and now we need to work on the establishment of a community centre. This centre will provide a home for social activities, meetings, support groups, etc.

It will become the *physical focus* for the growing awareness of the gay community. Much work will have to be done to achieve this goal including the following:

1. Approval number from the LLBO;
2. Incorporation of GTB as a non-profit organization;
3. Location of a suitable building;
4. Fundraising to finance acquisition of the building;
5. Establishment of management policy, operating procedures, volunteer policy;
6. Selection of a manager;
7. Renovate the building as required.

The scenario outlined above is possible if enough of us want it to happen. Now is the time for us to discuss this and other possibilities, and then get to work building our future.

- David Belrose

"BREAD AND CIRCUSES"

Kam Theatre Lab is hosting a week long theatre festival: "BREAD & CIRCUSES". This exciting festival will be held in Thunder Bay, May 26-31.

This national gathering will see companies come to the city from Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland. The week's schedule will include performances of original Canadian plays each night, with critiques, skills workshops and numerous panel discussions being run during the day. For specific schedule and ticket information, please contact Kam Lab at 344.1122.

Though none of the productions have explicitly gay content, some of the performances and workshops deal with women's issues, criticism and censorship, and how to work together in groups. These general areas might hold some interest for all of us.

"BREAD & CIRCUSES" is the first ever such gathering in Canada. Kam Lab is proud to bring some of the best Canadian theatre to Thunder Bay.

FEAR AND LOATHING IN THUNDER COUNTRY

"HONEY, LOOK OUT THE WINDSHIELD,
THERE'S SOMETHING BLOCKING MY VISION..."

A THUNDER GAY "EXCLUSIVE"

Thunder Bay - Wednesday. April 8th. The Avila Centre. Whispers cease and a short series of quick muffled coughs herald the entrance of Ken Campbell: Evangelist.

The warm up act- obviously local - plays a few revered hymns before and accompanies the crowd's rousing rendition of "Oh, Canada".

The self-avowed heterosexual begins to speak. Unaware of the presence of four urban gorillas, secretly listening to the preachings of *The Man*.

HE begins to speak: My daughter came home with this list of books, my wife took a look at it and began to cry. These books are recommended by teachers for our kids to read. We didn't approve of this list so I wrote to the minister of education threatening to go on a hunger strike if I didn't get a reply. The letter got lost in the mail and I fasted for a week....

A Pepsi smile pasted his face - lots of eye to eye contact - as he droned on.

Meanwhile, the gorillas sat cool and unperturbed. They came to get this man. *Get him... good.* The minutes agonizingly ticked by. Then with the suddenness of a flashing stiletto, the gorillas made

