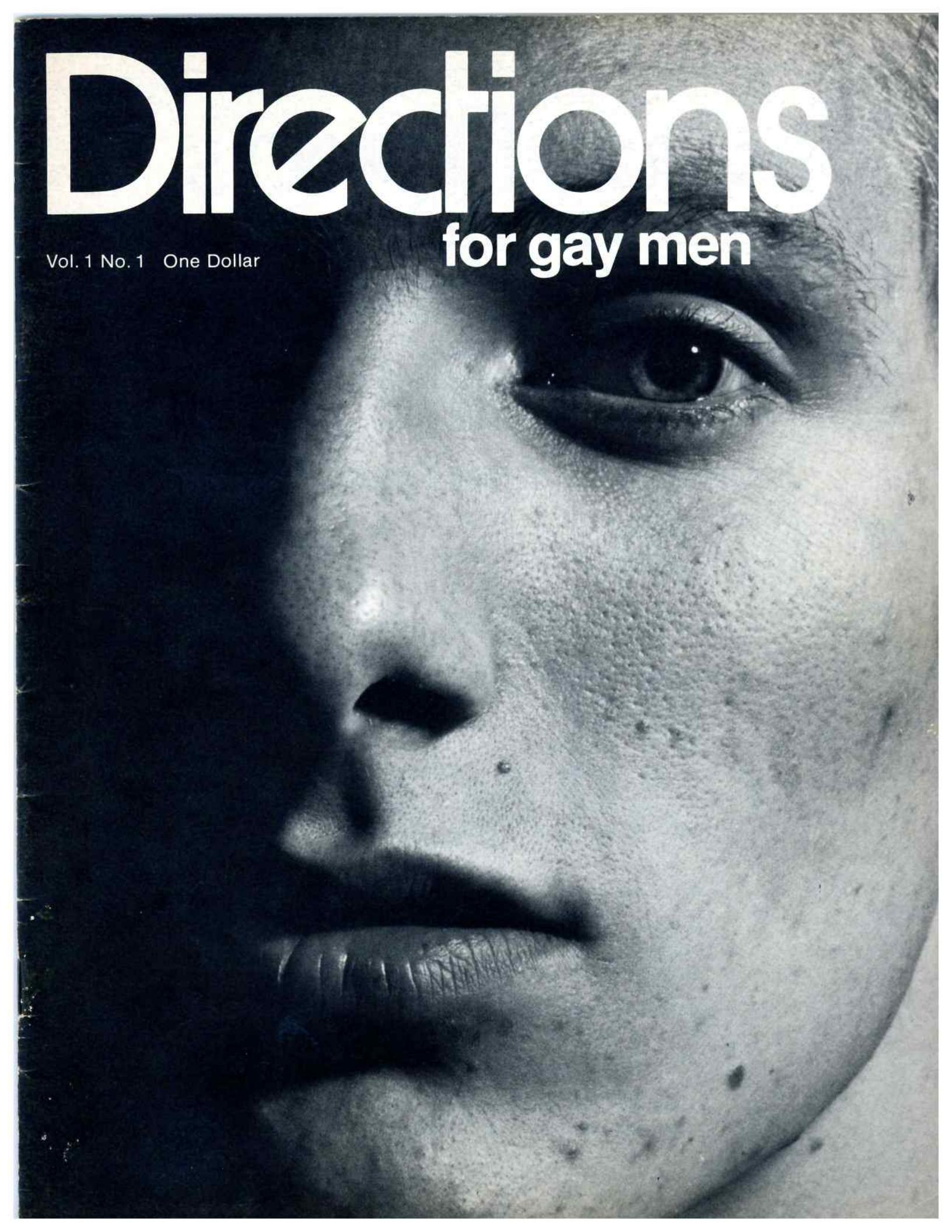


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Vol. 1 No. 1 One Dollar





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Directions

Vol. 1 No. 1, 1977

Publisher

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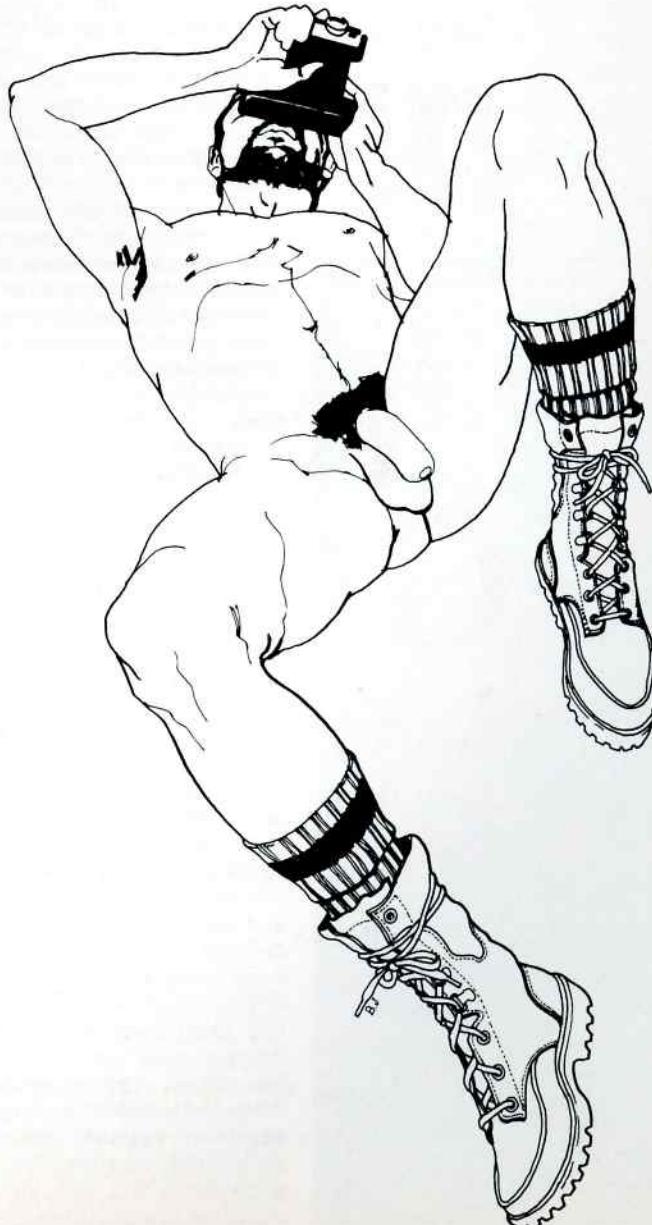
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Letter from the Publisher:

Directions commences publication with the goal of speaking to gay men about their own lifestyle; what's happening in Toronto, throughout Canada, the U.S. and the world at large.

We acknowledge the differences between gay and non-gay as acceptable alternatives for present day emerging attitudes of acceptance and enlightenment, without polemics or political stances. Our language is down-to-earth, frank and gutsy, with emphasis on what to do and where to go, where and what the fun is all about.

Being unabashedly gay is our personal choice and we have extended that choice to *Directions*; it has been created exclusively for the gay male. We hope that our own sense of pleasure in this venture will be shared by our readers and that you, too, will participate in celebrating the unfettered (or fettered, if you will) fun of a great way of living.



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Medifacts: Choosing Your Doctor

by Louis Parrish, M.D.

(GCO)—In an effort to protect and promote his health and well-being, the gay individual must confront and consider his own self-image, and society's view of him as he perceives it. In view of the traditionally conservative atmosphere of the medical community, finding proper health care can be problematic, particularly so if one must seek a physician in the midst of a medical crisis.

One obvious answer is to find a good doctor *before* you need him. One obvious question is what sort of doctor should you look for?

Actually, the doctor you choose needs only two primary qualifications: a basic knowledge of general medicine and a personality to which you can relate. Gay people catch colds, get ulcers, break arms and have the same complaints, to a large extent, as heterosexuals. Your physician will need no special knowledge or skill to treat these problems.

There are certain medical problems among gay people, however, that your doctor must be aware of. These are usually related to sexual activity and are not at all different in type (although likely greater in incidence) from those of heterosexuals. A physician need rely only on common sense and sense to treat you adequately. Furthermore, once he is aware of your homosexuality, he will likely try to learn more about special problems you may have.

To do so, he'll need to look no further than his medical journals. The medical community has at last realized the sex *in general* is out of the closet. Current literature on sex-related medical problems usually includes an appraisal of the specific problems of homosexuals, and many articles and studies concentrate entirely on this aspect. You may well be the impetus that causes your doctor to further his education in the increasingly important field of sex-linked diseases.

In addition to the new facts about the old venereal diseases (gonorrhea and syphilis), the role of sex is being defined in the genesis and spread of such diseases as hepatitis, parasitic infections of the gastro-intestinal tract (viz. amebiasis) and herpes. Although many people find them embarrassing, sex-related medical problems are no longer shameful secrets, but rather areas of national concern—and in certain diseases, problems of epidemic proportion. You, too, should learn as much as you can about them.

Many gay people fear a confrontation with the physician: a moment of truth and confession. For this reason, many would prefer that their doctor be homosexual. Not too many years ago, this preference was well-justified. Today, your doctor's sexual orientation is not that important, though there are, of course, times when your needs are best met by a physician who shares your own personal experience. A doctor, homosexual or heterosexual, who has gays in his practice can give you the benefit of that irreplaceable factor.

How can you find the right doctor? Certainly there are still some heterosexual (*and* homosexual) professionals who may be unwilling or unable to work with gay patients. An initial conference (again, see your doctor before you have acute need of his services) will usually tell you if your personality and your physician's are compatible. Keep in mind that a common sexual orientation is no guarantee that you and a particular physician are suited to one another. A good working relationship between doctor and patient is based on trust and confidence, and the common ground for these qualities lies far outside the area of mutual bedroom interests.

If you live in an urban area, gay service organizations can provide referrals. The best reference, however, may come from a friend with whom you share a common taste in friends and people. There are no guarantees, but it is more likely that you may get along with such a friend's doctor. If you live in a "one doctor town," or if your employer offers a staff physician with whom you would feel uncomfortable discussing your homosexuality, the time and effort it takes to seek outside medical help may be very worthwhile in terms of peace of mind.

Remember, your objective is to get the best medical care—and the more comfortable you are with your physician, the more likely you will be to promote and protect your well-being.

Dr. Louis Parrish is a psychiatrist and general practitioner, practicing primary medicine in New York City. He is the author of *No Pause At All: Living Through the Middle Years* (Readers Digest Press, 1976) and *Cooking as Therapy* (1975, now an Avon Paperback).

Language problems are the offered reason for Monty Python's Flying Circus being renamed *The Gay Boy's Dragon Show* on Japanese television.

Business: Toronto Directions

by Peter Bochové

For many years, Toronto has had a fairly active gay scene—enough to entertain the gay population, not enough to get too much attention from the straight population. Old standards like the Roman Sauna, which has been around for years and will be around for years to come, have served to keep gays amused and satisfied. Letro's, the Library and the August Club have come and gone, each with its own degree of success.

Although historically Toronto has been supportive of "quiet" gay businesses, the city has joined a growing North American trend and in recent years has stepped out of the closet. Gay businesses opening now are entering a thriving but highly competitive market. In order to survive, they must offer more than would have been acceptable a few years ago. The net result is a better deal for the gay consumer. Solid businesses, such as the Roman, have survived the trend; others, unable or unwilling to meet new standards of service, such as the Royal Oxford Retreat, weren't quite so fortunate. Toronto, with one of North America's largest gay communities, will support any number of good, well-run businesses which consider and respect the welfare of the gay customer. Hence, the new businesses springing up to serve this large, demanding clientele are introducing new standards and offering expanded choices for all of us. Let's take a look at some of them.

Naturally, I'm going to lead off with the Richmond Street Health Emporium, 260 Richmond Street East, which celebrated its first birthday in December 1976. We all know the reasons for going to steambaths—and some of us even admit to the main reason—but the management of Richmond Street wanted to provide something more. Therefore, Richmond Street was designed with a social atmosphere, containing a heated indoor swimming pool, a theatre seating a hundred people, 104 private rooms, lounge areas, unique windowed balconies overlooking the central core (pool table, photo gallery, too-tired-to-walk cruising area). The coffee shop on the main floor provides a setting for eating, talking, or ball-watching through the glass wall into the adjoining swimming pool. Card tables, a juke box and several pin-ball/electronic games provide a foil for the "I'm just resting" line. Richmond Street is one of the largest gay baths in the world and every night of the week offers special attractions for regular customers or visitors.

