

ust-September, 1982

IS OF THUNDER BAY
gazine

Thunder GAY magazine

50¢



NEW!

Our stories

ROB: Africa, 1980 ● BRIAN: Personal

UPCOMING COMMUNITY EVENTS

AUGUST 13-15 = Weekend canoe and camping trip. All equipment provided. Northern Light Lake. Could be a Superior Gay weekend...

AUGUST 27 = Social: NOTE DATE CHANGE!
This one is on a Friday.
And new location: K of C Hall - 384 Ft. William Rd.

SEPTEMBER 25 = Social: location to be announced. Call our phonenumber.

REMINDER: GTB regular meetings are bi-weekly during the summer months. August dates are: Tuesday the 17th and the 31st.

Thank You

A hearty thank you to Tom Kevin and Mauno for co-ordinating a very successful 'SUN-FUN' social in June. As well, three cheers to Lawrence and Ernie (and Terry) for our hot 'SUMMER NIGHTS' social in July. Good music, good organization, good times for those attending. Special thanks to Patrick for his sound services and to all the countless volunteers who donated time and energy.

APOLOGIA:

Regretfully, due to holidays and so on, this issue is two weeks late. Our apologies.

FAMILY GAYS

On July 19th, another guest lecture was given by a member of GTB at Lakehead University.

Similar to past talks, Michael was invited into a 'family sociology' class. The invitation this time came from one of the students in the class who received ready approval from her instructor to have a GTB representative come and talk about homosexuality in/and the family.

About twenty students listened, asked questions and were given copies of recent issues of 'THUNDER GAY'. The discussion was general rather than specific, with Michael fielding questions on gays in prisons, married gays, 'how do you meet other people' etc. This fits the pattern of previous exchanges. There remains a basic lack of information about gays and our gay community in the general public, with cliché ideas and stereotypical images still predominating. (The text for the class does not even list homosexuality as a possible element of family sociology).

Much work remains to be done.

COMMUNITY

GAYS OF THUNDER BAY
Magazine

August - September, 1982

Thunder
GAY
magazine

CONTRIBUTORS to this issue: Andy, Brian, David, Doug, Ken, Lawrence, Michael, Rob, Ric

Why Not Now? - BECAUSE:

(Staff)
GTB's plans to host a northern gathering for gay men and lesbians, called 'CONTACT: WHY NOT NOW', have once again been post-poned.

The gathering was to have taken place in Thunder Bay on the Labor Day week-end, September 4 and 5. There are no plans to reschedule the event, at this time.

The gathering was discussed at two consecutive membership meetings. At the first, plans were approved to go ahead. At the following meeting, one of the two co-organizers withdrew. Among the reasons he cited for doing so were: an uncertainty that enough people would attend an open, public gay week-end in the city, that a draft budget would have to have relatively high attendance to balance revenues against expenses, that

there was a perceived attitude that the co-organizers would take care of everything and no one else had come forth with ideas or commitment of time and energy. But perhaps most importantly, it was viewed that GTB should utilize the active members and present finances in maintaining current services (the office, our phonenumber, the monthly dances, the bi-monthly magazine) rather than attempt to host a regional gathering and do it poorly.

Without another co-organizer stepping forward, those present at the meeting voted that 'CONTACT' not be held at the present time. Most agreed with the general idea that such a gathering would be useful and beneficial, but that our current financial and people resources don't warrant taking it on.

EDITORIAL

McMurtry's War.

The chilling realization that a large department within Ontario's government has taken on the task of ridding a legal minority of its greatest single voice has sent shockwaves through the province's gay community. Roy McMurtry, Attorney General, is leading this war.

On June 15, the Body Politic was acquitted for a second time of using the mail to distribute immoral or indecent material - an article, "Men Loving Boys Loving Men", written in 1977. After four years before the courts and at a cost of more than \$80,000 the Body Politic successfully defended its right to publish. (This is a battle for principle - conviction is only a \$500 fine.)

Not satisfied that two courts have found the defendants not guilty, McMurtry's office again appealed the decision. Three times in court for the same charge? Are they looking for a court to convict? You bet.

Why are McMurtry and his hacks doing this? It certainly isn't to preserve public morals. Through legal goonery and bullying, McMurtry is attempting to drain the energy, the funds, the talent of the Body Politic collective. It's a war on the BP and it's a war on us. By stifling the gay press McMurtry wishes to permanently silence the one voice that speaks for many gays in this province.

It's a tactic that just might be working.. In a recent letter from the collective, Rick Bebout tells us that they've had to stop paying three staff members and put the rest on half salary. There is also a deficit of \$11,000. BP is getting choked..

You can help three ways:

1. Write McMurtry - tell him what you think.
2. Send a copy of your letter to area MPP's - better yet, phone them.
3. Donate to the Body Politic - right now.

In the meantime, the bullies must go. McMurtry should resign.

Doug Broman

Judgment

Basically, it's because of the straights. Like a friend of mine and his unconscious attitudes and snickers. I know when some of us are on the subject of straights, many of us will either discount them, fear them, outright hate them or try more to fit their mold or their 'identity'.

But when my friend picked up our anniversary issue, before he even read anything inside, he snickered. Like it was some kind of joke. It's no joke! It's damned serious! "THUNDER GAY" is an integral part of voicing, clarifying and communicating gay concerns in Thunder Bay. It wasn't until he read some inside (I should have told him to read the entire issue...) that he discovered it wasn't a bunch of social gossip going "OOOh...e-eeee-e" and "Oh Johnny dear, did you hear the latest on...!"

"THUNDER GAY" is not for that. And it's not like that for me at all. It's a bond. A link. A way of being aware of what some gays are saying in this city, and what is said elsewhere. But my straight friend (and he says he's accepting and aware of gays in society) reacts with all the narrowness of a snicker when he saw the issue in my apartment. Judging another book by its cover.

