

October - November, 1982

GAYS OF THUNDER BAY MAGAZINE

Thunder GAY magazine

50¢



- OUR STORIES
- CANOEING WITH HARRY
- NOTHING TO IT
- GTB: REVIEW & PREVIEW
- COMMUNITY
- UPCOMING EVENTS

COMMUNITY

Annual Meeting

GTB held Fall elections at our official 'Annual Meeting', October 5, 1982.

Nominations for the 1982-83 Executive Committee had been solicited at the three previous meetings and a slate of candidates prepared. The slate was presented to about twenty members in attendance at the meeting and was voted in unanimously.

GTB's 1982-83 EXECUTIVE:

President: Doug Broman
Vice-President: Michael Sobota
Treasurer: Darrel
Secretary: Ernie
Directors-at-Large: Lawrence
Jaimie
Ken Plante
Terry
Don
Line Jolicoeur
George

The first meeting for the new Executive will be Monday, October 18th.

Also adopted by the membership at the 'Annual Meeting' was a new schedule for regular meetings. They will now be held twice monthly, on the first and third Tuesday of each month. The October meeting will be the 19th. In November they will be the 2nd and 16th.

UPCOMING FALL EVENTS:

- October 19th - General Meeting
October 30th - Annual Halloween Extravaganza! Held at Strathcona Country Club-house. Strathcona Ave. off Hodder. Mainline Bus service.
November 2nd - General Meeting
November 16th - General Meeting
November 27th - Social at Vale Community Centre

Bike-a-Thon

On September 19th the Coalition For Gay Rights in Ontario held an unusual and interesting fund-raising event in Toronto: a 'bike-a-thon'.

GTB was fortunate to have a member residing in Toronto at present, who rode in the bike-a-thon as our representative. Word arrived that, although the event was non-competitive, our rider came in first! Congratulations Kim! We are all proud of your effort.

About fourteen individuals made pledges on Kim for the race, totaling approximately \$70. GTB voted to approve sending a matching amount from our own funds as a contribution in appreciation of 'our rider' and as our fund-raising donation to CGRO for this year.

GAYS OF THUNDER BAY
Magazine

October-November 1982

Thunder
GAY
magazine

Contributors to this issue: Andy, David, Doug, George, Jim, Michael, Rick, William

GTB-A Time for Renewal

Two and a half years ago, a small group of men and women founded an organization dedicated to meeting the social, educational, and political needs of the gay community. As we enter a new year with a new executive, I think it is worth looking at what we have accomplished and where we want to go with Gays of Thunder Bay.

In our short existence we have established and operated an office, out of which we hold regular meetings, run a telephone line offering information and peer counselling, and operate our own printing press. The printing press allows us to put out information at very low cost, and we produce a superb small magazine. "Thunder Gay" is known across the continent and has received articles from many sources outside Thunder Bay.

Through our Education Committee we have put out information through the media, and our members have

spoken to university and college classes, as well as other organizations, helping to promote a better understanding of the gay community in the community at large.

As our main social activity, we run a major dance or 'social' every month and this has become a vital aspect of our operation, first, because it allows gay men and women in large numbers to get together, dance and have a good time, and also because it supports the entire operation of G.T.B.

I think it is very interesting to note that GTB has been self-sufficient from the beginning and has always financed itself by the support of its members and friends.

Another accomplishment of the past two years is the fact that GTB is a legal non-profit corporation in the province of Ontario; a fact which may be of great importance to us in the future.

(Cont'd pg. 5)

EDITORIAL

Nothing
to it!

When I decided to co-ordinate the September 25 social with Terry, I was filled with the usual nudges of doubt that accompany the tackling of a new project for the first time. I had sat through many CTB meetings where people had complained that it was extremely difficult to find volunteers, there was too much running around to do - that sort of overwinded stuff.

What we discovered was something new and fresh - it was a joy. I will squelch the overriding myth that "volunteers are too hard to get". They aren't. People like to help and help they did. With the exception of the last hour, shifts changed like clockwork. From midnight until last call, we worked the door and the bar ourselves to make the counting of money, cleanup and the packing away of things a little easier.

It was a lot of fun. I met a young man from Montreal who helped

at the bar - he was fun to be around, enjoyed popping open the beers and pouring drinks and made the event a great occasion. Out of the experience came a new sense of camaraderie with people one seldom meets otherwise.