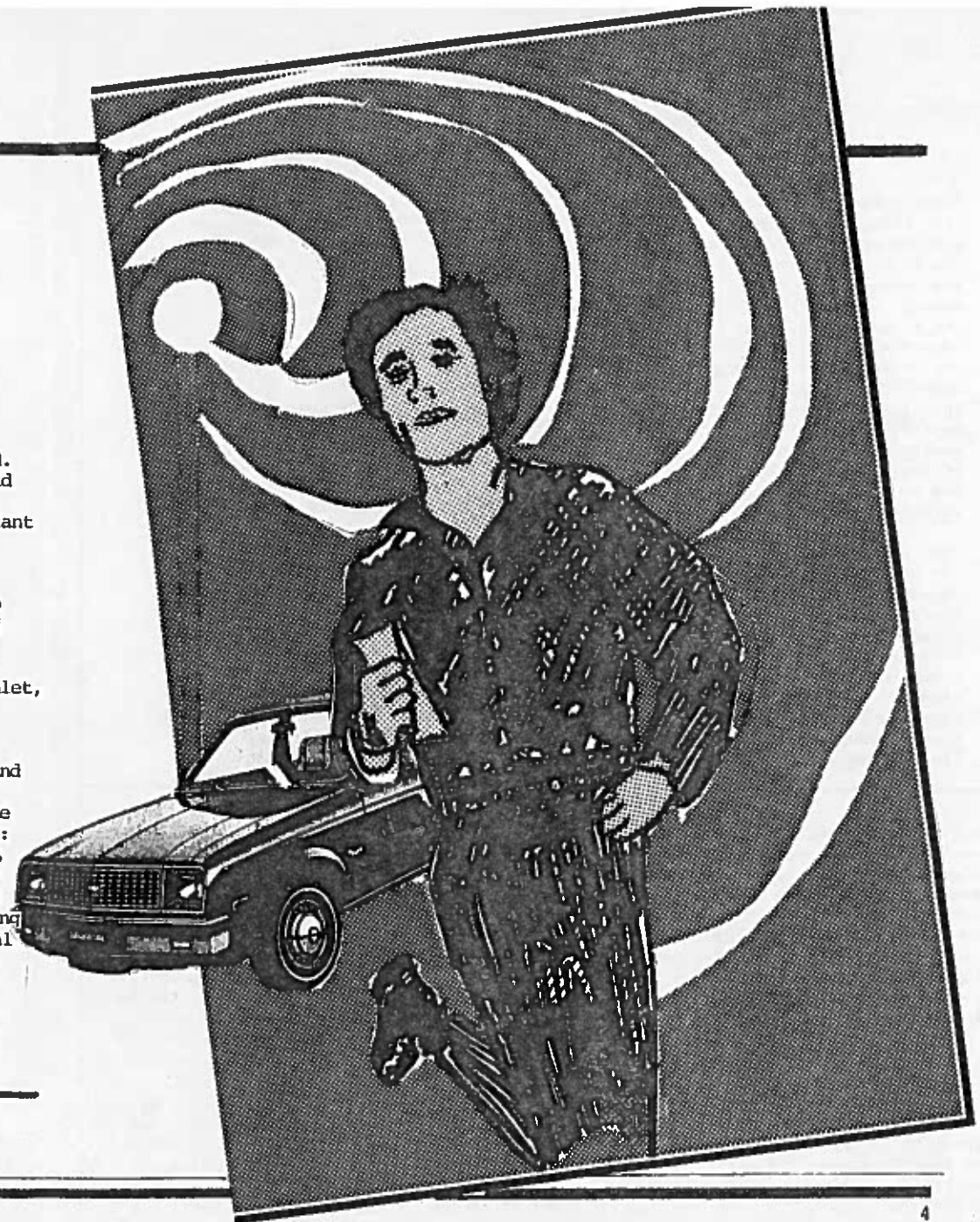
their move. "We were cool. Collected. We respected the territory," they would later recollect. "Concealing their weapon of truth, they strode like valiant knights out of the hall and into the parking lot.

"My hands trembled but I was committed....it was something we *had* to do..." Under the windshield wipers of every car in the parking lot they inserted a pamphlet.

The weapon of truth, the pamphlet, asserts that a lot of what modern day evangelists have to say is open to a great deal of debate and speculation. "Homosexuality - What the Bible does and does not say" is available from GTB.

As they made their getaway, the words of the *man* echoed in their minds: "We invite all persons of good will to join this dynamic, non-sectarian, non-partisan, grass-roots movement for the renewal of our society, and the blessing of God on our nation and in 'the global village' which is our world.

In the quiet tavern where the foursome plotted their next slashing counter-offensive, they drained a few beers and went home.



FLAUNTING IT

I don't know how. To flaunt it. "It" being my gayness. I guess, more honestly, I don't yet know how to be openly gay, happily so and celebrate it for all to see. Maybe, on a 'perfect' level, it isn't really possible, given the imperfect society we live in. But working at it is possible... and necessary. I've been learning a lot about being more public lately, and over the next few months I'd like to explore some of the issues, both troublesome and rewarding, about coming further out, through this column.

"Coming out" begins, I guess, with the self. A coming to terms with ourselves, our sexual orientation, accepting it and liking ourselves enough to want to share that acceptance with other people. Once begun, coming out from ourselves to an ever widening world of people is a cycle that may never end, that we may continue through out the rest of our lives. Don't get scared by this

of time. In many ways, GTB is a "pioneer" organization, involved with grass-roots work in what can still be described as a 'frontier' region. It has been worse. I am grateful to and respect the gay people who were out (to the degree they could be) in the 40's and 50's (some of them have interesting stories to tell; take some time to listen occasionally if you can). I'm in debt to those gays and their early attempts at organizing publically here (in the early 70's there was the Lakehead Gay Liberation group), to those who weathered the 'Mona Lisa' harassment and brutalities, to those who established the original 'Backstreet' club and struggled over the years to keep it viable and open, an accepted and necessary center for gay people to meet in.