After he read some, he had a change of heart. He did see worth in what "THUNDER GAY" does. I said: "It only says what people put in it" He said: "Maybe I'll put something in "THUNDER GAY", too.

Lawrence

Ed. Note: we welcome and encourage contributions from different viewpoints.

a pause at the Holiday Inn

*You get more gorgeous
after each beer.
Baby, I want to stretch
my balls around your cock
and drive you to ---
and back again
from this place
you washed in to glow
amidst all those boring counter-fits
begging for it.
It shouldn't be
so hard to fuck*

Ric Taylor

On the road to FAERIE Consciousness

— Ric Taylor —

The Northwest Radical Faerie
Gathering



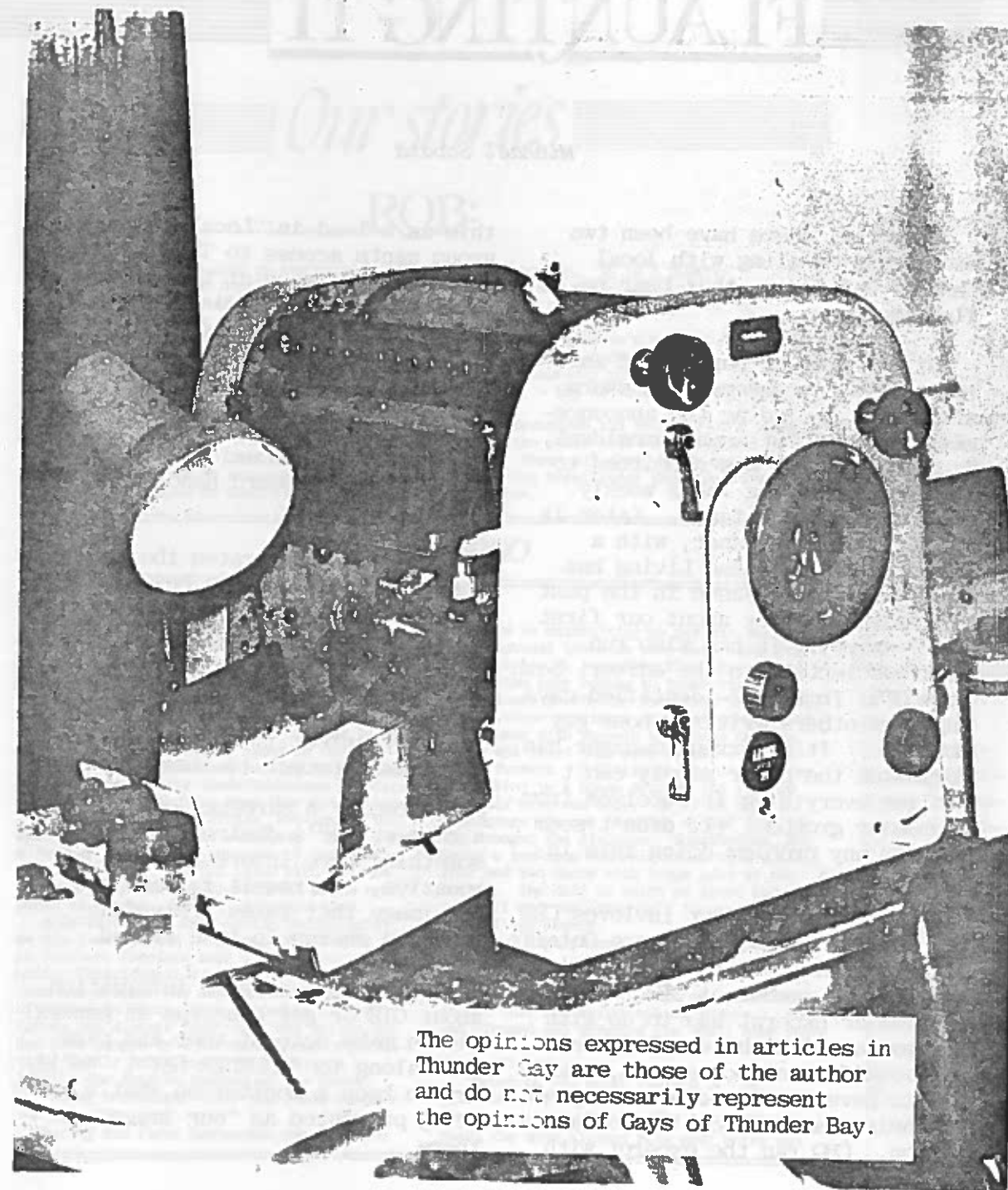
I reached the site of the gathering, one hundred miles south-east of Portland, Oregon at three a.m. Saturday after a tortuous road trip from Vancouver. The mid-February weather was steely grey rain, yet it was wondrous to be standing in the muck in that parking lot amidst the rain, with snow banked about atop some small mountain in the heart of the American NorthWest.

Our arrival was late so there was no lighted refuge for me and my newly-acquired Portland faerie brother so we crawled into the back of his covered Toyota and slept.

We had slept through the breakfast gong, entered the main wood lodge to thick iced carrot cake and spearmint tea and joined the large seated circle of seventy odd men. We joined hands and were led in an invocation to the spirits that inhabited the surrounding elements to guide and protect us. The NorthWest gay men who had organized the weekend introduced themselves and we in turn did the same, some expressing their expectations of the gathering. It dawned on me then that there was no agenda for the weekend. No schedule of preplanned events. The contents of the weekend were to be determined by the collective will. We were instructed to indicate on paper tacked to a bulletin board any workshop that one was willing to lead and/or which one would we like to see occur - and to sign up for any workshops that one wanted to participate in.

The exclusion of women needs no apology for the gathering's specific purpose was to explore and celebrate the unique gay male faerie consciousness.