It was especially enjoyable to see practically everyone and say hello to them. Though we ran out of some mixes and ice at the end, we were treated with civility by everybody.

What I liked the most though was the feel of the thing. Gays and lesbians celebrate themselves at our dances. It was also the first time we threw a party for 125 people and netted a profit of \$800 which will raise our building fund respectfully. Terry and I enjoyed the experience and urge our friends to do the same. After all, there is nothing to it.

Doug Broman

Thunder
GAY
magazine

The opinions expressed in articles in Thunder Gay Magazine express the opinions of the author and are not necessarily the opinions of Gays of Thunder Bay.

Submissions of articles, drawings, poems and so on are more than welcome. If you wish to submit something for the next issue, please see Doug Broman or Michael Sobota before or on Tuesday, November 16, 1982.

THUNDER BAY DISTRICT HEALTH UNIT

FREE VENEREAL DISEASE CLINICS

DIAGNOSIS & TREATMENT
No OHIP Number Required

LOCATION AND HOURS:

North Ward — St. Joseph's General Hospital
3rd Floor, 35 N. Algoma Street,
Monday and Thursday, 4:30 p.m.-6:00 p.m.

South Ward — Dodick Building
1119 Victoria Ave. East-Lower Level
Tuesday, 1:30 p.m.-3:00 p.m.

CLINICS WILL BE CLOSED ON STATUTORY HOLIDAYS
FOR INFORMATION AT OTHER TIMES CALL
622-3961 (Health Unit)

(Cont'd from pg. 2)

Seeing our accomplishments in the past two and a half years, many people might think that all the work is done and that now we can all sit back and watch things go on forever in some kind of magical process. Other people will think that the priorities of the group are wrong, that there is too much of one thing or the other and not enough of something else.

Well whatever each of us may think, now is a very important time for GTB. As we now have a new executive and a new season it is necessary to ask where we want GTB to go, what do we want to accomplish, and are we willing to put out some effort to make sure we succeed in the goals we set for ourselves.

I'd like to suggest some ideas for possible goals and to ask you to think about them and translate that into action.

Obviously the primary need for most of us is social. We need to meet each other to talk and play, to be able to feel part of a community. Right now we have an office that is overcrowded in terms of the functions it tries to accommodate, and we hold socials once a month. I think we would examine the concept of a community centre and see if that is any more possible now than it was a year or two ago. If we could find a hall to rent, we could operate a bar (as a legal corporation), run our phone-line, hold meetings, operate a press and printing studio, build a library and who knows what else.

As we build up the social aspects of the community, however, we must

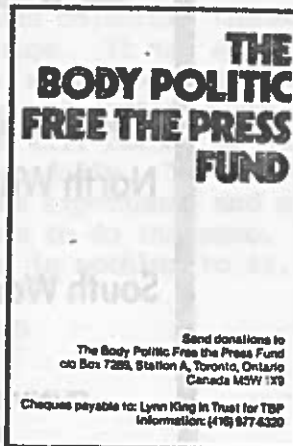
remember that there are still people in the larger community who don't understand us, or fear us, or discriminate against us.

It is very important then to build our education program to give us a better understanding of ourselves, to give other people a better understanding of us, and to allow us to act to improve our political standing and give us a position of equality with other members of the city and province we live in.

What I've mentioned here is not a program, but merely the direction that I feel GTB should be heading in the coming year.

If GTB deserves to survive it will be because it can meet at least some of the gay community, and if there is to be a gay community, the members of that community will have to take responsibility for ensuring its survival. I think that, with the contributions of all of us, GTB can be the vehicle for the healthy growth of our community.

David B.



FLAUNTING IT

...A bunch of positive items...and one depressing one:

1) Top of the news is our new executive. Congratulations! The majority of the new executive were ready and willing to stand when elections were announced in September. This eager willingness to represent GTB and serve our community bodes well for the coming year.

2) Last issue we reported on deteriorating relationships with two organizations in the Thunder Bay media. Here is a follow-up on one of them. David, Doug and myself (members of GTB's Education Committee) met with CBQ's station manager and newsdirector for an hour meeting. We presented our information, showing slanted reporting on the part of unknown and unnamed staff at the station. Both CBQ representatives listened and took notes from our remarks. Questions were asked, information exchanged, issues were opened up. The newsdirector stated we were an important group in the overall community make-up and deserving of coverage. He expressed the desire that we would remain open to communication with CBC. We left the meeting feeling there had been a genuine fairness in our exchange, and that we'd made an important move toward establishing more balanced reporting by the only CBC outlet in the region.