Following the same multi-facility philosophy, Studio II, 72 Carlton Street, is more than a discotheque. Recently opened, the club has been divided into several lavishly decorated rooms with different facilities in each. Pinball games, pool table, intimate seating areas, and a library surround a spectacular dance floor. The real trip, however, is the lower theatre area, which features 35mm. films of recent release every weekend, plus the city's best produced live stage shows—something else. I have never really been a fan of drag shows, most of which leave off short of being entertaining, so when Jay Cochrane (owner of Studio II) invited me to their Christmas show, I was hardly filled with delight or breathless anticipation. How silly of me. The show turned out a tremendous production, well-rehearsed, with great sets and glossy performances. I was on my feet screaming with the rest of the audience when the cast came onstage for final curtain. The rating: ten out of ten for excellence.

Sandy LeBlanc, owner of David's Discotheque, has also done something beyond the ordinary with the opening of a new club called The Garage at 19 St. Joseph Street. Raunchy, masculine, cruisy, it could be Toronto's answer to Detroit's Tiffany's. The music is good and loud, seating extends around the dance floor (for a great view and the best of cruising), and there's a stand-up counter for those who may lean this way. The decor is related to the club's name: heavy on cars, strictly-for-the-boys. Top notch.

As may have been noticed, there's been a change of management at The Club Toronto. When The Club opened, it was an innovation in steambaths and, as a result, it flourished. The new management has decided to be even more innovative. At considerable expense, they have added a new, sunken whirlpool which seats about eighteen and sleeps six with snorkles. Lo and behold, they have also added a wet steam room. Can you imagine? ...a gay steambath with real steam! What will they think of next? The top-floor dormitory has also been reopened. Wonders never cease. So, have a try at it.

More next issue on the continuing saga of Toronto's evolving gay enterprises. ■

Peter Bochové is President of Richmond Street Health Emporium Ltd., and a well-known promoter of gay business enterprise. He recently appeared on the cover of *Toronto Life*, in an issue which featured such enterprises in Toronto. You are certain to have seen his brillo-bright brass hair in almost any gay establishment you might have patronized, anywhere in town. He seldom strays beyond Metro borders, however. If you have items for inclusion in Peter's future columns, forward your information to him in care of *Directions*.

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Toronto Up-date: Directions to Note

by George Hislop

This column will appear regularly as a source of news for readers who are not involved in the Toronto gay scene, or who might otherwise be out of touch with Toronto happenings of interest to gay men.

The Parkside Tavern (530 Yonge St. at Breadalbane) has recently redecorated its front bar and has installed a new acoustic-tile ceiling in the **Five-Thirty** beverage room at the rear. The ceiling greatly reduces the decibel level in the room, making conversation somewhat possible in what was previously an impossible din. Face-lifting extends to the john. Atmosphere, anyone?

Fat Frank, your friendly waiter at the Parkside, showed up at **The Lanyards' Millionaire's Night** at the CHAT hall. He won a pile at the various gambling games and proceeded to purchase heavily at the auction of donated merchandise. He, in company with 150 other people, bid briskly for the many valuable items. Frank gave away all his purchases. The Lanyards are a local leather and denim group and their effort succeeded in raising a considerable sum of money for CHAT's community work.

CHAT (Community Homophile Association of Toronto, 199 Church St.) has recently hired a new, full-time general manager. Erny Schwarz is the name, and Erny has some great and exciting plans for the CHAT Centre. Watch for them and get involved.

The Spearhead, Toronto's oldest and largest leather and denim affiliation (seven years and over 100 members), through its HAC (Have a Care) Committee, sponsored a Toys for Tots party at the CHAT Centre. Hordes of people showed up, each with a toy for the CHUM Children's Christmas Toy Crusade. Again, CHAT benefited from such a large crowd at the Centre.

Have you been to **Les Cavaliers** (418 Church St.) lately? The piano bar is a big hit and has become so crowded that the overflow is moving into the dining room to sit and join the singing.

Blackbeard's (2087 Yonge St., near Eglinton) has announced the opening of a piano bar also. Check it out.

A bar that is seldom mentioned is the **London Tavern** (572 Bay St. just below Dundas St. W.). It is jammed on the weekend with its regulars. The Hammond Organ is the instrument of choice here and the place can be fun. A few TV's and TS's call this place home. You might remember it as Charley-O's, where the upstairs bar rang to the sounds of the leather and denim crowd.

They pulled out and left the place flat when the management of the day started taking them for granted. Incidentally, the upstairs is still flat.

The Quest (655 Yonge St., below Charles) has built a new bar on the ground floor at the back. Maybe this will become a new cruise bar since cruising was nearly destroyed upstairs when the dance floor was enlarged and a louder disco-type atmosphere was created.

Speaking of Disco-dancing, the **May Gay** (above the St. Charles Tavern, 488 Yonge St.) has changed its name to **The Club Triangle**. Extensive interior changes have been made with the bar re-located.

Elsewhere in this issue you will see mention of **The Garage** (19 St. Joseph St., near Yonge), a new enterprise by Sandy of David's. This is a separate club, designed to attract the more rugged gay male.

Studio II (72 Carlton St., at Church) is hauling them in, helped along a little by the Manatee being closed for repairs for so long.

Just along Carlton Street from Studio II is one of Toronto's newest hotels. **The Carlton Inn** is a large hotel which welcomes gay people. If you're looking for a great place to stay in Toronto, handy to everything, and at low, low prices, The Carlton Inn is the place. Tell them *Directions* sent you.

Most of you are aware of Toronto's big baths (Richmond Street Health Emporium, The Club Baths and the Roman), but how many of you have tried the smaller ones? **The Barracks** at 56 Widmer St. (off Richmond St. West, almost at Spadina) is not just for the leather or S&M crowd, as rumor has it. It's for anyone who has imagination or is into fantasy trips. Even if you haven't much imagination, come and enjoy the fantasies of others. You'll have fun.

Another lesser known but intriguing place is the **Terminus Baths** (600 Bay St., next to the Bus Station). Craig, the owner, is forever doing things to the place to improve the facilities. It's a change and worth trying.

If you work downtown and want to pick up gay magazines or books, try **Best Sellers** in the basement concourse of the Thompson Building (65 Queen Street W. next to the Sheridan Centre Hotel). Don will help you with their small but comprehensive collection.

On the Gay Liberation Scene: the great news is that Gays have been dropped from the "Prohibited Classes" in the new Immigration Act. This Act has not been passed yet (expected Spring of 1977), but when it is, it will mean that merely *being* homosexual will not exclude a person from entering or immigrating to, Canada. Bear in mind, though, that you can still be

deported if you are not a citizen, for committing a crime. If you are not a citizen and you are convicted of gross indecency or any other crime, you could (but not necessarily) be deported. This change has been brought about by the concerted actions of Canada's gay liberation groups, now brought together under the National Gay Rights Coalition, over the past seven years.

C.G.R.O. (Coalition for Gay Rights in Ontario) is planning a meeting of all Ontario gay groups the weekend of Feb. 5, 1977, hosted by the Gay Academic Union at the University of Toronto. The main topic will be *Education: Teaching the truth about homosexuality in Ontario schools*.

On that same weekend, the **Committee to Defend John Damien** is holding a large rally at Trinity College, University of Toronto. It is now two years since John Damien's contract was not renewed by the Ontario Racing Commission because he is homosexual. A recent fund-raising drive among Canadian gay groups had a target of \$6,000 which has now been reached. Your efforts are still needed here, however. John's fight is everyone's fight. How about sending along \$5 (the cost of a night at the baths or the bars) to the Committee to Defend John Damien, Box 117, Station V, Toronto.

Terry Phillips has taken over from

Chris Burchell (who did a fabulous job as Chairperson of the Committee).

Hamishpacha (The Family) is the latest addition to the gay helping scene. A group for Jewish gays, it has been growing by leaps and bounds. This group meets in members' homes and is into social activities and rap sessions. Their mailing address is 1179A Bloor St. West, Toronto, Ontario M6H 1M9.

Dignity—the Catholic gay group, meets at Our Lady of Lourdes Church (Sherbourne St. at Earl St.) every first and third Thursday at 7:30 pm. Liturgies on first and third Sunday at 3:30 pm. They recently sent a representative to speak on a panel at the Peel-Dufferin Separate School Board. Very successful, we are told.

Bob Wolfe and his beloved Larry, both of **M.C.C.**, are off to Vancouver to look into the possibilities of extending the Metropolitan Community church's work to that fair city. Bob, who was M.C.C.'s first pastor in Toronto, did much to establish that church and its Centre at 29 Granby St. here. It has not been all smooth sailing, but what group hasn't had its ups and downs. Bob and Larry will be missed by many. Our best wishes go with them.

Do you live in Mississauga? Then contact **Gay Equality Mississauga** (GEM), P.O. Box 193 Postal Station A, Mississauga, Ontario L5A 2Z7. Elgin

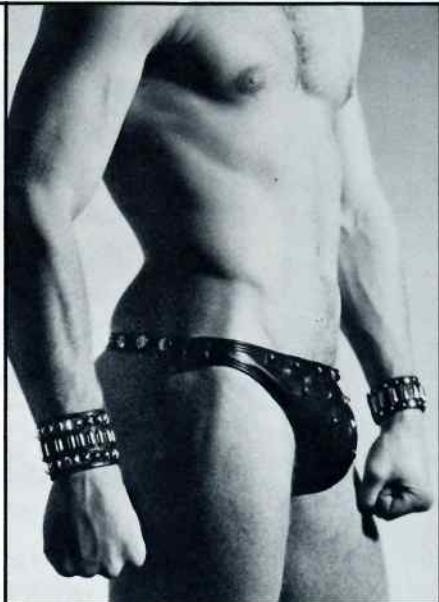
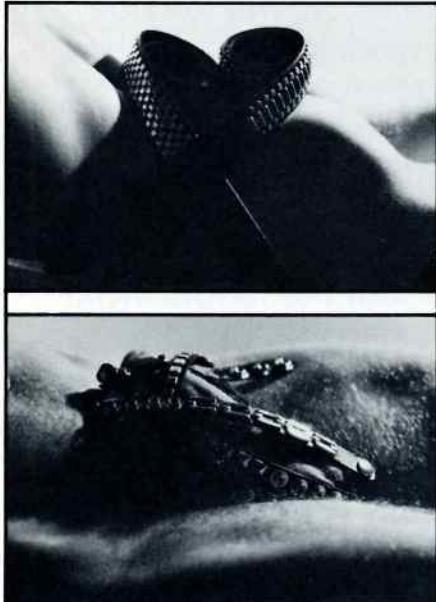
Blair, a long-time fighter for human rights is the President of this, the first suburban gay organization. (Yes, I know Mississauga is an incorporated municipality.) They have already challenged negative news items in both the *Times* and the *News of Mississauga* and received extensive coverage.

One writer, David Scott-Atkinson, wrote a particularly nasty piece in the *Mississauga News* headed 'Fags, Fruits, Fairies.' This same David Scott-Atkinson was host of a City TV show (*Free for All*) on which Harvey Hamburg of TAG (Toronto Area Gays) was a guest. Scott-Atkinson was so rude and crude that he was removed from the show as a result of gay protests and the next week Harvey was invited back to talk about TAG with William Ronald, an artist and former host. TAG is a telephone line (964-6600) to help gays who want to talk things over with someone else who is gay. They also have discussion groups for those who are married and for those coming out.

GATE (Gay Alliance Toward Equality) has a new president, Brian Mossop. Tom Warner will now be free to devote more of his valuable time and considerable talents to C.G.R.O.