(Cont'd page 18)



The opinions expressed in articles in Thunder Gay are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the opinions of Gays of Thunder Bay.

FLAUNTING IT

Michael Sobota

Recently, there have been two examples of dealing with local Thunder Bay media, that bear reflecting upon.

At the time of our second anniversary, Arja Lane prepared a story about GTB, including the announcement of our first woman president, Line. The story was submitted to Lakehead Living, a local weekly. The article was refused. Later it ran in the daily paper, with a photograph. Lakehead Living has run GTB press releases in the past (including a story about our first anniversary). It has also run numerous letters to the editor, both from GTB, from self-identified gays, and from others writing about gay concerns. It's current manager has suggested the paper simply can't publish everything it receives from community groups. (It didn't seem to have any problem doing this in the past...).

The second incident involves CBO, CBC AM Radio in Northwestern Ontario. It ran an excerpt from a phone-interview with a member of GTB. This particular excerpt had to do with the matter of high school students, on two different occasions, asking GTB to have someone come and speak in their classes about our organization. CBO ran the excerpt with

this as a lead-in: "Local homosexual group wants access to Thunder Bay schools". Someone at the station wrote that lead-in, distorting the content of the interview.

Both incidents point out a seeming lack of concern these two media representatives have toward GTB and the local gay community, as well as insensitivity toward handling gay issues.

It also demonstrates the necessity of caution when being approached by the media or when making approaches to them.

The above incidents will be discussed by our Education Committee, with the intent to come up with a positive approach to these two

media reps. A careless word or a copy-writer's desire to create something more interesting or provocative, can result in damage to our image that takes tremendous time and energy to turn around.

If you hear or read information about GTB or gay concerns in general please make note of them and pass them along to "THUNDER GAY". We'll try to keep a monitor on what's being presented as "our image" out there.

Our stories

ROB:

THERE IS AN AURA OF SINCERITY SURROUNDING ROB GARDINER. HE IS A TWENTY-four year old man from Hamilton who studied nursing at Lakehead University this past year and is presently employed at a local hospital. Accepted at McMaster, Rob will be leaving this September but plans to return next summer.

We had become friends this spring and over coffee or beer he'd hint at the experiences of life in Africa that only a year ago were shaping and changing him. The sincerity of his concern for the African condition was continuously punctuated by his smile, his soft even voice, but mostly by the story itself - his determination to treat people as people.

This first of two parts deals mostly with the adventures and intrigue of a young man accepting a foreign culture and his homosexuality on the other side of the world. Part two focuses on the lessons, the hopes, the changes. Above all else, Rob's unique journey carries with it a sense of compassion and a yearning hopefulness the stretches from the high plains of Zambia to the livingrooms of Canada.

Africa, 1980

ON MAY 24 IN 1980 ROB GARDINER ARRIVED with five other young Canadians in Lusaka, the capital of Zambia in south central Africa. Residing at the city's college residence, the group was being oriented for their stay in that country. They were taking part in projects sponsored by Canadian Crossroads International, an organization based on the principles of young Canadians working in the Third World to raise their consciousnesses and later educate other Canadians when they return home.

Before leaving for Africa, Rob admits to much confusion over his sexuality. He had had a few gay experiences but none of them had seemed adequate. He had lived with a woman for two years - a relationship he still respects as loving, sharing and supportive.

A Metallurgical Engineering Technologist, he was first posted to Kayuni (Small Bird) in Southern Province with a water provision unit. Coincidentally he was only fifteen km. from his brother who had been managing a credit union in Monze since September of 1979. Kayuna was a state farm which had failed but had been bought by a Canadian-based organization, Family Farms Inc., to aid Zambia by leasing the land to farmers at low rates, providing buildings, loans and funds to develop the area.

During his first few months Rob was "too

involved in maintaining my psychic balance". If homosexual advances were made, and looking back now he remembers that there were, he was too busy coming to terms with the new culture to realize they were happening.

The water provision unit was composed of twelve men with shovels and picks who dug wells and lined them with concrete for the local farmers. A Britisher who managed the unit lived in a house outside the village with his wife and baby. He tried hard to discourage the new Canadian worker from living amongst the Africans. Nonetheless Rob found a two-room concrete house with a tin roof and two doors with large gaps at the bottom. The half in which he lived had a tin wall and the other half functioned as the village church.

It was highly unusual for white people to live so close to the Africans. The hospitality he received was "overwhelming... small children cried when they saw me. The women fought over who would cook my supper." They had cleaned and scrubbed his small home where he rolled his sleeping bag over a bamboo mat on the floor.

Though he was never visited by one, puff adders (a dangerous poisonous snake) were a constant threat. The large gap beneath the door allowed rats easy entry and

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Rob found holes chewed into his knapsack and some clothing. He was told to clean his mouth and hands extremely well before retiring in order not to attract them. It was cold, dark at six p.m., with only a candle to read by before going to sleep at nine.

AFRICAN MALES ARE NOT AGGRESSIVE YET THEY head the family. One neighbour had fifty natural brothers and sisters and a father with fifteen wives. The large extended families are necessary for survival in a country without a welfare system. Family members assist each other the way social agencies assist needy Canadians.

Though English is the official language, Rob found communication difficult in a country with six completely different languages and sixty-two dialects. It was especially hilarious at meal times where he ate each day with a neighbour family - Peterson Moonga, his wife and two brothers. While the two brothers went to school five km. away, Peterson worked for sixty dollars and month. Of that, fifty dollars went to food with the remaining ten used for clothing and the other necessities.

Rob's neighbours mixed Christianity with their centuries-old belief in the supernatural. Their constant adherence to these ways, where witchcraft is commonly practised and entrenched in everyone's minds, he found "fascinating". He struggled to understand their beliefs - beliefs which have been developed as their medium for survival. Peterson's wife was being treated by a witchdoctor for being barren. (The treatments were not working and Peterson would likely take another wife to guarantee children.)