3) A lengthy letter from Ric Taylor ran in our last issue, commenting on a portion of my June-July column.

One of his central points, that there are many different and differing views about gay concerns and especially gay concerns in Thunder Bay, is an important, positive contribution from him.

4) Steve (not his real name), a local craftsman, recently had an exhibit of his work. The exhibit was announced at a regular GTB meeting, to general positive response, and members were encouraged to take it in. I talked with Steve personally about doing a review of the show and got an enthusiastic, positive reaction from him. The following week, after seeing the show and compiling my notes for the review, Steve phoned and requested that I not write it. After a curt exchange he hung up. Once again, Steve is safe inside of himself: nothing will appear in THUNDER GAY that might associate him with us. I was really depressed by his phone-call for a couple of days. I wonder what Steve is afraid of. I wonder, genuinely, if he knows. I wonder who he imagines his enemies are: THUNDER GAY? GTB? Me? To address the issues involved here probably will take our lifetimes. The beginnings of addressing them has to start within ourselves. Who are our enemies? Who are our allies? Who threatens us? Who gives us support? These simplistic questions are only ones to start with.....

Our stories

ROB:

Rob Gardiner left Thunder Bay shortly after the publication of the August-September issue of Thunder Gay. He was in love, quit his job early, packed up and departed in what was one hectic whirlwind of a week. He left a vacancy within me for I was his friend - a vacancy that has since healed over with translucent memory.

It was with Rob after all that on a sodden Sunday night in July the Horseshoe Tavern witnessed us dancing together. The band had been playing sixties music, and gushing over with beer and nostalgia we just got up and boogeyed. After a waltz together, we noticed glares from the bikers and sailors around us and bid a hasty departure. (We heard afterwards there was a brawl - we got out just in time.) With our arms wrapped over each other's shoulders we stumbled through the foggy night laughing and singing like a couple of drunken faggots - which we were, which made us proud.

He took walks with Ken and me. We went for drinks or he came up for tea. We shared his joy at getting a substantial raise at work; his angst at having quit smoking and begun again. But the specialness which surfaces when a friend departs is full of a sort of sentimental glow. A glow that

grows in memory and a touching insight develops into the depth of love that can be achieved between men.

Within the nebula of love created by the merging of our solitudes came the magnificent bond that has cemented a permanent affection within me for a friend. I don't believe it's all that rare but I do believe it isn't much discussed. It isn't rare that I love my friend, but it is rare that I would celebrate it here and in this fashion. And that tells me something more about Rob - it says he certainly left his mark.

And what did it? I mean this fellow told me one night I was on the road to becoming a capitalist pig - an exploiter! (He was wrong of course - enough said.) It was probably the fact that he could be so blunt with me and I with him: I countered his accusation with one of my own, calling him somewhat of an ideologue. During this hilarious match of outrageous mud-slinging a third person who neither of us knew very well sat wide-eyed as we whooped and cheered over our differences. Whooping faggots - which we were, and proud.

Then there was Africa, his coming out there. (See August-September Our Stories) And wanting to go back. Rob Gardiner DID Africa. Black Africans celebrate

each other. Male friendships are close, sexual contacts between them not uncommon and accepted. There is a freedom of affection that is lacking in the west. Rob's nursing skills are desperately needed and his willingness to provide them is great. This man's unselfishness, with his wealthy stockpile of caring and sharing and limitless capacity to suffer for the greater good did certainly

make its mark.

Enough! Much more of this, it'll come out sopping with sentiment - he's still alive for chris'sake!

In short we miss Rob. His was the gift of love. It was unique and precious. (When you read this down there in Hamilton Rob, don't say I never did anything for yuh.)

Love,
Doug.

ERNIE:

It was a gift for graduation - a summer in Japan in August 1970. Ernie had never visited any large cities. He had spent his life in a small Ontario town but at the age of eighteen he was thrust into the cosmopolitan bustle of Osaka during the World's Fair.