The Thursday night bowling league at the Olympia on Edward Street is known as the **Judy Garland Memorial Bowling League**. One of the teams is

—continued on page 22



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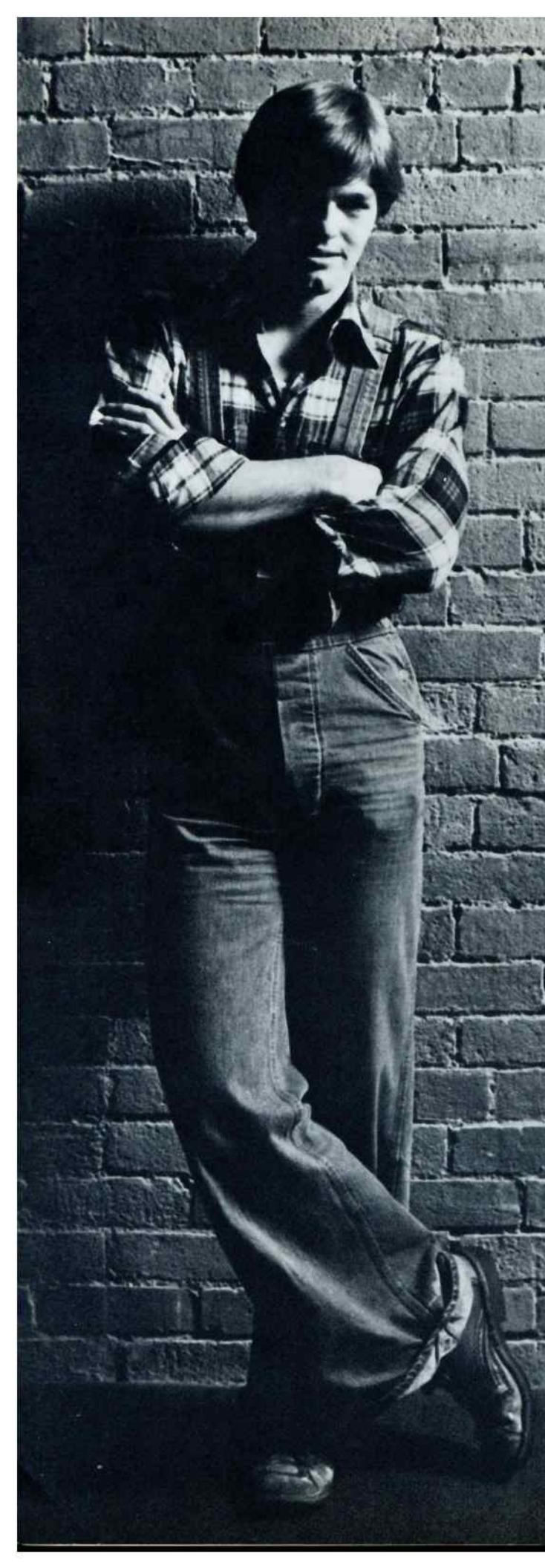


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Talking with Marcus

by Richard Prybyzierski

At first meeting, it seems unlikely that this guy has ever been lonely, afraid or unhappy. Mark Whitehead comes across as the boy we fantasized in high school—the football hero who got hard standing next to us in the showers, the scout who shared a sleeping bag with us at summer camp. Tall, lean and muscular, with perfect teeth and bright, innocent eyes. Butch. Twenty years old. Problems? Of course—because he's quite human, very real. So forget the fantasies.

The real Mark Whitehead becomes apparent as he talks, as the tension eases and the shyness fades. In the process, his good looks gradually assume less importance and we become increasingly aware of the total person. And all of this becomes a back-drop for the things he has to say about himself, about life, about what it's like to be a just-come-out gay attempting to cope with a whole new world.

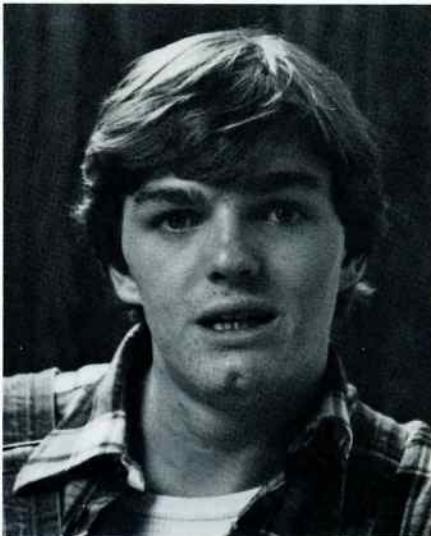
Restless and impatient, he hasn't waited for experience and insight to come to him; he's worked at achieving them in measures far beyond his years. He's also worked hard as co-founder of Toronto's (and perhaps Canada's) first organization of young gays—between the ages of 16 and 25. He's putting a lot of himself into the effort of making the group a success, because he needed such a group when there wasn't one.

"Knowing you're gay and coming out are two altogether different things," he says, smiling. "In grade five, I had my first crush on a guy. By grade eight, I knew the crushes weren't going to stop. I fell in love with a new guy nearly every year until I graduated. At the time, I thought I was a pretty sick character. Life was lonely and confusing, with little hope for a more rewarding future. I footed around with a number of guys during those years. They weren't very happy experiences for me. I remember one at Cedarbrae Pool. A guy swam up to me and said, 'Hi! I'm a fairy.' It scared the hell out of me, but we did leave the pool together and we wound up jerking-off in a church basement. He must have been religious."

After graduating from grade thirteen, Mark went to work at a trust company. In what he thought of as being the super-straight business world, the tension mounted. And there were problems at home. In the summer of 1975, his stamina began to run thin. He seemed unable to understand himself, unable to pursue acceptable goals, and had nowhere to turn. He had fought with and run from the notion that he was really sick, the whole fearful notion that he was a *homosexual*. His future seemed limited to following either of two drastic choices: suicide or finally recognizing and learning to live with the thing he thought was wrong with him. One night, he made his choice. He phoned Huntley Youth Services. They listened.

A few days later, he sat down with his counsellor, Rhoda Matlow, for their first session. "I told her all that I thought I dared about myself and by the time I'd run out of things to say, I was in tears. Finally, I blurted out: 'And to top it all off, I think I'm a bit gay!' Having never made the admission to anyone, not even myself until recently, I was terrified and unable to imagine her response. She might even throw me out. Instead, she merely asked, 'What do you mean, a *bit* gay?' Her reaction was the best possible: she didn't react at all. I realized that I was safe, that this woman wasn't frightened by what had frightened me so much, and that she might help me."

At the end of the interview, Rhoda asked Mark if she could phone George Hislop, the President of the Community Homophile Association of Toronto, and ask him to attend their next session. "I said, 'sure,' but inside I was uptight. When I arrived for the next session, I was still worried about including a gay stranger in so personal a discussion, but the three of us sat down



and began to talk—about me."

Tension eased fairly quickly when Mark recognized that both George and Rhoda were there only to help him. Shortly after the introductions, George took a copy of *Time* out of his briefcase and showed it to Mark. The cover photograph was of Leonard Matlovich, the U.S. Airforce Sergeant who'd made headlines around the world by refusing to accept a dishonourable discharge for being gay. The *Time* cover also carried Matlovich's bold proclamation: "I AM A HOMOSEXUAL." As Mark glanced through the article, they talked some more, and then the session was over. George mentioned that he was on his way to a gay bar. Would Mark like to join him? "I said I'd like to, but I was really scared shitless. I'd never been to a gay bar; I still didn't know George very well; I didn't know what to expect."

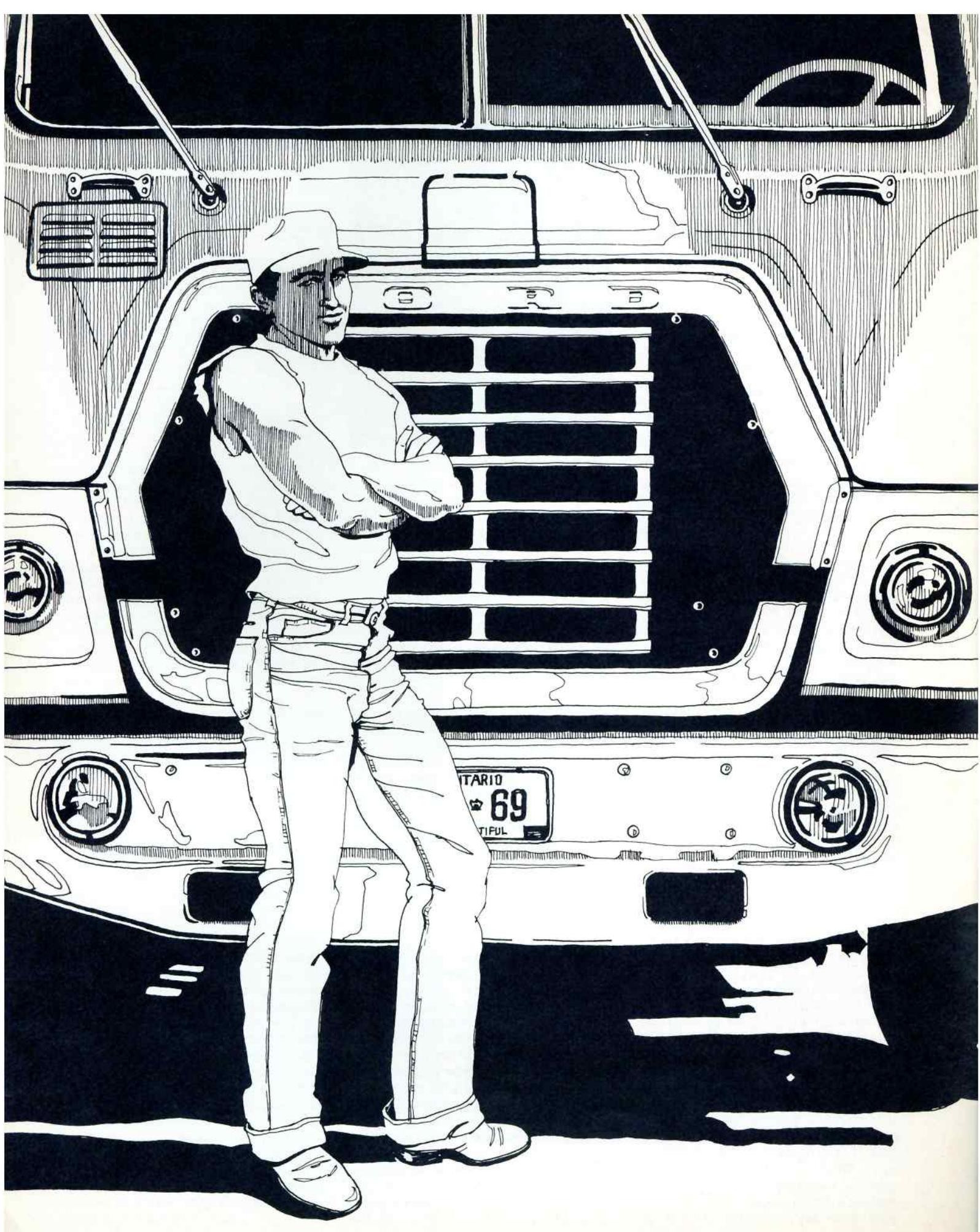
In a few minutes, they were sitting at a table at *The Quest*, having a beer. Then a friend of George's stopped to chat. "They hugged while they talked and then, jokingly, George reached inside the open front of his friend's shirt to feel-up the hairy chest. I was shocked and embarrassed; couldn't believe my eyes. I no longer knew whether what I was seeing was 'sick,' but I still thought it was somehow wrong, certainly not allowed in our society." When the friend left, Mark and George went upstairs to the disco-bar. They danced. "My first dance ever with a guy was with George Hislop. I still tease him about it. It either made my reputation or ruined me socially." Mark got high as the evening progressed and another of George's friends offered to drive him home. Beginner's luck? In any case, he had met someone who gave him invaluable support and guidance in coming out. "We're good friends now."

The first step behind him, each successive step became easier for Mark. He continued to see Rhoda for weekly counselling and kept in touch with George too. "They both helped me immensely. I'm forever indebted to them. They gave me a whole new way of seeing myself." At their suggestion, he decided to enter group therapy at Huntley. There were nine in the group, all between 16 and 21. "I think that I was the only gay person in the group. It was really quite a mixture—with a wild variety of happenings every week. When it was over, we all felt that the group had accomplished what it had set out to do: to build up our self-images, bolstering our opinions of ourselves and learning to accept ourselves at face value."

Like many others, Mark's first response to self-acceptance was a desire to test this acceptance on others, starting with those he cared for and trusted. It was more than a desire to "tell the world." It was a need to share his new-found sense of well-being, his sudden and euphoric "I'm okay!" assurance. Obviously, he hoped they would accept his previously hidden self, as he had. One more lesson to learn.

Susan, a close friend, was the first to share the news. Her response was evasion, until evasion was not possible. Then came the tears—finally, acceptance and a new kind of closeness in their friendship. Gaining courage from this delayed success with total honesty, Mark decided to look up his last high school crush for a second round of confession. "I'm gay." It must be a joke. "I'm in love with you." Not funny anymore. Hostility and rejection. Mark gave it a little time and again contacted his buddy, this time with the face-saving protection of the phone. The friend had heard enough and turned him off with, "You're trying to shove the subject down my throat! I'm sick of hearing about it. They should all be taken out and shot!" —Slam. The incident hurt Mark, and he quickly realized that he still wasn't together enough to handle blatant rejection. More important: he learned that when you expose your most vulnerable self to someone, you have to be sure of that person's ability to handle it. He also recognized that the corrosive fear which he had previously experienced was a common response to homosexuality, however encountered. His own freedom, so recently won, was not something he could easily share with the world. Fears born in mythology and ignorance die hard.

—continued on page 25



Trucks are for Truckers

a short story by David Henry Ahlers

illustrations by Bruce Jones

I didn't always like trucks.

I was nearly seven when I went with my parents on a trip to Halifax and it was my first experience of travel anywhere by car outside of our small town. I hadn't seen any large trucks before, except for delivery vans and cartage trucks. They weren't very interesting anyway. They seemed cumbersome and slow as they negotiated the hills and short streets in our neighbourhood. Once we were out on the highway on our way to Montreal, my mother kept pointing out the things she thought I should notice—things she thought would be interesting new sights for a little boy. Lake Ontario was just a lot of uninteresting water and we couldn't even see the shoreline from the highway. Farms and factories offered no charms either. But right there, so close that I could feel the thunder of their wheels deep down inside me, were the most marvelous things I had ever seen. They were so big, so tall, that I had to put my face tight to the car windows to see high enough for even a glimpse of the drivers. Enormous, all-powerful and completely entralling trucks.