Rob's house had remained empty because villagers thought it was haunted by spirits and no African would live in it. There wasn't too much fear for Rob though - spirits would not harm a white man because the colour of his skin would frighten them away.

Following a hard day's work and an evening meal of white maize, beans and ochra, Rob returned to his house. The stories had started when a man was murdered there - the sounds of the night worked their haunting ways but Rob had gotten used to them - the thundering crashes of baboons bounding over the tin roof or curious cows poking their heads in the door. It

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was very late when he heard it. Gargling sounds - a choking noise. Then the sound of boots pacing the room.

The sounds persisted each night. Rob was frightened. He took to reading his Bible, fearing the dark. A few weeks later, in the black room a pair of hands grabbed his hair and shook his bed. He was lifted up and shaken - shaking and shaking.

He left the village shortly afterwards and went to stay with his brother.

HE WAS
LIFTED UP
AND SHAKEN..

HIS FOUR MONTHS WITH THE KAYUNA villagers had taught him a great deal. He was yet to fully experience the intense hatred of the whites toward the blacks. He was yet to have clothing stolen, to be beaten, to get involved with

an extortion ring. But still, the culture being imposed upon him screamed for comprehension. His Canadian middle-class values meant nothing when surrounded by the issue of mere survival - survival in struggling ex-colonial states - survival against a brutal Republic of South Africa which is just south of the border.

HE STAYED WITH HIS BROTHER FOR A FEW WEEKS in Monze in a three-room house. There were rows and rows of these houses with their tin roofs - hundreds of them. Every two homes shared a common toilet and shower, the sanitation poor and the water unreliable. He wired home for money and planned to travel to Tanzania on the Zambian-Chinese funded train system.

Travelling fourth class in a packed coach Rob met a young African. They struck up a conversation - Rob's gayness stirred - "He was the most beautiful man I've ever met in my life... big and beautiful." They still exchange cards.

He stayed in cheap hotels where he got to meet people off the usual tourist routes. He befriended a South African refugee nicknamed, "Zero" who had been in the Soweto riots where many of his friends had been machine-gunned down.

In Dar es Salaam, men dance with men in the open as they do across most of Africa. The are affectionate with one another, hold hands, sit closely together. It is almost the opposite of our culture. Considered "cheek" to show too much affection to their wives or girlfriends in public, Africans keep that part of their lives private.

Our stories

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It was to have been his first encounter. In a bar, he met an eighteen year old Arab. The grass they smoked may have been mixed with opium. They left and were heading to the hotel. Police are on every corner of this overpopulated city where residents must carry ID cards because of the high crime rate. At one corner the two were stopped and Rob showed his passport, visas and stamps (the most important possessions a foreigner has). His beautiful Arab friend had no ID and was arrested. Rob never saw him again.

THERE WERE RUMOURS
OF GUNFIRE
AT NIGHT..

AFTER TWO WEEKS, HE TOOK THE bus to Mt. Kilimanjaro. In a dive bar he drank Chibuku, a lumpy thin porridge-like beer served in Javex bottles which had been cut in half. He met a young Masai, Peter.

"Take my picture," Peter said. Though most Masai believe pictures rob them of their souls the young man wanted chibuku. Rob took his picture, then, "now buy me a beer". This went on for some time.

Rob travelled to Serengety and arrived in Tanga where two young men offered to act as guides. They showed him around, invited him to meet their families living in a nearby mud house. Along the way, Rob's clothing was stolen. Though thieves may be beaten on the spot when they are caught, his possessions were not recovered.

Borrowing money from the CUSO office to return to Zambia, Rob visited Zan-zibar on the way. The predominantly Moslem island which used to be the capital of the slave trade is now peaceful and filled with the scent of clove trees. Originally Persian, the ruins of ancient palaces are unbelievably huge. With only a few policemen, the contrast was a relief.

AT EITHER THE HI-LIFE OR THE HOLLY-wood bars in Monze, juke box music thunders while men and women dance, lean against the walls, or prop themselves up on crates of warm beer. The atmosphere is always jovial for Zambians demand their beer. There is always an abundance of mealie meal, vegetables and beer.

It is customary after a night on the town for the host to walk you home.

One night, a friend, 'like, offered to walk Rob home. Once there, Rob invited him in. Happily bombarded by the culture, Rob was feeling more relaxed, more open. His receptive mood allowed him to finally admit to a desire he had often repressed back in Canada. If there is a time when the act becomes a celebration, it was then.

THERE WAS NO WORK FOR HIM IN ZAMBIA SO Rob decided to return to Canada.

Booking his flight in Lusaka he then decided to take a short side trip into Zimbabwe to the north. That country had endured a sixteen year old battle for independence from Britain and the dust was still settling. There were rumours of gunfire at night but Rob would find the people friendly, warm and forgiving.

He was hitchhiking. There had been a bottleneck at the border but he finally caught a lift with a driver returning Zambia in a large empty truck and trailer. They began drinking vodka and lime juice, smoking joints, stopping once to pick up beer. They were having one hell of a time. The driver picked up speed, aiming the truck at guinea fowl on the road. They were swerving and

lurching at over a hundred kilometers an hour. They managed to kill a couple too, when suddenly the driver lost control and hit the ditch. The truck bolted sideways to the other side of the road. The passengers were bounced and flung around. It slammed into a tree. Amazingly, neither of them were hurt but the vehicle itself was totalled. Rob hastily left and hitchhiked on to Harare.

HARARE, THE CAPITAL OF ZIMBABWE, (formerly Salisbury before independence) is a clean bright city, almost western, with a downtown area similar to those found in Canada. For the first time, Rob booked into a youth hostel - the whites immediately began their usual attempt to indoctrinate foreigners - telling them horror stories about the "kaffirs", creating a climate of fear and distrust, of hatred and repugnance. Contrary to these reports Rob would find the blacks friendly and sincere. He visited the museum, the art gallery, the university. He then decided to see for himself what life was like and ventured onto the streets.