The mesmerizing cadences of a strange culture were even more enthralling by the lunacy of American soldiers letting off steam while on R&R from the front in Vietnam. "They brought their craziness with them - everything was upside down."

He had had sexual encounters. They were not fulfilling, just a desire to placate a constant urge that was always there. It was strange and beautiful then that in this exotic country full of confusion

and full of life, Ernie found himself falling in love.

There were fifteen in his group. A tour guide was assigned to them. Nao-hisa, the same age as Ernie, acted as their eyes and tongues as he showed them about Japan. They visited Japanese style hotels where they slept as a group on grass mats in large rooms. They all bathed together, the women on one side of a small partition, the men on the other.

As they travelled Now, the guide's nickname, began warming up to Ernie. They found themselves together all the time. There was no privacy as we know it, just companionship all the time. One turned inward for privacy, a quiet private solitude where everything around them was ignored.

Now was proud and wanted to be seen

with Ernie everywhere. In a nightclub Ernie was shocked to discover groups of males dancing at one end, groups of females at the other. The lack of restrictive taboos were almost an affront but the easy-going attitude of Now who found something good in everything eased the transition into the Japanese culture.

Try as he could, Ernie never admitted he was gay. He couldn't tell Now that he loved him—an initial closeness had developed into an intense friendship where they leaned on each other. Now made sure he called Ernie to make sure they slept, ate, bathed, toured — did everything together. By the tour's finish, following a tearful farewell at the airport, Ernie ended what for

him had been "like being on a honeymoon". It was his first experience with gay love.

He speaks warmly of Now. The Japanese are fine boned, exquisite people. And for all the differences, Ernie didn't see Now as a Japanese, he just saw the person. For a while they exchanged letters and presents as though they lived in just the next town. But over the years their contact drifted to an end.

Now, wistful, memories as pleasant as a fresh warm breeze, Ernie confesses he has fallen in love with other men and met dozens of others, but only two or three can compare with Naohisa.

D.B.

At 16:

COMING OUT

What will happen if I admit I am gay? Am I? Will I ever be able to lead a decent life? What will my parents do if they find out?

These and many more questions run through the minds of all gays at one time or the other. Some never learn the answers. I took a chance and faced these questions and the truth. Hopefully in the story that follows about my experiences, you will learn something, and maybe I will be able to answer some of these questions for you.

I am sixteen years old. I had my first gay inclinations when I was younger. As time went by, these feelings became stronger and the need to meet other gays was

unbearable. These feelings were suppressed for a long time, as I was not sure of the truth. A lot of my time was spent trying to change myself. It didn't work. After a while, I had to find out for sure. That is when I came in contact with The Gays of Thunder Bay.

Everyone at The Gays of Thunder Bay was, and still is, really super to me. I enjoy talking to them and learning from them. Because of my age, this became harder to do. It is not fun to have to lie to your parents, especially when your relationship has been really close. But I was happy, so I lied.

My home life soon became the pits. If there was a fight at

home, I had no desire to make up afterwards. What's the use, if your parents kick you out when they find out you are gay?

For a month, I thought I was so smart. My parents would never find out. They couldn't catch me in a lie. Well, they did.

The reaction from my parents was totally amazing. Of course there were the tears and guilt trips, but my mom and dad agreed that they would try to understand. They still loved me. Both of them had a lot of respect for me being able to come right out and tell them. Both of them had the pleasure of speaking to two gay men and enjoyed it. They are now reading books on homosexuality.

Everything seems so much better now. A lot of the pressures are gone and I don't have to lie. Yet there are many more things to experience. Some things will frighten me, some I will enjoy, and some I will not agree with. I'll make it though. Why not? I've come this far already.

Jim

Tell us your story!