Some of the people involved in these earlier efforts have moved on to other places; some remain and continue to grow further here.

endless line stretching into the future. Continually coming out further can be both troublesome, awkward, stressful, painful and also healthy, positive and nourishing. For me, each further bit of "public" ground I earn, I feel lighter, even exhilarated. And also for me, earning it is the way it happens. Like The Body Politic quotes each issue above its masthead: "The liberation of homosexuals can only be the work of homosexuals themselves" (Kurt Hiller). No one is going to hand over our acceptance on a platter. It's going to take work, mostly our own work, and it begins with the self.

This is where GTB comes in. Happy anniversary to us. Though GTB is a healthy year old and growing strongly, let's remember and congratulate the gay people in Thunder Bay and area who've contributed to our history over a much longer span

To all of them we owe our gratitude. Helping bring our gayness...further out.

And now we are GTB. The foreground of a long line of gay history here. Our accomplishments in just a year of 'official' existence, stand solid and credible. And our presence brings awareness of gay issues and concerns further out into public light: stories about GTB in the local press, appearances on local radio, educational out-reach talks to classes at Confederation College and Lakehead University.

GTB helps me. Because of our numbers, our weekly meetings, our dazzling socials and house parties, the work that goes on through our various committees, I am a happier and more open gay person. I get a lot from GTB and all of us in it. Congratulations... and lets continue helping each other. Always growing a bit...further out.

Michael Sobota

Gays Of Thunder Bay

THE FOLLOWING PRESS RELEASE WAS DISTRIBUTED
TO ALL LOCAL AND REGIONAL MEDIA ON THE
EASTER WEEKEND...

P.O. Box 2155 Thunder Bay

PRESS RELEASE

THUNDER BAY GAYS REACH OUT

For Immediate Release

Within one year of operation, Gays of Thunder Bay has developed an extensive list of achievements and have begun a campaign to inform and educate - to tell gays in the Northwestern Ontario region that "there are other gay persons out there". To be a homosexual in this corner of the province can mean isolation and frustration. In the smaller communities, a gay lifestyle may simply not exist. "It's difficult, almost impossible," says one man, a former resident of Fort Frances now active with the young organization. "We must reach out and inform."

Gays of Thunder Bay is an organization representing gay men and lesbians in the Thunder Bay area. As part of its first anniversary, the group has dedicated itself to assisting those wanting information about homosexuality, wanting to discuss their attitudes towards being gay, wanting to socialize with other gays. The group provides speakers to interested organizations and media contacts are easily arranged. With the installation of a peer counselling phoneline, many people have benefited from the information and help provided. From their office in the downtown north ward GTB members hold weekly Tuesday night meetings, discussion groups; provide a library with a wealth of positive literature and information, and plan for the future with their fast-growing organization.

In the planning stages is a community centre to house the group's social activities. Currently looking for a suitable site and organizing the proper arrangements, the group is confident that this much-needed facility is not too far off. The group is also assisting in the province-wide effort to have "sexual orientation" included in the Human Rights Code of Ontario. The clause would provide protection from discrimination solely on the grounds that one is homosexual - on the job, in housing and so on. Quebec already has such a clause and the British Columbia government is considering it for that province's code. To celebrate its first year of operation, the group will be hosting a social on April 25. Newsletters, pamphlets as well as other information can be provided by contacting either the phoneline at (807) 345-8011 or by dropping a line to GTB, P. O. Box 2155, Thunder Bay 'P', Ontario.

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HOORAY FOR YOU! Over the past year your continued support has convinced us that JTB is performing a needed and worthwhile service. The executive is now ready to move forward. A committee has been established to research the opening of a club and to begin the preliminary steps toward that goal.

Your support is needed once more to ensure that we can



all enjoy the successful efforts of this committee.

We are asking that you purchase your membership to JTB as your statement saying you want a club. The small price you pay at this time will be applied toward your club membership at such time as a club is opened. But we need an indication of your desire for a club in the very near future.

Please fill out the attached portion of this notice and give it along with \$10.00 to any member of the executive.

.....We're almost there.....

Membership Application

NAME.....SEX.....
ADDRESS.....
TELEPHONE.....

I would like to be on the mailing list

YES.....NO.....

FEE PAYABLE - \$10.00