Every one of the trucks passed our car. I thought we were going awfully fast, but the trucks went much faster. As they came up on us from behind, you couldn't hear their noise—just the metered little bumps of our car's wheels on the roadway. Then, as they overtook us and pulled out to pass, a combination of high engine whine, deep-throated exhaust and the pounding of giant tires roared out of hell and into our car. The very first one had been quite frightening, but only for the moment it took for its thunderous passage and the quick dying of its sound as it sped away from us. Pure exhilaration. I had found the most exciting, most wonderful things in all the world. And I knew I would always love them. Always.

My father thought my new passion for trucks was a healthy sign. He had previously expressed his annoyance and concern because I had not responded to his attempts to interest me in soccer games, hockey, or even the "boys' toys" which relentlessly appeared at Christmas and birthdays. Now, perhaps, there was hope that I would forget about those silly girls' things—like drawing pictures, reading my children's books and playing in my make-believe theatre. Perhaps I would start behaving like a real boy—a "he-man" boy. So, instead of just driving through Montreal on our way to Halifax, my dad drove down through the city streets to an area where there were hundreds of trucks loading and unloading, trailers standing in rows, rigs jockeying up to platforms. We walked around the area for nearly an hour before my mother's boredom and impatience brought us back to the car. But I had never been quite so happy or excited before.

By the time we reached Halifax, I had made up my mind. I was going to know all there was to know about the big rigs. I wasn't interested in just driving a truck; I wanted to work with the whole, wonderful machine. I wanted to be a master truck mechanic. So, during the next few years, my dad helped me collect brochures, magazines and manuals on just about every truck made in North America. He still tried to get me interested in his favourite sports, but seemed ultimately resigned to my singular attention to one and only one masculine subject. Mother was left out of most of this. By the time I was ten and could reel off specifications of engines just by the sound of them, she thought they were all the same: dirty, complicated and thoroughly uninteresting. At school, I was advised to pursue an academic career and when I decided against continuing at the collegiate, Mother

cried. She was afraid that I'd waste my "fine mind" at a technical school. Dad was pleased, though.

During my years at tech and the first year at my job with International, I didn't have much time for the things most guys my age were doing. I didn't go out much, almost never dated. I was too busy with my studies and my work. It was what I had dreamed of doing and I loved it. And I still loved the trucks. Just handling the giant pistons, feeling the oversized shaft in a transmission gear-set, gave me a sense of joy, almost a sensual satisfaction. Some of my friends thought I was strange, since they worked only grudgingly; their only pleasures came after work and on weekends, when they were off to movies, out for a few drinks, or with their girlfriends. None of this interested me; I had my studies, my work, my trucks. Then something happened. I guess it could have ruined my life.

After I had been with International for nearly two years and had completed three up-grading training courses, my new supervisor called me into his office to tell me that he was moving me out of the shop. I was being promoted to a new department related to the training of drivers—teaching truck drivers about the mechanical and technical aspects of their rigs. I pleaded with him, not wanting to leave my shop, but finally had to give in. The Company had already made the decision.

The following week, I drove to Toronto and met my new supervisor. He introduced me to the staff in the department and showed me my office. It was just a little desk in a corner, with shelves on two sides, with glass partitions and an open doorway. I sat down, feeling so lonely, lost and unhappy that I nearly cried. Then, with an angry buzz that startled me, my phone rang and I learned that a truck driver who had signed up for the new course was coming in—that very day—and that I

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would be making a trip with him in his rig. The course material and curriculum I was to teach hadn't been approved by management, so they wanted me to get some "on-the-road" experience which they thought would be beneficial. At the same time I would be able to provide some immediate technical training for the driver. It was like a reprieve from heaven. Anything to get me out of that rotten, stuffy little office.

Tom arrived just after lunch. When I first saw him, my mind flashed with recognition. I couldn't help remembering the same sensations, the same feelings inside of me. Feelings experienced long, long ago. Tom was tall, powerfully built and he moved with the smooth agility of an athlete. Even his voice had an authoritative, rumbling sound. Sort of sleepy sounding too, but like he knew just what to say and nothing could shake him. For the first time in my life, I was frightened by another person. In just those few moments, the overwhelming presence of Tom had scared me, then left me with a recognizable, but new sensation of exhilaration.

After we had been introduced and left alone in my office, Tom eased into a big grin and said, "I was a little pissed off when they told me you were going on the road with me. A week's course at full pay would have been o.k., but I didn't like the idea of dragging a teacher with me for two-thousand miles! You don't even look like a teacher. How old are you, Dave?"

"Twenty-three, and I'm not really a teacher. Not until I came to Toronto and this is my first day here. You're my first trainee."

"Well..." Tom seemed not to have been listening to my apologetic sounding explanation and was far off in thought, "...if you're going out with me in the morning, I'd better get back here tonight to pick you up. We'll be taking off at 4:00 a.m."

Startled, I blurted, "Oh, that won't be necessary! I've already got a room on the Queensway, so I can get a taxi in the morning and meet you at the loading depot."

"Aw, come on," he laughed, "you don't want to sit around here all afternoon. We can go downtown and relax awhile, get a good night's sleep and be ready to take off at four. After all, I've got to look after you, Teach!"

That shook me a bit more. Why go downtown now? What would the office people think? Did he think I'd be spending a whole evening with him? I had some course outlines to study. Did he think I'd be...oh, who cares what he thinks. I abruptly decided that if this guy and I were going to be spending so much time together in the next week or so, I'd might as well get to know him on



his own ground now. "Uh...I guess that would be a good idea, but I'd better check with my boss. He might have something else planned for me this afternoon."

A few minutes later, we were on our way. We dropped by Tom's place so he could change clothes and then went back to town. First stop, the "Y" for a swim. Tom was a member, but I had never been to a "Y" before. By the time we got downstairs to the locker room and peeled off our street clothes, things were much easier. I had gotten past the strange sensations and felt much less awkward with Tom. It was like we had known each other for a long time. But when I saw him standing next to me, without a stitch on, part of it came back. I was again frightened by what I was feeling; it was an odd combination of awe, admiration, and that weird, physical exhilaration, deep inside me. Tom was easily 6'3", a good four inches taller than I am, with long, brownish blonde hair. He looked like he'd spent a lot more time working out in the gym and baking under the sun than he had behind the wheel of his truck. I wondered why he wasn't more like the other drivers I'd seen in the past few years. Most of them were grubby, with soft, paunchy bodies. They seemed to have narrow, static little minds too, and their humour revolved about CB radio, beaver conquests, mindless stories and the most boring of tall tales. Yet, here was a bright, god-like athlete, who looked like he could be a success in Hollywood...driving a truck for a living! My eyes were still on him, scanning down the length of him, pausing at the swaying length of his cock and the solid mass of his balls, and on down past his lean, beautiful legs. Yes, beautiful. That's what I was thinking. I realized that I could hear my own shorter, more rapid breathing and feel my own pulse banging away with the weirdness of it all. I thought he was beautiful! *God, am I nuts?* Tom broke into my racing thoughts with a slap on my thigh.

"What are you looking at, man? You've got one too, you know. Looks like you need a cold shower for it too. Come on..." and he was off down the corridor between the lockers, leaving me standing there like a fool. Instinctively, I looked down at myself. I wasn't hard; what the hell was he talking about? Why did he think I would have a hard-on? I grabbed my towel and joined him in the showers. Tired of following him like a puppy, trying to resist the overpowering urge to let him take command, I barely rinsed off, walked briskly to the deep end of the pool and knifed into the water. I'd finished two laps before Tom got there. He just sat on the side benches and watched me swim three more lengths before diving in and joining me.

Suddenly, there it was again. I was tremendously aware of his physical presence. Every smooth motion of his body, although it mirrored my own, stroke for stroke through the water, had an exciting, thunderous impact on me. What was wrong with me? Or was there something strange about Tom, something unworldly, something I *should* be afraid of? No time to think about it. With a single movement, we were up and out of the pool, standing at the edge...dripping, gasping, smiling.



In that moment, I surrendered, relaxed and gave myself over to his charm. I liked him, determined that I damned well wasn't going to be afraid of him. How could I resist an offer like his?

"Dave, you're great. I hope we can be friends. You'll get impatient with me on the technical stuff, but I'll try hard and maybe the trip will be fun anyway."

I could only smile and answer, "Sure!"

We took long, hot, steamy showers, then dressed and hit the street. Tom had no real plans for the evening and I didn't have even a vague idea of what one could do in Toronto. After a walk down Yonge Street, past the massage parlours, movie houses, stores and

restaurants, Tom suggested that we have a good dinner, head back to his place for some TV and get an early start on sleep. I went along with the first part, but wondered why we had to go back to his place. What about my room? What about packing for the trip? What kind of place did he live in anyway? Oh well, he was going to be doing the driving for quite awhile, so I decided to let him call the shots for tonight too.

By the time we got to Tom's place, it was nearly eight o'clock. On the way, we had driven out to my room and I had packed a bag, changed clothes and told the landlady that I was off on a trip. I was still stinging from her parting remark: "Have a nice time, son. You look so excited, a body'd think you were off with your bride on a honeymoon." Didn't the dumb broad see Tom sitting there in the car? Why, all of a sudden, were people making smart cracks, queer cracks? Or was it the way I felt, not what they were saying?

In some stupid, mindless way, my thoughts swirled around that idea as Tom and I sat in his apartment watching TV. Queers. I didn't even know any. Was I queer? My dad still thought I wasn't in his league because I didn't go for sports, but that doesn't mean you're queer. My buddies thought I was an oddball because I didn't spend time with them evenings and weekends, because I didn't run around trying to ball every chick in town. Well, hell. Queer is cocksucking. Queer is fairy. Queer is walking funny. Queer is...sick. Shit, man, I'm not queer, so why am I thinking all this crap?

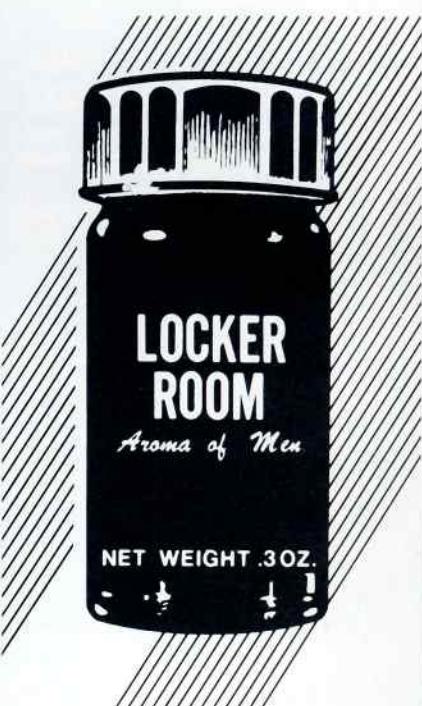
Finally, bringing my head around to the screen, I joined Tom in a laugh. Caught up in the program, I relaxed and felt at ease. Then Tom stood up, clicked-off the TV and suggested that we turn-in. There it was again, that funny feeling, welling up inside. Breathing faster. A tingling expectancy. When I saw the bedroom, I nearly panicked. There was only one bed. A double bed. Like my parents' bed. I was afraid again. Of what?

"Tom, I sleep like a...well, I thrash around a lot. Maybe I'd better sleep on the couch in the living room."

"Forget it! You're not about to disturb me and we'd might as well get used to each other now as later. I'll leave you enough room," he replied with such warmth that I would have felt silly protesting further.

I hung up my clothes, watching Tom strip down and slide into bed. In the half-light coming through the door from the john, I could see that he was naked, that he was still exciting and beautiful to look at. Wordlessly, I went to the john, returned to the bed and slipped in, trying not to disturb Tom. In a minute, his arm was around me in a quick hug.

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"I'm glad you came home with me tonight, Dave. Are you o.k.?" he whispered. I didn't have time to be afraid, angry, or even wary. It was so warm and natural a thing, I couldn't help feeling a happy, wonderful glow as I squeezed him back.

"Sure, I'm fine." Then, just as I felt something else happening to me, I noticed that Tom was slowly, rhythmically moving his body. Gently, just enough that I could feel the bed rocking with the motion of his hips. I knew that I had a hard-on. I could feel it pounding into my groin, tingling up through the bottom of my crotch and into my ass. I hadn't touched myself, but it was almost like the beginning of coming; a wave of expectancy went through my whole body and settled with a shudder of excitement in my cock, my balls, and deep inside me. I didn't think about anything except Tom. His great big glorious body. His cock. His legs. His smile and flashing eyes. And his cock.

"Are you having the same problem I am?" whispered Tom.