Our stories

10

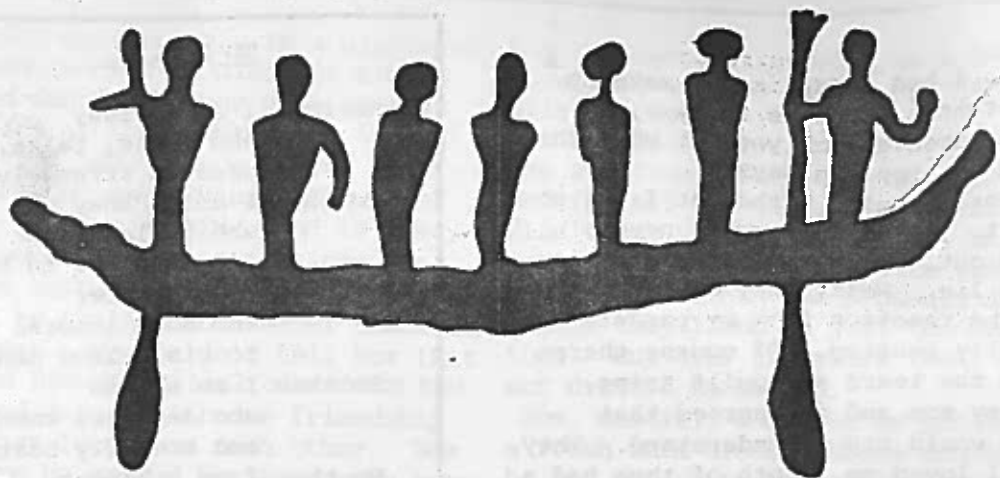
TO WHO...

To them I am a sissy
who walks, talks, and
dresses strangely
To them I am a Pansy
who is less than what
I'm supposed to be
To them I am a queer
who does immoral things
to his fellow man
To them I am a homo
who despises women
and brutally beats them
To them I am a Faggot
who rapes and murders
their little children
To you I am a person
who has the same wants
and needs as any other
To you I am a Friend
who is as trusting and
reliable as any other
To you I am a lover
who is caring and
tender as any other
To myself I am a man-
no more,
no less.

©. W. Prettie 1982
Not to be reproduced or
copied in whole or in part
without express written
premission.



Our stories



A Superior Gay Week-end: On Northern Light Lake with Nine Gay Men

A recent CP wirestory made it official: this past summer was a dreary one weatherwise. It was one of the coldest and wettest on record in Ontario. There was one week-end in mid-August that was an exception. Remarkably, it was the weekend GTB had scheduled for a canoe trip.

Accepting the dreary weather, I was worried in advance of the trip, about purchasing rain-gear. It was one of the priority items on a handy list provided by our guide, Harry, during a meeting prior to the trip. The gear is expensive. I had asked a friend if I could borrow his but he was slow in coming thru. On the morning of our departure, these two friends came to my door and gifted me with a full set of bright yellow raingear. I was non-plussed. The gift, their love for me was an omen. That and the just-in-time arrival of friend Ken from Edmonton (via VIA because of the Nordair strike)

set the tone for the week-end.

It was a superior time. I never had to use the rain gear. On the Friday afternoon we drove out of the city for Northern Light Lake the sky was mostly clear and sunny. It was warm. It got brighter, hotter and better thru the week-end.

There were nine of us who met at the launching point at the lake: Harry, Terry, Ernie, Terry, Ken, Walter, Kirk, Don and myself. This would be an international adventure: six of us reside in Canada, three came from Minnesota. We were experienced canoeists and complete novices. Though some had been on this lake previously, this was going to be a unique adventure: nine gay men together for a week-end, away from main-stream cultural influences.

Let me say quickly that the entire event was not arduous or even 'rough'. This is due mostly to the rapport and co-operation we quickly fell into, but even more so to the preparations and pre-planning of our guide and mentor:

Harry. He had provided all our equipment: a beautiful, new large canoe (this would be only its second outing) that comfortably accommodated all of us, our packs and other necessary equipment. That included tents, cooking gear, life-jackets, paddles of various sizes to suit the paddlers, and food. Food! We dined like kings: one evening meal was rice with chinese vegetables, another featured beef stroganof with chocolate cake for desert.

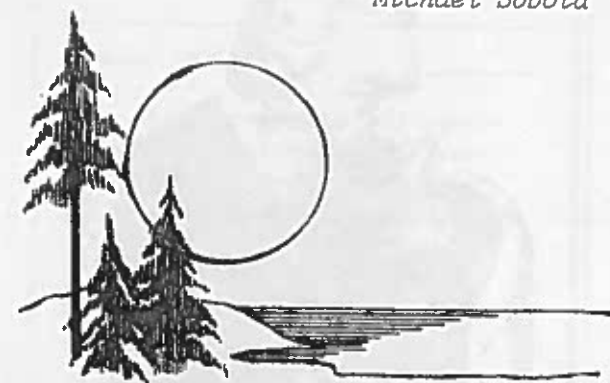
During the 2½ days we stayed at two overnite campsites, journeyed to Northern Light Falls, where the lake rushes through a narrow passage and spills into Saganaga Lake, inspected closely tall rock cliffs that had numerous pictographs staining their surface, and covered approximately 25 miles of paddling during the entire week-end. We paddled together (more or less...), ate together, set up and pitched camp together, were photographed together, swam, bathed and slept together...in various combinations, of course.