Our stories

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There were also gay people out there. A cruise area in Salisbury Park existed and a second experience soon took place. He got to like Harare very quickly. He applied for a job with the local university and was hired. He returned to Monze to pick up his things and cancelled his flight back to Canada.

Finding a cheap hotel to live in, he asked for and received a half-month's advance on his wages. At the Institute of Mining Research, he was hired as a technician doing research on a secret study for the government.

"It was the hardest time of my life then. I mean, trying to live in a country where you are white and thereby part of a small minority - a privileged minority. Ninety-nine point nine per cent of the whites are obsessed with their hatred of African people. But Rob's friends were black, he lived in town with blacks and could not accept the stories the whites had told him. Though confused by the hatred, Rob now figures that the whites treat the black majority with such contempt in order to rationalize their prosperity. For a hundred dollars a month whites hire servants; they all have gardeners, cooks, nannies. The highest standard of living of any single group in the world.

THE CRUISE AREA IS CALLED THE "Square". Frequenting mostly be Europeans who hire young blacks for sex, the area is dangerous. Rob was roughed up once when he failed to realize that the man he was with was only doing it for money. His room was ransacked after.

He had met a charming African - another Mike. They were looking for a place to drink but the hotel they were at housed a full black bar. There was room in the other bar - the white bar - so they went there. Immediately they were hassled by white men. The sight of a "kaffir" in their exclusive domain was too much for them to handle. A fight ensued. Rob was hit, he ran to the lobby to get the manager to call the police. The manager refused. Rob ran out to a telephone booth. The police finally summoned, he returned to the posh bar where tables had been overturned and curtains ripped down. The manager had hustled the white

assailants out the back way. The remaining witnesses told the police later that the black had caused the row - he got what he deserved.

Later that night they returned to the hostel with torn shirts and black eyes.

TOO MANY HUSTLERS CAME TO KNOW WHERE HE WAS STAYING. His room was becoming a perilous place. Thugs stopped him on the street. His first cheque from work was stolen along with his money, his passport and cigarettes. He desperately wanted to get out of there when he met a thirty-five year old Britisher who offered him the extra room in his house.

Mike was white, seemed friendly enough. At least he didn't seem biased. As Rob was to discover, the gay hairdresser entertained a bizarre fantasy: thoroughly enjoying sexual dominance by big black men, absolute submission - but hating these same blacks with a vengeance.

While living in the house Rob received word that his brother's best friend Chris was in town. They arranged to go out after work. Prowling the bars, talking of old times, telling stories, raising hell - they were attacked, rolled on the city streets. They lost everything but made it back to the house.

Met by Mike, the Britisher went beserk. There was no way he'd allow Chris - a black - into his home to sleep. He offered him the "servant's quarters" - a shack in the back yard. Rob rebuked the Britisher by insisting he'd stay with Chris there though enraging Mike who kicked them out of the house. He packed Rob's things into his car and drove the two downtown. Robbed, penniless, they sneaked into the hostel for the night.

Chris went home the next day. At work there was no way he could get sympathy or help from his co-workers who greatly disliked Rob's associating with Africans. He asked for another advance but was refused. A visit to the Canadian Embassy on the top two stories of a luxury hotel netted him \$75 (Zimbabwean). They stamped his passport so he couldn't leave the country and then billed his mother in Hamilton! He found them "rude and obnoxious" at the embassy. A month

ONE NIGHT MIKE DISAPPEARED



Our stories

later he returned the money.

AGAIN FORCED TO WIRE HOME FOR MONEY, HE found a comfortable furnished apartment downtown. The white person who had moved out had neglected to tell her housekeeper that she was leaving. The aging housekeeper had been ill and returned to the apartment one day to find Rob, a white stranger living there. Though he could hardly afford it, he kept the woman on.

He and Mike had become close during this time and the attractive black model moved in with him. For a short while, life was blissful. Mike sold a favoured possession - his stove - to buy things for the apartment. Though they got along well, Mike's association with the rough hustlers at the Square eventually soured the relationship.

THE YOUNG BLACK, PASCAL, WAS VERY GOOD looking, appeared to be eighteen or nineteen. In the apartment, he came on to Rob and they enjoyed themselves.

One night Mike disappeared. For a couple of days there had been no calls and Rob was worried for his friend. A knock was heard at the door. He answered it to find the young man he had been seduced by standing there. Pascal told Rob he was sixteen, wanted money or he'd call the police. Rob slammed the door on him. Shortly afterward there was another pounding on the door.

A black policeman, Lovemore, entered the apartment with Pascal. "I understand you had sexual intercourse with this man," he said. Asking Rob for ID and the name of his employer, Lovemore suggested Rob talk with the boy and settle the matter or he'd take him to the police station.

The boy demanded fifty dollars. Rob refused. Lovemore dangled a pair of handcuffs before Rob and threatened him with jail. He relented and produced ten dollars telling Pascal to return on Monday. Lovemore vowed to return if the matter wasn't settled then.

It was a Friday night between Christmas and New Year's. Rob was frightened, wanted to see a lawyer but all the offices were closed for the holidays. The weekend would be a hell on earth for him. He locked the door, chained

it, pulled the curtains shut and turned off the lights.

Peeking through the drawn drapes, he saw policemen on the street below. Some came to his door, banging on it, yelling, "come out, we know you're in there!" The street swarmed with security detectives, uniforms, thugs and toughs. One attempted jimmying the window. The phone rang continuously. At night

Rob locked himself into the bedroom, terrorized in the dark. In the morning he let the cleaning lady in. Caught in the middle of the trap, Rob feared for her safety but she sneaked in and out and helped where she could.