"What problem?"

In a single, easy movement, Tom's body was against my side; his rock-hard cock was pressed against my side and his hand had found its way to mine, closing around it with a tender strength that heightened my sense of pleasure to the point of bursting.

"That's the problem, Dave. From the minute I walked into your office I knew I wanted you. Knew that I'd have to try to make it with you, even if it fucked-up the whole thing with my job, and the course...everything."

"I'm not queer, Tom. I've never done anything with a guy before. I don't know why...I mean, I've got a hard-on, but..."



"Come on, Dave. You know why you've got the hard-on. You were looking at me at the 'Y' and you must have known the score. I want you, Dave."

With a simple physical mastery which put down my frightened resistance, Tom pulled me to him and gently

held my whole body in his arms. I could feel his muscles tense and relax as he moved his arms and thighs, seeming to envelope me completely with all of himself. His lips brushed against my chest, grazing lightly through the hair on my chest and down the narrow path to my navel, down, down to the place where my cock was pulsing, pulsing and now jumping with the expectancy of his touch. And all the while, his arms, his strong hands, his thighs and his body made love to all of me in the gentlest, most beautiful way I could imagine. As his lips caressed the head of my cock and then moved down its throbbing shaft, I could no longer hold out any resistance. I knew that I wanted this. I knew that I wanted Tom.

"Tom, oh, god damn—" and I brought my arms around him, moving them down to the tousled head that was moving so wonderfully down and up and completely over my cock—down, down to envelope all of it, and gently back again to thrill the head of it with his tongue.

Pleasure consumed me. It seemed that I couldn't stand another minute, couldn't hold back, without the tremors of my impending orgasm releasing in a volcanic spume, but Tom seemed to sense my dilemma and moved his gloriously attentive mouth away and around, searching and finding new and

—continued on page 22



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Education:

Directions for Success

by Peter Bochove

Being gay can be really tough if you do not have a good idea of how to go about it. It is necessary in this day and age to be thoroughly familiar with proper standards of behaviour: what is acceptable and what is not. Without this sort of knowledge, it is quite possible to fail at being gay—and then what do you do? Judy Garland records are a glut on the market (simply can't be sold). The makeup for men which you bought at Eaton's in 1968 might fetch a small price in Buy-and-Sell, and the *Body Politic* will probably let you cancel your subscription, but how will you hold your head up in public?

Directions is a publication with a social conscience (as demonstrated by the nude photographs we print) so we feel it is our duty to prevent you from failing at being gay. In a continuing series of articles, we will attempt to impart knowledge which cannot help but make you successful. In keeping with our personal image of being timely and useful, this issue's lesson is on summer street cruising.

How to cruise the street

1. What to wear

A) If you are attractive, wear something tight. The article of clothing should mould all your good points and disguise all your bad. Example: 30" waist, good cheeks, knobby knees and silly ankles—*bell bottoms*, size 28. Simple, no?

NOTE: If clothing is tight and your strategic area is small and/or unimpressive, resist the urge to compensate with rolled sock or other artificial appendage. Prosthetics are hard to explain if you do score and there is always the danger that they will fall out onto the street, frightening dogs and small children—to say nothing of the embarrassment it might cause should this happen during your approach. If the real thing is beyond the help of constant dirty thoughts, walk backwards everywhere you go.

B) If you are too thin or too fat, it is much easier to dress for street cruising. Wear a kaftan at all times and see that your hair is nicely combed. If you do not have hair, a straw hat with flowers generally gets attention.

2. Proper position

A) If you are an active person, do not sit. Walk around and stare a lot. If you are interested in someone, walk around him constantly until he notices you. This is difficult on crowded sidewalks, but not impossible.

B) If you want to sit, sit somewhere impressive. Park benches are good because you will be able to suggestively scratch certain areas of your body when you think someone is looking. Avoid sitting on or leaning against fire hydrants or similar structures. Yes, it can look suggestive, but not many people can compete with something the size of a hydrant and are likely to be frightened off.

C) Leaning against a wall is a sure bet. You can see him coming, accidentally trip him, catch him before he falls and apologize in such a friendly manner that you'll have him home and in bed before you can say shit.

3. Opening gambits

Once you have your prey's attention, you must be able to talk to him. Most people react badly to being dragged off without an introduction. I suggest the following:

A) "My, what a nice tight pair of pants! What kind of material is it?" Reach out and rub it in the hip area. If he is gay and/or interested, he will turn so that you brush against either front or back. If he is really straight, he'll drill you in the teeth (a small drawback to street cruising).

B) "I'll bet you don't wear underwear!" He'll either suggest that you come home to see for yourself or he'll call you a faggot and drill you in the teeth (same drawback).

4. Errors to be avoided

A) "Have you got a match?" He'll either light your cigarette and walk away or give you a lecture on lung cancer. I even know of one instance where a guy used that line and got drilled in the teeth (which leads me to conclude that this small drawback is persistent and that the come-on line is too old to use, even on straights).

B) "Do you live around here?" Forget this one. Your best hope would be a yes or no; in either case, the conversation ends abruptly and the prey walks away. Why, I even know of one case where a guy used that line and... well, never mind.

That's enough for this issue. You can now see that our magazine fulfills an educational purpose. Please do not delude yourself, however, by assuming that having read this article you will become successfully gay. There is much to learn. Subscribe to *Directions*. You'll never get this kind of offer from a matchbook cover correspondence course ad. ■

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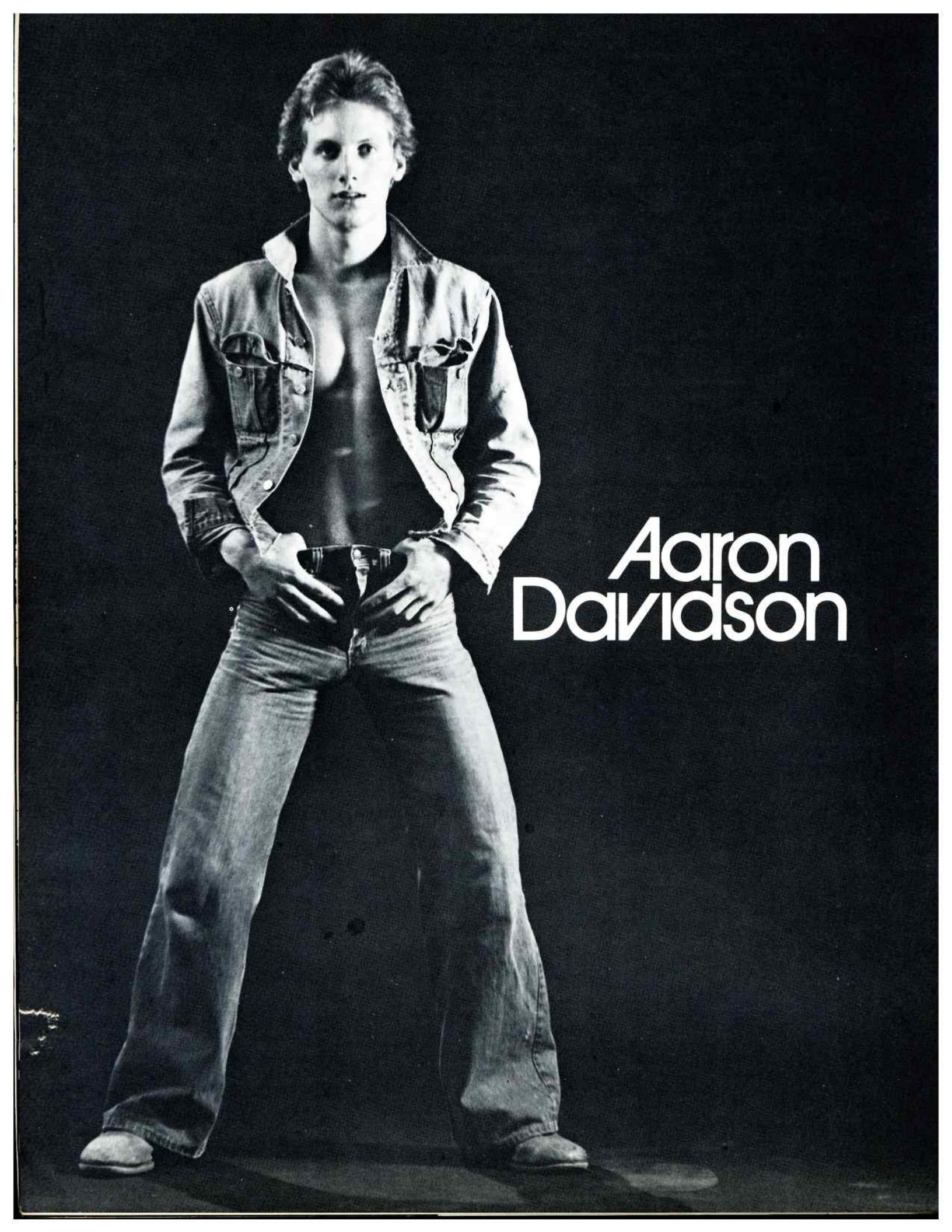
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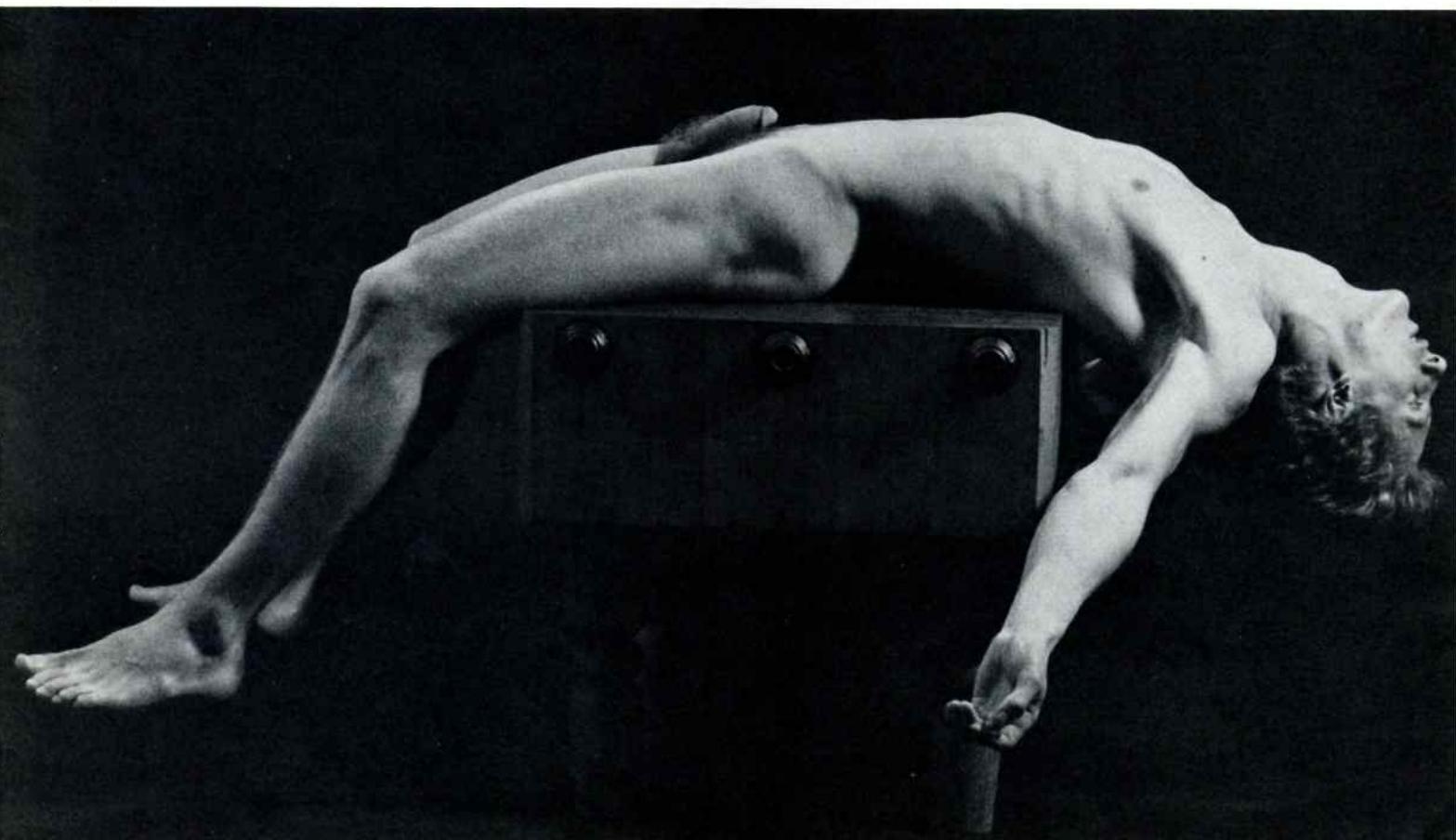
Peter Bochove is President of Richmond Street Health Emporium Ltd., and a well-known connoisseur of cruising technique. He is quick to point out, however, that one should 'do as he says, not as he does', since his own record of success would be envied only by those among us who get off on getting drilled in the teeth.

