

Grand River Rainbow Historical Project

www.grandriver-rainbowhistory.ca/

celebrating the lives and times of rainbow folk in Grand River country

Guelph Gay Equality Newsletter → Guelph Gay & Lesbian Equality Newsletter → Guelph Gay, Lesbian & Bisexual Equality Newsletter

Publishing History: Issued by **Guelph Gay Equality (GGE)** from 1977, May - 1990, August. Issued by **Guelph Gay & Lesbian Equality (GGLE)** from 1990, September - 1993, April. Issued by **Guelph Gay, Lesbian & Bisexual Equality (GGLBE)** from 1993, May - 1995, September.

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Guelph ay quality

JULY EDITION

OLD NEWS IS IMPORTANT NEWS!

This issue deals primarily with the action taken by the G.G.E. and others regarding the ominous clampdown at Silvercreek Park. In addition, we are getting ambitious - i.e. we are attempting to expand this newsletter. We are, after all, a student publication representing YOU. We know you are out there, we know you think and are almost certain you write. Our wrists can't be THAT LIMP that you can't pick up a pen! So get down to it - in any form (Literary, that is).



NEWS

The G.G.E. Meeting

Tuesday, June 18th saw the passing of an unanimous decision to uphold Judge Wood's ban on the publication of the names of sixteen men (aged 18-54) arrested for gross indecency and buggery during the police video surveillance of the Silvercreek Park washrooms on June 14. The members of GGE and other groups decided that the consequences and "punishment" of public disclosure is far greater than the relatively minor "crimes" committed. Over the course of the meeting it was decided that a support committee be established to financially assist any of the individuals who decide to fight the charges. Witness the birth of the Silvercreek Society. The information base of this committee will be the GGE's regular office and further details may be obtained through the GAYLINE.

Up The Ladder

At the CSA meeting of June 19th, VP External, Liz Kwan introduced a motion to support the ban on the publication of names of individuals charged on June 14th and to express "strong concern, disapproval and displeasure at the Mercury's actions to attempt to lift the prohibition." Her rationale behind the motion was based first on the fact that some of the individuals charged are University of Guelph students and second, on the general ethical principle that this type of media coverage of the incident is the exploitation and sensationalization of an unfortunate occurrence, rife with social implications, - the consequences of which, if publicized, would certainly lead to devastating repercussions for the individuals involved.

As the speaker's list opened, several responsible points-of-view emerged. President Jaye Robinson gave her support to the motion with the condition that the CSA makes it clear that they, in no way, condone the illegal activities themselves.

Jan Sheltinga, Editor of The Ontarion, following the lead of other newspapers such as the St. Catherines Standard gave her support to the motion saying that she could see no "journalistic gain" through the name publication, that there had been enough hardship already and that in this case, it was the responsibility of the CSA to protect the students it represents. After more miscellaneous, technical discussion, Kwan requested the vote, with the motion being carried 8-1-1 with CSA Executives Mike Wallace voting against it and Roberta Mason abstaining. The concrete result of this motion entailed a letter to Gary Manning, Managing Editor of The Mercury, urging him to desist in further appeal attempts.

The CSA's decision to support the ban on name publication represents both a responsible attitude and a willingness to take a stand on a very sensitive issue. The GGE wishes to thank the CSA for their support and in particular, Liz Kwan for drafting a comprehensive and articulate motion. The maxim was to minimize human suffering and hurt and most of saw this.

EDITORIAL

Fun at Court

June 20th marked yet another baptism of fire for the individuals charged in the Silvercreek Park incident - a series of preliminary hearings scheduled to begin at 9:30 am. Members of the GGE, students, friends and others arranged to fill the courtroom with the twofold purpose of providing moral support and with actual physical presence, protest against the tactics and position taken by The Mercury on this issue.

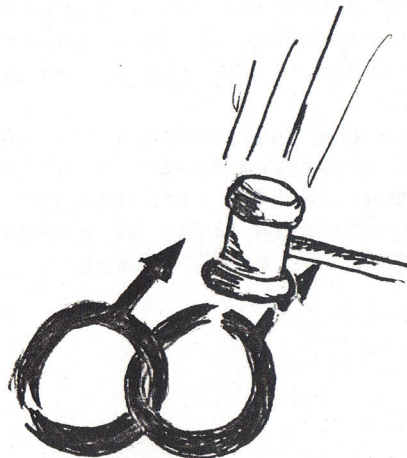
Walking to the courthouse I was unable to block out a number of sickening images and scenarios in my mind. Sixteen men, 18-54 - from student to businessman alike called to stand in front of a Magistrate on charges that society does not easily forgive.

I wonder how many of these men had lain awake staring at a glowing clock radio flip from twelve to seven, electrified by the type of terror that urges the mind to run over every possible sequence of events and outcomes - from exoneration to crucifixion. Missed classes, a "sick call" to work. "No dear, I don't think I'll eat breakfast" and please god don't phone me at the office to ask when I'll be home or if I can pick up our child from wherever because I won't be in. I wondered how many people would see past the neon term "bathroom sex" and into the tragedy of a park "closet", the logical result of social repression and the stigma of homosexuality.

Long before 9:30, the press had arrived to hover and sniff over the list of names and corresponding charges posted outside the courtroom. I could feel my anger turn acid watching them, so eager for a front row seat, sweaty with excitement over an anticipated lurid little byline.