The panic of those days almost broke him down. At five in the morning on January 2 he stole from the prison of his apartment. In the dark, he hopped over a fence and ran down an alley to a park where he hid until a lawyer's office opened.

The lawyer, though efficient, was not sympathetic. He told his shaken client that if he hung around with kaffirs he could expect this sort of thing. Advising Rob not to hide, he suggested that Rob call the police if

Pascal returned. The age of consent is sixteen in that country but gay sex is still illegal. The worst that could happen would be deportation but were Rob to plead innocent - his word against a black's - he would probably beat the charge.

The anxiety lifted, Rob returned to his apartment vowing to lead a normal life again. The boy did return and when Rob threatened to call police he disappeared.

Mike was still missing though and for the next couple of months, Rob avoided the square. He made several other friends, discovered a safe gay bar and began frequenting it. Life began piecing itself together as Rob began enjoying the people and city life.

EARLY IN MARCH, HE WAS SITTING IN his apartment with a friend when there was a knock on the door. A CID cop stood there. Confirming it was Rob Gardiner she was talking to, she told him to contact another police woman.

THE BRITISHER WENT BESERK



Our stories

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Our stories

The woman worked in homicide. It was beginning to happen again.

From work the next day, Rob nervously contacted the detective. On the phone, the intimidating voice at the other end icily said, "We know everything and all about you... we want you to come down and talk to us." She offered to send uniforms to pick him up but he insisted he'd find his own way down. He took the afternoon off and went to see her.

"YOU AND MIKE ARE LOVERS AREN'T YOU?"
"No, just friends."

Mike had been arrested she explained. Pascal too had been jailed.

A similar series of events had occurred - this time with a married business man. He had had sex with Mike and Pascal who later returned and demanded money. It backfired and the man had called the police. Lovemore had been in on it. The extortion ring had attempted the same with other Europeans and police wanted a statement about what had happened to Rob.

At first he was hesitant. He gave her a statement but wouldn't sign it until he saw his lawyer. It was doubtful the police would use the statement against him but they would not assure him they wouldn't. He signed.

Later, Rob read about the ring in the local papers. Lovemore received a seven month prison sentence. Mike and Pascal got two years on a prison farm.

A short while ago, Rob received a letter from Mike begging his forgiveness.

AS HE ENCOUNTERED MORE AFRICANS, MADE MORE friends, he came to feel at home there. Next issue, Rob explains why Africa is the place where he wants to spend his life.



13

BRIAN

COMING OUT: A PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

The earliest sexual experiences I can remember were with my male friend between the ages of five and eight. While other boys may have played doctor with girls, we explored each other. As I think back about the mutual masturbation and oral-genital contact I wonder how we knew what to do. However we started, it was extremely pleasurable and lasted for several years. In adolescence there were both heterosexual and homosexual fantasies. Two sexual experiences with a male friend were disastrous and unsatisfying. We remained close friends for another year but we never discussed the experience.

Adulthood was a time of homophobia and repression in terms of my gay sexual identity. I believed no one would love me if they knew. My sexual experiences with women were passionate and pleasurable.

I had a lot of time alone with my thoughts when I moved into the city this past April. I had been living in the rural area but I had not met many people in the city. For many years I had been conscious of the fear of doing something about my attraction to other men. Now I became aware of another fear equally as strong but opposite to the fear of being homosexual. I was worried that I would never have a gay sexual encounter, that I would never "know", and that I would always be oppressed by fear. Since "fear is the mind killer" (Dune), I knew that I would have to do something.

I had heard about Gays of Thunder Bay and the gayline when a member of GTB spoke to a sociology class at L.U. the previous summer. The first time I called the gayline I tried to sound cool and experienced. "Where do men meet other men in Thunder Bay?" Someone explained about the monthly socials, the GTB office and a nearby bar. They invited me to meet them for a drink.

I wavered between going and staying safely at home but finally I left. At the bar I asked the waitress to point out the people from "GTB". "What?" I gulped, "Gays of Thunder Bay". "Oh. They were here but they've left."

My girlfriend went east on holidays about three weeks later and I called again. Again I tried to sound cool and experienced. This time when I was invited to the GTB office to meet some people I didn't piss around. After a quick strong drink I took off. As I entered the GTB office my heart was pounding. I was conscious of several different fears: the fear of being seen, the fear of not being loved if I was gay and the fear of rejection. But I also felt exhilarated. I decided that I would do this experience with as much honesty and as consciously as I could.

When a person has a part of himself that he cannot be honest about, that dishonesty affects other areas of his/her life, inhibiting consciousness and growth. The first time I went to bed with a man I felt a tremendous amount of energy in my head. Fear blocks the flow of energy. Breaking through my fear allowed the energy to flow.

My mother took the news calmly and collectedly. She was worried that my father would blame himself. He has since told me that he thinks I did not make a wise decision. The fact that an older sister had a lesbian relationship during the winter certainly made it easier for me to talk to my parents. The more conscious friends who "knew" breathed a sigh of relief. They realized that I was being oppressed by the fear of homosexuality. One friend told me how brave I was. She is conscious of the ways that she was attracted to other women but she knew she would never be able to do anything about it. I have observed that it is easier for me to talk about my gayness to women than straight men and easier to talk one to one than with a group of people.

Another thing I have been conscious of is the various levels I continue to be attracted to women. An important part of this is my desire to have children. My gay sexual contacts have been very limited, but so far I prefer heterosexual sex to homosexual sex. There is something very satisfying about genital to genital sex; the giving and receiving of orgasmic pleasure with the genitalia. I enjoy the sensation of the penis inside a vagina while simultaneously enjoying the partner's pleasure and satisfaction. However, when cruising I look at men.

People have said to me: "When you choose..." Choosing is unnecessary and on some levels impossible. I can choose my behavior, what I will allow to manifest. But I cannot choose what I find attractive or sexually stimulating.