A black and white fashion advertisement. The central figure is a man with short, wavy hair, standing against a dark, textured background. He is wearing a light-colored denim jacket over a dark t-shirt and high-waisted, light-colored denim jeans. He has his hands in his pockets and is looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the texture of the denim and the contours of his body.

Aaron
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Photographs by Steven Hiller





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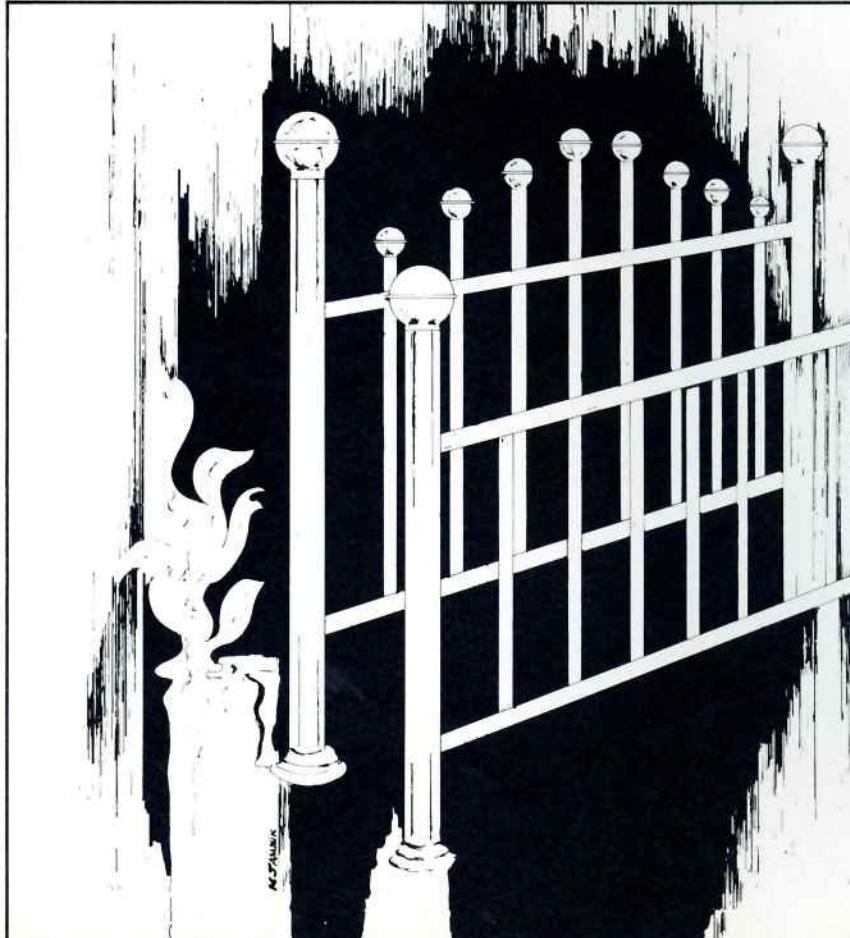
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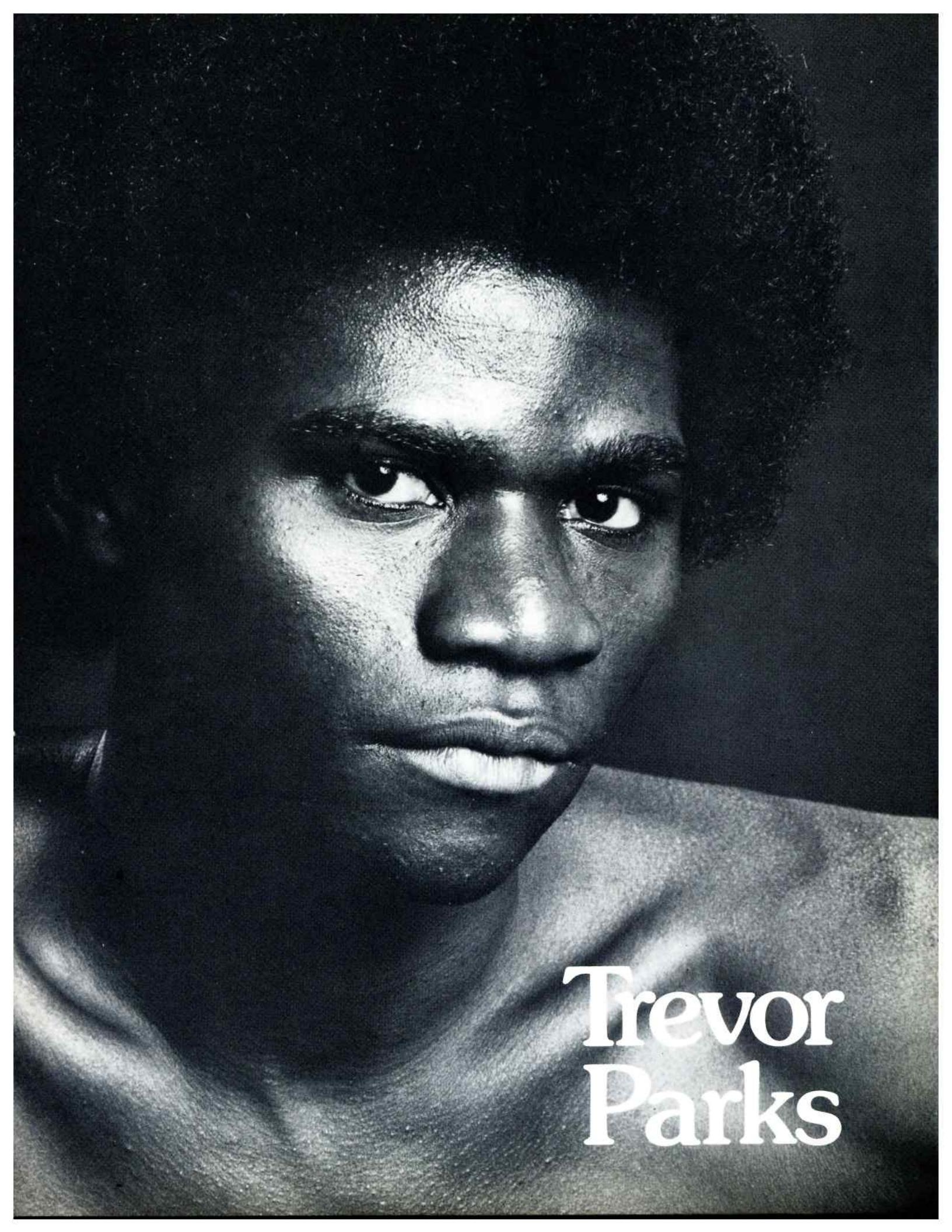
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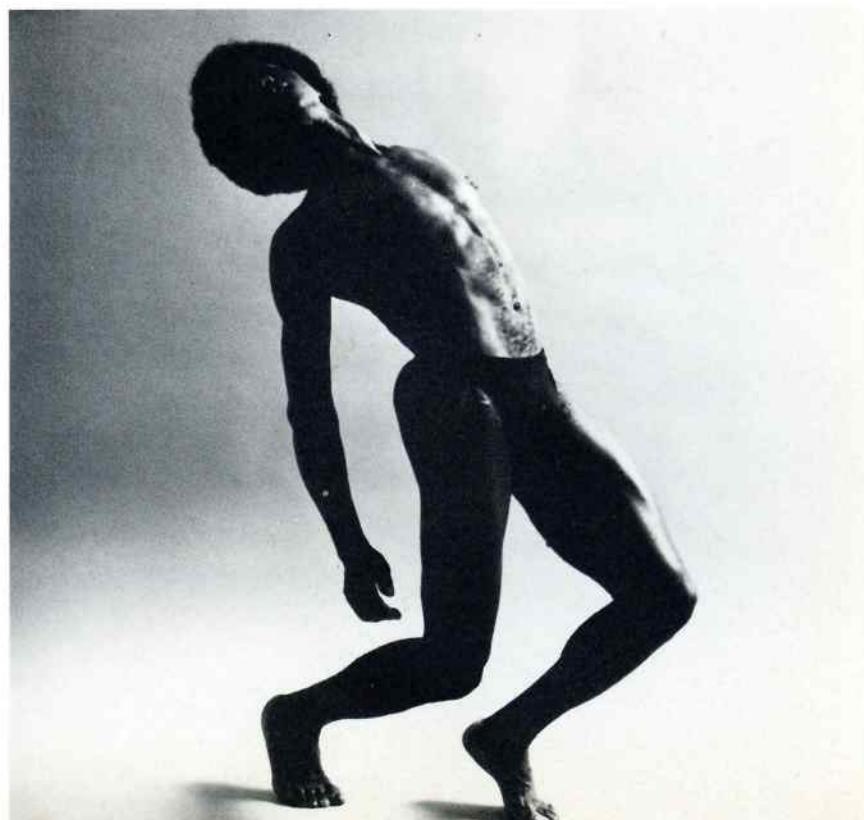
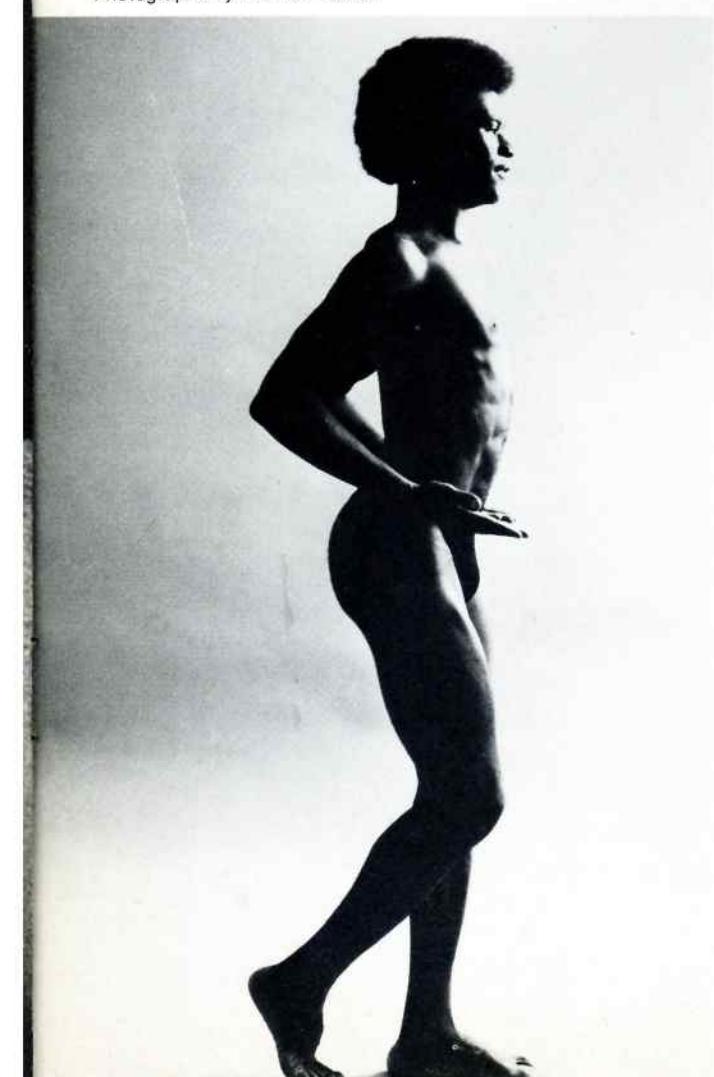
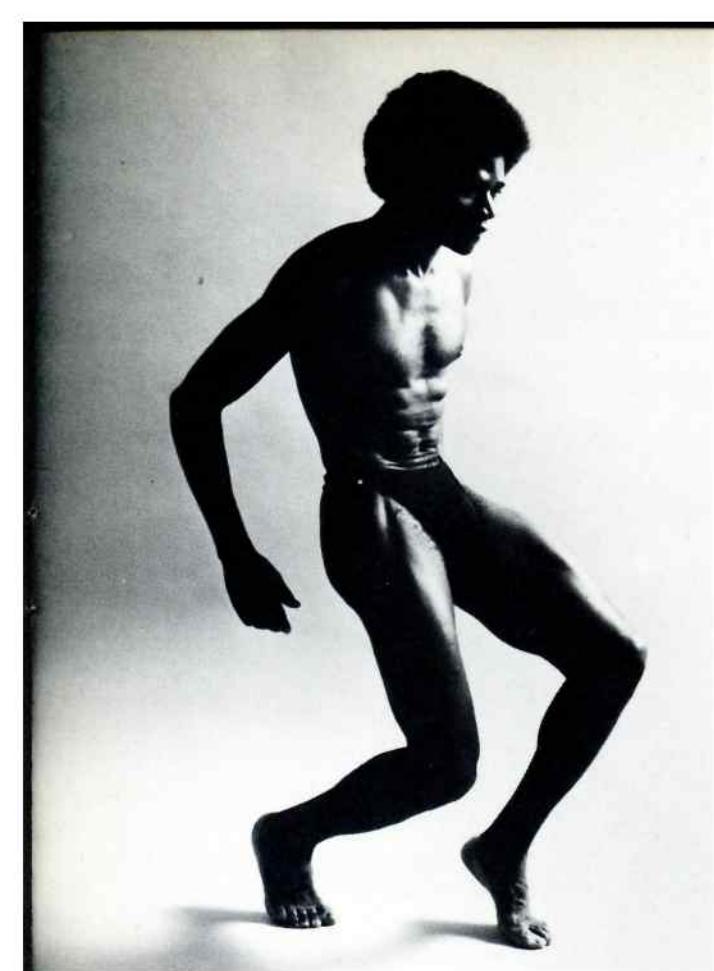
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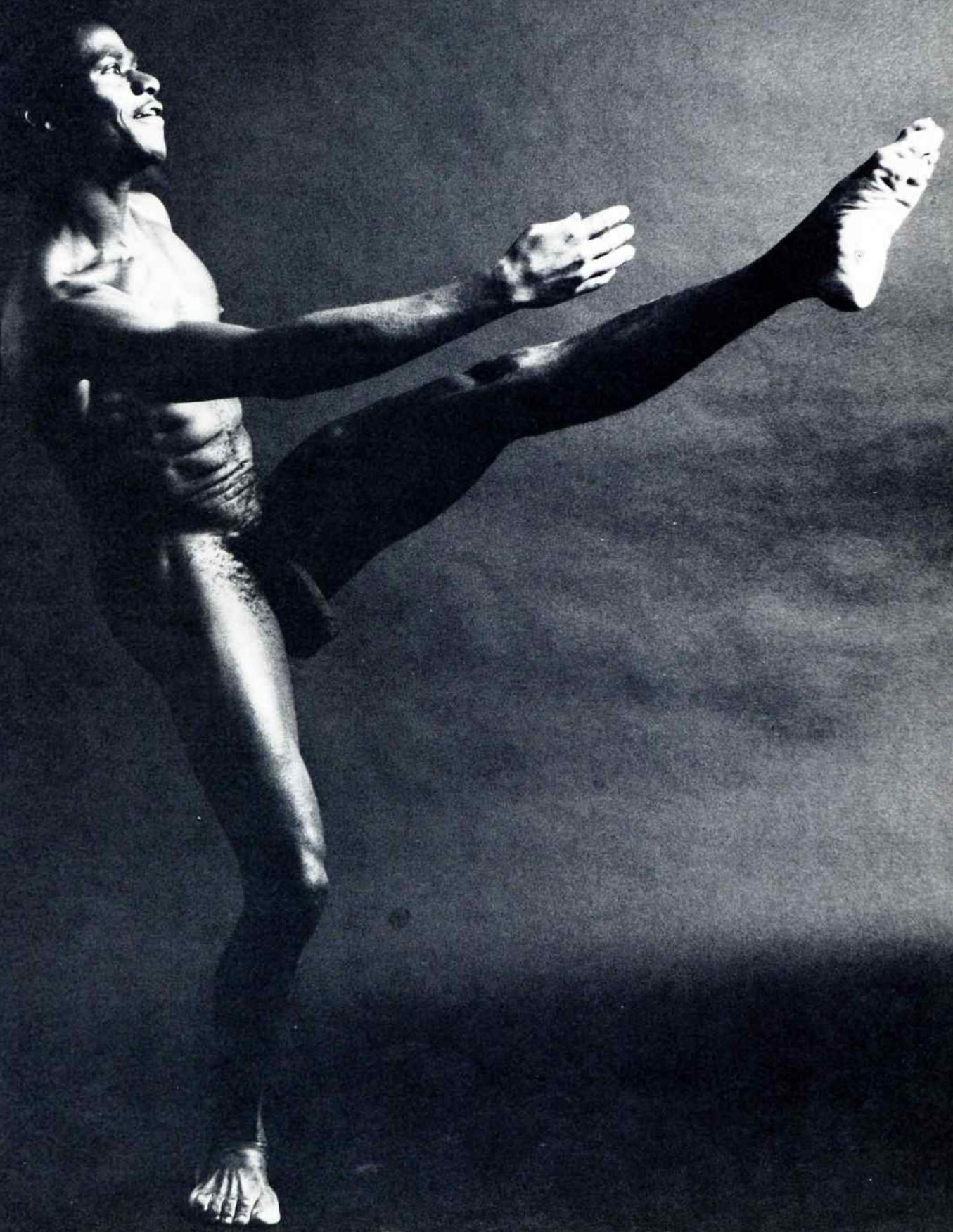