I came away from the week-end with two important contributions that I still carry with me: the first is the importance of doing such an adventure. The whole project, from proposal through organizing (no easy task within our community) through the actual communal event. To spend that time

with gay men, away from non-gay influences (essentially) and establish a fresh and nourishing co-operation, is tangible reward of real value. Hard to describe, but felt solidly. The second is the growing respect and appreciation I have for our guide. I knew he was a good man when I had first met him, many months previously. Being able to work with him, learn from him, give him support and take it from him was nourishment better than those exotic meals he provided. What a beautiful man Harry is.

We parted company reluctantly; all agreeing the trip was too short and that we had just found our paddling muscles. We are already discussing plans for next year...

Michael Sobota



Phoneline:

GTB's phoneline is both a link for the outside world into Thunder Bay's gay community, and an information service within our community. Arguably, our phoneline is perhaps the most important ongoing service GTB offers.

Since being established, now more than two years ago, thousands of calls have been logged. Hundreds of individuals have made personal contact through the phoneline on staffed nights, and dozens of gay men and women have entered our community after making contact and receiving positive support via the phoneline.

The phoneline is staffed with two volunteers every Wednesday and



Friday evenings, from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. At other times, a taped message is heard.

The line is essentially used for information: news about GTB or upcoming social events, general information about homosexuality, personal peer counselling

345-8011

relating to individual concerns. Volunteer staff who work the line receive training via our phoneline guide-book and by working a number of shifts with experienced staff.

We are currently in need of more volunteers to fill the two evenings of 'live' service, and to share the workload with those regular dedicated people who have been working the line for a long time. Training is simple and straightforward. Only a few hours of your time are asked for, and time committed is only as much as you want to commit.

Your rewards are deeply personal ones: being able to give support to someone in real need, passing on information to someone new in town, helping expand positive awareness of our community.

If you might be interested in working with our staff, or if you'd just like more information, drop in to one of our regular meetings or better yet, phone 345.8011 on a Wednesday or Friday night.

GAY CAMP JAMBOREE

What was planned to be a great weekend, was spoiled by a small attendance.

A "Gay Camp Jamboree" was held at the Conestoga Camp Grounds in Winnipeg, on the 3rd to 6th of September. It was run by Glen Kelly, who had been planning it for two months. There were many activities listed for the weekend, such as a Mr. Jock Strap contest, bonfires, a Hawaiian Luahua, etc. Many of the activities were not held as an estimated thirty gays showed out of an expected number of 500.

The gays that did attend



enjoyed the activities that were held. It was a chance to get away and express ourselves without worrying about pressures from straights. One of the ideas which the gays at the camp had about gaining a better turn-out, was that a down payment be put down on the camping spots. This would be a good thing for Mr. Kelly to consider for next year; if there is a next year. Everyone would like to see it put on again, so better luck next time.

Jim

Yes! I'd like the next six issues of "THUNDER GAY" for only \$5.00, mailed first-class in a plain envelope.

Name _____

Address _____

Postal code _____

I'd like to send a gift-subscription to an out-of-town friend. Enclosed is another \$5.00 for each subscription.

I've put their name and address on the back of this form.

Clip and mail to:

G.T.B.
P.O. Box 2155
THUNDER BAY, Ontario
P7B 2W0

Gays Of Thunder Bay

GAYS OF THUNDER BAY is an organization of lesbians and gay men from the Thunder Bay region.

OUR MAILING ADDRESS is: G.T.B.
P.O. Box 2155
Thunder Bay P, Ontario

OUR PHONELINE is open every Wednesday and Friday evening from 7:30 to 9:30 pm. At other times a recording advises callers of activities. Reach the phoneline by dialing:

(807) 345.8011

All persons interested in the gay movement in this area are welcome to contact us with offers of help, donations and so on!

GTB