I have looked at my coming out as a spiritual process. I see three major effects that coming out has had on my life. I am able to experience greater levels of spiritual energy. This is because energy is released from the blocks that fear created. My spiritual teacher tells me that I have a stronger yang or masculine energy since my coming out experience. Most important is the increased sense of honesty that I now have in my life.

We all have stories...
Tell people yours
in "Our stories"
Next: Ernie in Japan
& others!

Our stories

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Community and sexuality

The gay community is still relatively young, especially here in Thunder Bay. We spend much of our time trying to create the conditions to allow us to be "gay", but what do we want out of this? The range of sexual possibilities goes from celibacy, to monogamous couples, to open relationships, to casual sexual friendships, to promiscuous sexual affairs and so on. There are many differences amongst gay people and if we are to have a liberated community, it must surely make room for all the varieties of sexual behaviour enjoyed by the people involved.

It is disturbing to me when there is an attempt by anyone to regulate our sexual behaviour by telling us that one kind of behaviour is better than another or that one is correct and the other is incorrect.

Many people try to present gay "marriage" as the ideal and put down casual sex. Others will promote casual sex and denounce monogamous couplings. For example, in the Body Politic #85 (July-August '82) Ken

Popert maligns a segment of the gay community by denouncing gay "marriages". He says, "promiscuity knits together the social fibre of the gay male community; the imposition of widespread marriage-like couplings inevitably goes hand-in-hand with the abolition of that community."

This kind of divisive attack is not the way to promote a new age for gay people. If we have been and are working to end the oppression of gays by straight society, let us also work to end the oppression of gay people by other gay people. We must recognize the great variations and differences among us and allow these to develop as they will. If we, as a community cannot, or will not, accommodate all of our members, then we will not really deserve to call ourselves a community.

This question of relationships and sexual behaviour within the gay community needs discussion and response from others in the community. What do you think?

David Belrose



The Body Politic Collective / Les membres du collectif du TBP

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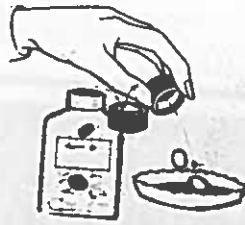
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WHERE TO GET HELP



Thunder Bay (Special)
The Thunder Bay District Health Unit operates free venereal disease clinics for anyone in need of help or advice.

The clinics offer both diagnosis and treatment. The service is completely free. No OHIP card or number is required.

There are two clinics available, one each in the North and South Wards. In the North Ward the clinic is in St. Joseph's General Hospital, 3rd Floor, 35 N. Algoma Street. Their hours are Monday and Thurs-

day, from 4:30-6:00 p.m. In the South Ward the clinic is in the Dodick Building, 1119 Victoria Ave. East, Lower level, on Tuesdays only, from 1:30-3:00 p.m.

The clinics are closed on legal holidays.

For information at other times call 622-3961 (Thunder Bay District Health Unit) and request information about the free venereal disease clinics.

Keeping yourself healthy contributes to a healthy and happier gay community.

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 & 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)

I left the lodge a little deflated by the lack of organization and searched and found an unoccupied cabin amongst the thirty-odd reserved for us. Inside, I strung up two clotheslines and hung my clothes and bedding, sogging wet, to dry in the thermal environment, thanks to a spring water fed radiator. I made my way to a metal roofed wood shed and joined a snake line of some 25 men moving rough hewn pine boards from one end of the shed to the other.

It was part of our bargain with the commune proprietors that each gathering participant would contribute two work hours a day to ease our expenses. Our human conveyor belt revelled in the effort, singing songs, bonding our gay camaraderie. Others contributed by clearing the land, digging ditches and washing dishes. The meals were prepared by members of the land-owning commune. Following the quiche salad lunch I entered a small pine hut straddling a hot spring, my sore body yielding to the sauna; others coming and going, the cool wet outside relieving our steamed nakedness. A light evening vegetarian meal, some bridge before the blazing fireplace, others lounging, talking, making music. The electrical generated lights flashed off at 11:30. A lanterned party guided me to my cabin and deep sleep.

I did make the curious Sunday morning vegetable-tofu soup and herbal tea breakfast. A group headed off into the drizzle for a hike while I chose to join a hastily called mini faerie circle to air bitches. I spoke my frustration at the gathering not having accomplished very much,

J. expressing his pain and rage as a gay person and not finding any healing at the gathering. Others spoke their frustrations. The circle exposed a polarization between those who wanted more leadership and structure (me amongst them) and the other let-it-happen-wait-and-see camp. The circle offered no resolution but served to relieve the tension.

From the circle, five of us withdrew to an isolated hill cabin for a "healing workshop". No leader emerged from amongst us - so each individually expressed his feelings creating a cacophony of screaming, pillow throwing, stomping, cursing. One initiated a touching improv, J. condemning it as slothful, we drawing him in, laying him down on cushions, assaulting his arrogance, pleading his love and tolerance, J. rising, grateful, the five of us entwining, singing, dispersing for lunch. Other workshops that occurred that morning included one on faerie magic, string weaving, and rural gay consciousness.

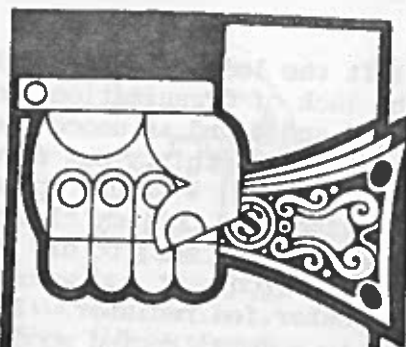


Moonlight Melodrama, a local summer theatre company, presented "Return Of The Maniac" as the first play of their current season. Having had some advance indication of the content of the play, a number of GTB members attended the opening night performance. Following this, the play was brought up at a general membership meeting where approval was given to send a letter of protest to the company's "artistic director" and their Board of Directors.