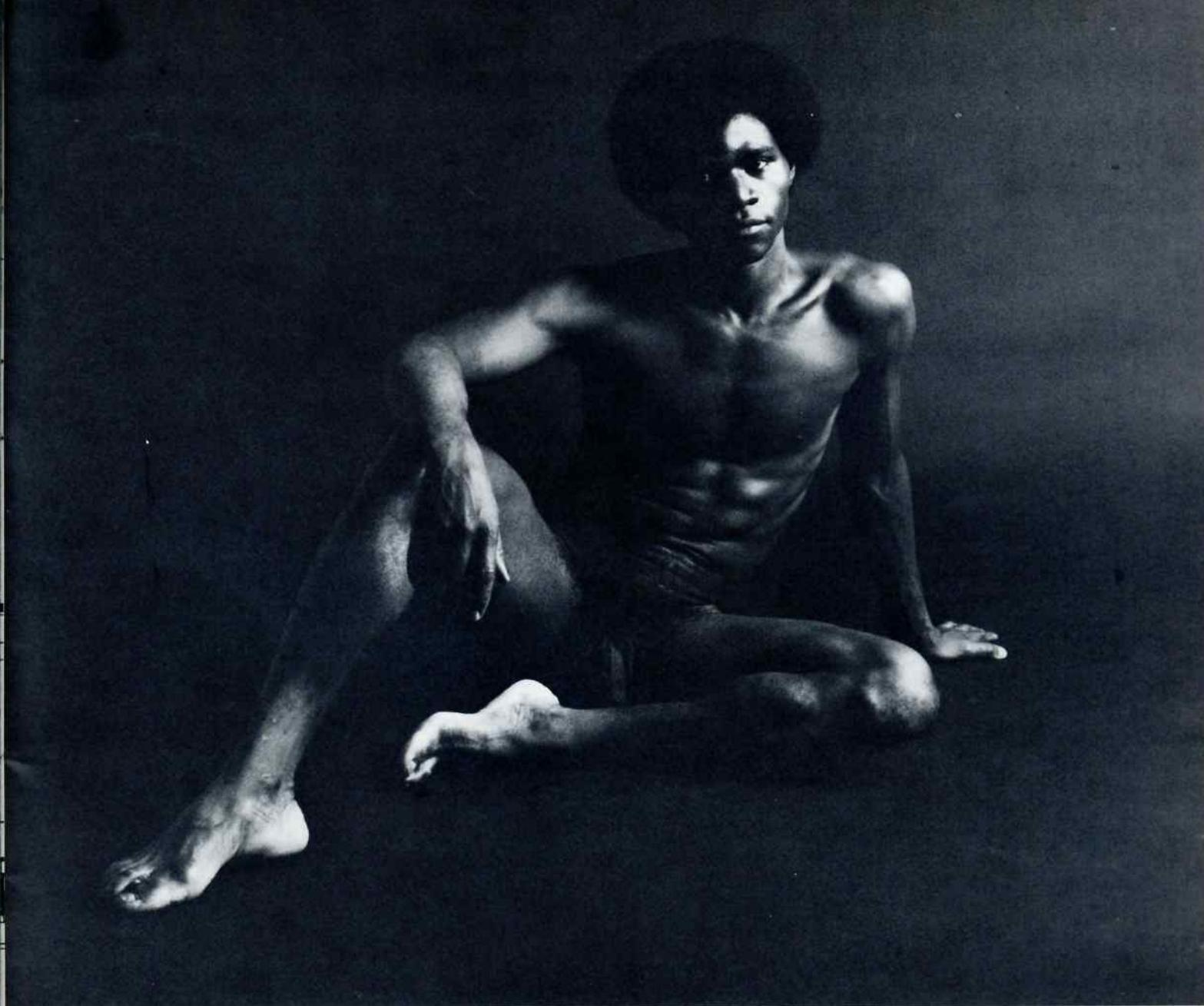


Trevor
Parks



Photographs by Norman Hatton





Trevor Parks is an entertainer—and he knows how to do it. Not content to sit back and watch others get the applause, Trevor finds an audience where ever he goes. He's comfortable on any stage, in any set. He's made movies, done television drama, modeled on runways, played musical comedy, danced to enthusiastic African rhythms and sung in nightclubs. And he's done all of that in Toronto. Performing jobs in Canada are not plentiful and Trevor is not unrealistic. He recognizes that if he doesn't promote and hone his talents, no one else will either. And that is why he is constantly finding

a stage and hitting the audience with an energy that he won't let falter. He knows that he wants to find the top of the business, and that the only way to make it there is to keep topping yourself. When he's not onstage he's studying how to improve himself when he is on it. Constant dance and drama classes tighten his control. Constant performing sharpens his skills. When he makes it to the top of the entertainment field, he has still farther to go: as a dance teacher and choreographer. Trevor Parks is a producer; and he'll never let the audience forget it.

Directions, from page 5

called the 'Crisco Kids' and another 'Friends of Dorothy.' The T-shirts are camp. Drop by and have a shriek.

Wednesday night is the Leather and Denim bowling night. Same alleys.

That six page article on gays in the Canadian Churchman, the Anglican Church newspaper, certainly stirred up the dust. The letters of protest are still coming in. If you read the articles and thought they were good (and they were) then write in and support the editors.

The United Church of Canada's brief to the Ontario Human Rights Commission urged the inclusion of "sexual orientation" in the revised code. The United Church of Canada, one of Canada's largest Protestant denominations, feels that people should not be discriminated against because of their sexual orientation.

News from the courts: Eighteen-year-old Otto Horvath was convicted of extortion (blackmail) by Judge Hugh Hornsberger in York County Court and sentenced to 45 week-ends in jail (90 days), ordered to take any available job, and to pay \$1,105 in restitution. Judge Hornsberger said Horvath's crime was "particularly despicable"—preying on the victim's fear that his family and government employer would learn of his homosexuality.

Horvath was also placed on 3 years probation and ordered to make restitution at the rate of 25% of his weekly take-home pay. He had spent 4½ months in jail before trial by judge and jury. Horvath met his victim in the washroom of a Yonge St. movie theatre. He received \$265.00 cash and the victim's credit card. He charged \$640.00 worth of goods, including a suit, jewelry and a \$90 lighter. Horvath showed up at his victim's place of employment when the man changed his residence. On another occasion he threatened him with a realistic imitation of a high-powered gun. The judge warned Horvath against breaking probation.

Two murder trials of interest to Toronto gays are those of Jose Silva, a 16-year-old "model" from South America charged with murdering a 42-year-old Toronto organist and businessman; and Joseph Donahue, charged with murder of a man from the London Ont. region, also a musician. These are scheduled for the Spring of 1977.

Stay out of the Bloor St. subway washroom. Police still spy on the public through the vents in the baseboard and over the doors.

Happy Birthdays: to the Body Politic on its recent fifth; to CHAT on its upcoming sixth; and to GATE on its fourth. ■



Trucks, from page 12

wonderful sensations for my craving body. Now then, I had to respond; my passive enjoyment of the new release ended as I turned about, grasping at Toms hips to find him with my mouth. To consume the cock I had seen at the pool, the cock I had imagined just minutes ago here in the shadow-light of the bedroom. All my fears and hostility about cocksuckers vanished in the urgent need to find and love that thing with my mouth, to feel its power and life inside me. In my rage to suck and take him into me, I wasn't the tender, experienced lover that Tom was, but tore at him, eating him deeply, fiercely. The savage thrusts of my

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mouth and throat were met by his own complementary rhythm, diving into me with serpentine urgency.

I wanted Tom to come, wanted to feel his whole body in orgasm, wanted to take his come, but his cock was pulling from my thrusts, signalling something else. Tom's mouth and hands had found new ways of driving my desire, pressing back against the mounds of muscle above my thighs, searching out and finding the soft tissues of my outer sphincter. Tom licked hungrily around it, the slick movement of his quicksilver tongue dilating the tightness of the muscles and teasing my nerve-endings to a fever-pitch of desire. Then slowly, gently, he moved around, held me in his great arms and whispered hoarsely.