All but one of the individuals chose to opt for a later court date to enter a plea. The one man pleaded guilty and the Crown began to "proceed summarily". He stood with his back to the courtroom audience and listened to his charge read out in unnecessary, humiliating detail. He was sentenced to twenty days or a three hundred dollar fine along with the stipulation to notify any change of address, and yes, I'm being serious - to refrain from using any public washroom in the City of Guelph for a period of one year (I presume the Magistrate expects him to commute to his washroom at home once or twice a day). Joking aside, that last conditional is both impractical and degrading, clearly designed to hang the committance of the act over his head for a sadistically long, protracted period of time.

As he turned and walked out, you couldn't help but notice the strain on his face juxtaposed against the reporters' brisk, efficient note-taking and animated dialogue.



Now that's entertainment - A CONVICTION - this is REAL news boys!

Because nothing seems bizzare when everything is bizzare, it was only much later that I was struck by the irony of Thursday's "justice". Previous to the first Silvercreek Park conviction, I watched a case in which a man has assaulted his common-in-law wife effectively enough to lacerate her face in several places. For this crime, he received neither fine, jail term, nor conviction; after all, there were mitigating circumstances in his case. The same degree of judicial leniency, discretion, charity - whatever, was clearly not applicable to a man who had the misfortune to be video taped engaging in bathroom sex, to a man who participated in an offense where no one was hurt, where no one bled. Here we have two social diseases crystallized beautifully in the form of courtroom justice - the trivialization of wife beating and the intolerance of a victimless homosexual indiscretion. It should however, be remembered that video surveillance exists only because it is sanctioned by the higher levels of government. Their laws, Our lives - I think I understand now.

C.J. Moriarty

The Issue Goes to Town

Members of the GGE and U of G students hit the streets to raise a little consciousness on the 21st and 22nd of June. The idea was to protest against the Guelph Police Force's video surveillance of the Silvercreek Park washrooms which led to the barrage of arrests. With the help of information handouts, banners and signs Guelph citizens were confronted with the issue of civil rights and the harassment of Gays. The group of demonstrators attracted a great deal of media coverage and managed to reach a large number of people. Reactions were - well, mixed. The stance taken by the demonstrators was not a legitimization of public washroom sex, but a stand against the methods employed by the police. As it has been pointed out, posted signs and uniformed security guards are cheaper, more humane ways of dismantling "tea rooms". Further, we asked people to look at the social intolerance and stigma attached to homosexuality in hopes of their understanding how this can happen and why these "tea rooms" exist.

The demonstrations of Friday and Saturday were successful in and of themselves simply because they heightened public awareness and gave moral support. It was a show of solidarity. There comes a time when hiding and acquiescing to social strait jacketing and homophobia in the form of video surveillance and media exploitation can be no longer accepted as an integral part of living your life as gay. We responded. You show your spirit by showing your face.

INFORMATION

Lottery tickets are available at the next navy club dance or from the G.G.E. executive and support the IGA conference at the same time.

Tickets are \$1.00 each or a book of eleven for \$10.00. Draw is held at 4:00p.m., July 5, 1985 at the Medical Science Building, U of T.

The IGA conference is being held in Toronto, June 30th to July 7, 1985.

Write to IGA Conference Committee, 105 Carlton St. 4th floor, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5B 1M2 or phone (416) 927-7921.

Do you think you have V.D.?

Guelph has a free V.D. clinic. The clinic offers almost total anonymity, e.g. your name is registered with a number and the number is used for all dealings with the clinic. The clinic is open Monday - Thursday from 5pm - 7pm. The clinic is located at 73 Delhi Street. Phone: 8212370.

CLASSIFIEDS

Responsible, mature male student (33) seeks living accomodations for the 1985-86 university year beginning in September.

JAMES HAAF, 230 Grassie Blvd., Winnipeg MB R2G 2L6

I as Woman

I walk a fine line, I walk on thin ice
between a wet T-shirt and a bondage device
the things people do to sugar and spice

I am brutalized and tenderized
a heart - red piece of meat
hung up and (de) graded carefully
Almost good enough to eat

You devour me, the commodity
I'd reach out for the straps that bind her hands
But I musn't disrupt supply and demand
There's a love shortage and we starve

There's no injustice troubling you
the girls are paid for what they do
Funny how they turn out - a little black and blue
Open their minds as wide as their legs

It's respectable, historical, our backs flat to the ground
And I must take it like a lady?
Discreet and lying down
There's a deep wound and I burn.

C.J. Moriarty

Woman on the Corner

Fire of two
with your blood, it's my love
that follows you around the room

Wet against this chest
Your touch inside me
I used to never meet your eyes
But that's all fallen away

Thoughts not worded come screaming clear -
Ours is a liquid understanding, and
this rhythmic command of your language is
moving me, making me proud
And I know as sure as we will laugh out loud
You turn aside the black in my nights

C.J. Moriarty

LIVE DANGEROUSLY

Tue. July 02: Video Movie Night

_T.B.A.; infinitely preferable to what the Odeon has to offer (e.g. First Blood 2).

Tue. July 09: Survival Game Part 1.

-an organizational skills exercise. How to cope with day to day problems and/or crisis indigenous to a gay life style. This is not as serious as it sounds! We use a fun approach to disaster.

Sat. July 13: Navy Club Dance

-18 Commercial St. 9 pm. The right to bitch about the music is earned by bringing some! (tapes or records).

Tue. July 16: Survival Game Analysis Part 2.

-a follow-up to July 09 entailing ways of improving methods and techniques of system/network utilization.

Tue. July 23: Member's Own

-one of our members will be speaking on the topic of relationships. All are welcome.

Fri. July 26: School House Dance

-611 Silvercreek Parkway 9 pm. Rides available at 8:30 pm. at the G.G.E. regular office. Whether you return with us is, however, entirely up to you!

Tue. July 30: Coffee House

-an informal get together. Since we supply the refreshments, YOU can supply the entertainment.