The play, such as it is, contains outdated and spurious psychology; among other things it confuses transvestism with homosexuality. Proceeding from this confusion it implies homosexuality is the root cause of murdering and the attempted murdering of women characters in the story. Further, it uses the implied homosexuality of the transvestite character (the 'maniac' of the title) as the butt of cheap, degrading and tasteless humour, while reinforcing old stereotypes.

Moonlight Melodrama promotes itself vigorously as "family theatre".

At our copy deadline, no reply to our letter of condemnation had been received. We have learned, however, that "Return Of The Maniac" has been dropped from the company's summer schedule. Our sources indicate this had nothing to do with our protest but rather is due to an internal casting problem.



GTB BUILDING FUND
GAYS OF THUNDER BAY
BOX 2155
THUNDER BAY, ONT.
P7B 5E8

BOOKS

THE JOY OF LESBIAN LITERATURE:

In our featured book section in the previous issue, we readily acknowledge that the titles on our suggested "BASIC LIBRARY" and "Summer Favorites" lists were heavily weighted toward gay male content. We would be happy to print an other list weighted toward lesbian content. We need someone well read to organize and write such a list. Any takers...?

forum

Letter to the Editor:

I take issue with Michael Sobota's "Flaunting It" column of last issue. For a starter, Michael is guilty of the very sin that he attempts to expurgate: ie., being negative. He characterizes GTB meetings as one where "seldom is there an acknowledgement in a positive way of those members who are there" and again, where "seldom is there a suggestion to rally our energies and get on with whatever needs to be done".

Instead Michael sees a form of infighting where the "background chatter" is a "nagging and growing disruption." Boy, talk about being negative. Not only does such a characterization misrepresent the true nature of those meetings but it disparages the efforts of those members who choose to attend.

It has been my experience that the GTB meetings are efficiently run and very business-like as they should be. A great deal of work is invariably accomplished in a positive supportive environment. Individual efforts are commonly applauded and gratitude expressed. I find the gay community here not celebratory enough, but the GTB meeting is one occasion when I experience a renewed sense of gay pride and working community.

So why should I want to get that off my chest, malign the contribution of a tireless crusader and run the risk of having hurled at me the stigma of being "negative"? It is to point out the problem of Michael's attempt to scourge our community of what he labels "negative shit". I assume here that Michael is attacking

peoples' attitudes as opposed to impolite or ignorant behaviour.

I readily admit that my finding Michael's comments negative is my subjective evaluation. As well, I have no doubt that it was not his intent to be negative - he may very well defend his position as his sincere perception of GTB reality. But therein lies the problem. Pie to one may be piss to another. Unless one is advocating an objective standard of negativity - but I submit that that position is intolerable as it begs the unanswerable -who is the arbitrator and by what right? The danger of such a position is that it righteously defends the party-liners and alienates the rest. Our community cannot tolerate such a polarization nor should it. We are a community of immense diversity - and it is only through constant examination of ourselves as gay people, in all our variety, that we will ever be able to understand and to alienate ourselves.

We all have our "negative shit" to work through. Michael would have us believe that it can be dispelled by banishment. But that simplistic solution ignores both the historical context of our negativity and the reality that its cure requires patience and endurance. Instead of attempting to suffocate these anguished cries, we as a community should draw them out, engage them, and heal them as best we can - without perjorative labels.

Ric Taylor

At four p.m. the 'Hi Valentine's Tea' took place before the main lodge fire. Charlie Murphy, Seattle faerie folk singer provided the music - some of us dressed in faerie makeup and any other inspiration. The dancing and celebration lasted into the night. At its conclusion I joined a group who stripped and hand-in-hand guided each other out of the lodge down the dark wet steps - to the sauna hut - revelling in its pleasures.



The Monday morning closing faerie circle was safe, and warm and close, no one wanting the break the safe strong bond. We thanked the spirits that had guided and protected us. The rain still falling, I left as I had arrived, yet I was not the same person. I had been wrong - I had only to open my faerie eyes to see that so much had been accomplished, right from the very moment the gathering had started. There is no possible pre-structure for such an event. It is the sum of the participants energies. Each gathering would unfold differently yet would unfold differently yet would invariably raise the faerie consciousness.

The North West Gathering had touched my being - my pagan fearless joy of celebration of love - our love - but faerie souls touching. Oh, I had experienced orgasmic love with a few brothers there. Perhaps those couplings went deeper than others, but they too were sharing within the context of the gathering - celebrating it, elevating it. I left with a faerie vision - eg: living in a faerie commune - celebrating our communal love - creating an energy centre emitting streams of love energy, connecting with other worldly love energy centres - forming a grid over the whole planet - encompassing all humans - in love and celebration.

Worth Noting:

"THUNDER GAY" Goes Public!

At a recent meeting of workers involved with producing "THUNDER GAY", a decision was made to encourage public subscriptions.

Our magazine has been available only at GIB meetings (in our office) or by mail through a paid GIB membership, or through a closed circulation mailing list sent mostly to other journals on an exchange basis. We'd like to build our readership while helping defray the costs of printing, handling and mailing each issue. This also allows people who don't want to become members of GIB to still receive information about the gay community in Thunder Bay.

A year's subscription to "THUNDER GAY" is \$5.00 for six issues. This price is for first-class postage, and comes to your door in a discreet, plain brown envelope.

Read the news, views, upcoming social activities and entertainment from within the gay community of Thunder Bay and northwestern Ontario. We urge you to subscribe.

AN OFFER HARD TO REFUSE.....

GIB memberships are only \$5.00 in August!

Membership gives you discount admittance to all our dances, copies of our magazine mailed to you in a plain envelope (if you wish), legitimate voting rights at all meetings, and the pride of supporting and building a broader gay community in Thunder Bay. Sign up now!

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

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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

**Subscription
information
inside!*