"Dave, I want to fuck you. Don't be afraid; I wouldn't hurt you for anything. *Oh god, you're so great!* Easy does it, baby. Just move with me, let me know with your body."

I couldn't say a word. I knew before he spoke that I wanted Tom inside me, no matter how. His tongue had already found its way, flicking in and out of the tender, softened hole, making me want him there. Tom eased our bodies together, his legs pushing outward between my thighs until I was spread out, reaching the corners of his bed with my feet, holding tight to the pillow under my chest. Gently, easily, softly, the head of his tremendous cock played with me, urging me to open to him, urging me to take him—to take him into the depths of my body. Moving with him, then moving toward him, I felt a dull pain as his cock actually entered me, but his gentleness, waiting with me as I paused, brought back the absolute pleasure of loving him in this unfamiliar, but natural way. As I relaxed and we again moved together, he slowly pushed himself to the full depth of his shaft. He took over the meter of our rhythm, pushing and withdrawing with sensuous strokes, while I returned his loving with my whole body, matching his movement in a growing fury of explosive feeling.

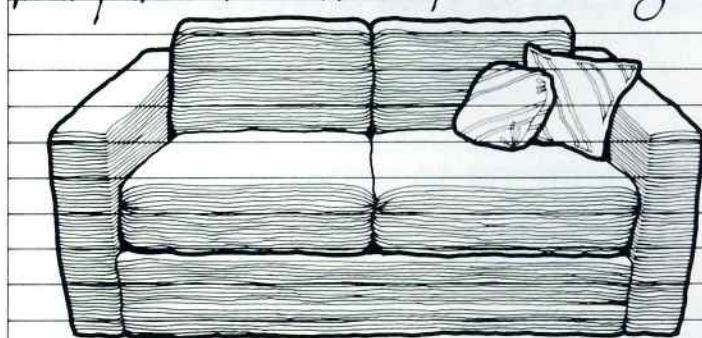
At the height of my feeling, with Tom plunging his manhood deeply, deeply, with writhing insistence which had to find a climax, I felt the spasms of his come travelling the length of his cock, pouring, shooting its heat inside me. As the glory of the moment hit me, I could feel the well-springs of my own sex reach the uncontrollable. I came in waves and tremors, filling the front of my own belly with the hot wetness of my sex.

We clung together, holding tight with our arms, breathing as one until the breathing subsided to a slumber-softness and I could speak.

"Tom, I know you've had other guys, and you know that I haven't. But this

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was the best, the very best and I wouldn't have missed it for anything."

"Of course it's the best, you shit-head. Now relax and get some sleep."

We rolled over together and he held me close, bringing his mouth to mine for a first kiss. I'd sucked a cock and been fucked, and now a guy was kissing me—deeply, fully. I returned his pleasure with my own, and slowly we drifted off for what remained of the night's sleep.

When the clock buzzed us awake at four, we managed to make it to the shower, grab coffee and a slosh of orange juice before leaving for the truck. The trailer was already to go, so we went down the checklist—wheels, tires, engine, controls—and took off in the cool, early morning air.

During the week-and-a-half which followed, I taught Tom nearly as much as he might have learned in the Company's course. I learned a lot myself.

Looking back, I guess I learned more from Tom than I had from any other teacher. He helped me find myself. He showed me the way to the freedom and joy that I had always tried to find in the trucks. I guess Dad was right; I've always been a romantic. These days, I'd say that underneath my butch-hard exterior, I'm really quite the nell. But at least I know where I'm going.

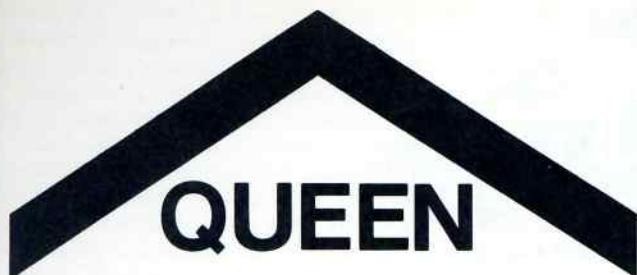
Fuck trucks! I'll take truckers. ■

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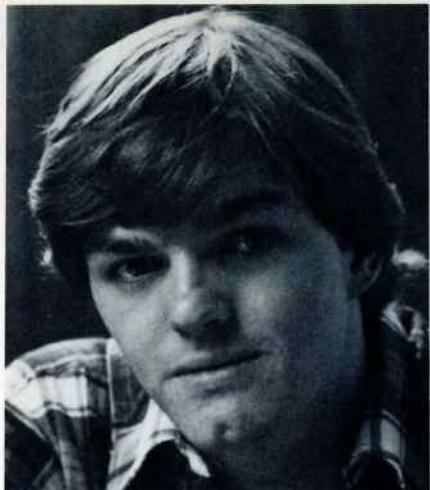
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Marcus, from page 7

A short time after these incidents, Mark took part in a "Sexuality Discussion Group" at Huntley, organized by George and Rhoda. He met Ralph Loesser, 18, at the sessions. Building on what they had learned and discussed with the group, the two of them met one evening to talk about the idea of starting a gay youth group—one which focused its scope on the particular problems of the young gay person. They reviewed some of the things which had come out of the other group discussions: rejection, identity problems, role-playing, parental relationships, etcetera. "We decided that starting a youth group for gays was a worthwhile objective. Beginning with some members of the Huntley group, we began to contact acquaintances whom we thought would be interested in such a group."

The first meetings were held at Mark's place, in May of '75. Soon they needed larger quarters and eventually found the perfect spot at the 519 Church Street Community Centre, which is owned and operated by the City of Toronto. Mark approached members of the board of directors; their initial response was hardly enthusiastic. Some insisted that the legal aspects had to be researched exhaustively. Others suggested the requirement of a psychiatrist's presence at all meetings. One proposed limiting the membership to "young people over 21." Fears were voiced about the dangerous possibilities of sex on the premises and young people, uncertain of their sexual identities, being corrupted. Negotiations dragged on.

As weeks passed, Mark marshalled support for his cause. Support was requested and received from Margaret Campbell, Liberal Member of the Provincial Legislature; Toronto Ward Six Aldermen Dan Heap and Allan Sparrow; the Toronto Children's Aid Society; the Metropolitan Community Church; the Community Homophile Association; Huntley Youth Services;

psychiatrist Clive Chamberlain and social worker Mike Armstrong, both of the Juvenile Court Clinic. The last great stumbling block was the group's proposed age spread. "I kept pressuring them for our original proposal, ages 14 to 21, but eventually the group accepted the board's suggested ages, 16 to 25." After more than a month of board and program committee meetings, the first gathering of the Toronto Gay Youth Group was called to order in a meeting room at the community centre.

The group meets every week with an average attendance of 15. Guest speakers are a regular feature, but many of the meetings are taken up with group discussions. "There's an agenda for each meeting, but unless the group is planning some big event, like a dance, we move the business part as quickly as possible to get to the lecture or discussion."

The group serves another purpose as well—as participant in a referral arrangement with other Toronto organizations like Huntley, Toronto Area Gays and the Family Court Clinic. "If an organization feels that someone they're talking to might benefit from talking to us, they'll give the person our phone number. We're always glad to meet with someone. One guy who's 14 has been phoning for about two months now; I'm trying to encourage him to meet me so we can talk face to face. I'm also trying to get him to go to Huntley."

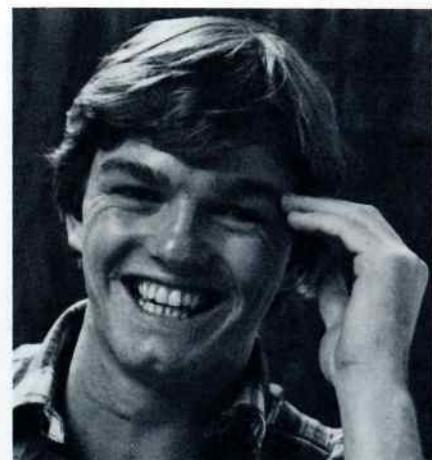
"I think it's important not to close people in with labels. If someone phones who thinks he might be gay, I stress that it's also possible that they might not be. I try to tell them that the best way to find out who they are is to talk to people. Some people just aren't ready to confront themselves. We're trying to help."

The membership of the group shifts continually, as new members join, gain confidence, then move out into the wider gay scene. "That happens in most gay groups. They tend to be a first stop for people just coming out. Some young gays," he adds, "frightened or dismayed by a new world with new rules and customs, leave both the group and the scene and go back into isolation. I think it's at the back of everyone's mind when they go out for the first time that this is it, it's going to last forever. Our society is so family-oriented that our first thought is to find a lover and settle down. The chances of it happening the very first time aren't even worth talking about. But some people think that if it doesn't work, there's something wrong with them. It takes time to accept the idea of relaxing, enjoying meeting people. There is no rush required—no frantic search for a lifetime companion—if you've al-

ready come to terms with yourself and your other goals. People tend to put too much pressure on themselves to find someone to satisfy needs that they can only satisfy for themselves. I've been through that, and now I think that if I can't find meaning in my own life, then nobody in the world is going to give it meaning."

"Part of the problem is that the gay world is a new and terrifying place for someone just coming out. All of a sudden, after years of being cut off from everything, it seems as though you have been cast as part of a big party. You walk around, trying to look like you know who you are, acting sophisticated when you're really scared out of your mind. You attempt to convince the person you're interested in that you're really someone else, someone this person is going to like. The pressure to compete, to make it, is really unbelievable."

"The clubs are really great places to escape to. I enjoy them. But eventually I had to realize that I'd reached a point where I'd made the clubs my reality. I had to face the fact that I was scared and that I was running around trying to find what I could only find in myself. I think that what I'm learning to do now is to relax, to enjoy my life and to avoid trying to make it by being something that I'm not."



For Mark, the last year has been a giant leap from despair to a whole new way of seeing the world. Was it worth the effort? "It's been a stupendous year. I'll always remember it, but I wouldn't want to go through it again. Learning can be painful. I'm finally aware that I'm ever-growing, ever-changing. If I can learn to have some grasp on who I am, then maybe I can help other people find out who they are. If I can help people realize how much there is in life to enjoy, then it makes sense that I'll be enjoying my life all the more. I want to finish my degree in psychology, maybe go on for my Master's degree. As for love, well, I don't think I'm all that settled in myself yet, or will be for a while." ■

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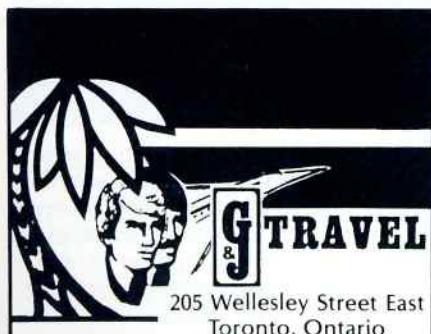
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Forum: Where is the Gay Hero?

(GCO)—After eight years of gay liberation, wouldn't it be nice if we could have produced just one up-front man for a gay hero? A man who young gay people could identify with. A gay version of Mickey Mantle, Woody Allen or Dustin Hoffman who would serve as a role model for pubescent gays. An openly gay man with sensitivity, integrity and self-respect who could pose a real threat to the Garbo and Dietrich posters cemented on the walls of gay bars all across the continent. A man who would demolish stereotypes once and for all and with one courageous smile, expose the inane sensibilities of a male mystique that is rooted in acting like "real men" do.

The recent epidemic of "bisexuals" is only an alternative if we are ready to admit in desperation that a good gay man is truly hard to find.

My closest friend doesn't believe that gay people necessarily need gay heroes. Nevertheless, she worships Kate Millet, idolizes Jill Johnston, aspires to write like Rita Mae Brown and jokes about moving to Massachusetts so she can campaign and vote for Rep. Elaine Noble. And just last June, her "favourite comedienne in the wole world" discreetly, but with dignity, stepped out of her closet.

Where are the gay men with whom we could make comparisons? All these women risked coming out at either the outset or peak of their careers. Forget about the guts it takes to come out—these women just plain care. It's understandable why Tennessee Williams didn't come out during his creative peak—in the naive Forties and Fifties. He came out via his *Memoirs* in 1976 because he needed the money. If he needed the money, I would rather he'd have done Maxwell House Coffee commercials than to have told all the world he's the real Blanche DuBois.

And how much good does it really do to have Charles Laughton come out after he's six feet under?

Recently, Truman Capote said that having a couple of heterosexual experiences doesn't make one a bisexual. This is a decent sign of Capote's gay consciousness. But in the Mart (*Boys in the Band*) Crowley tradition of hanging up our dirty laundry for all the straight world to see, Truman is responsible for authoring the television movie *The Glass House*. The centrepiece of this fortune-in-men's-eyes flick was the brutal rape of an innocent and likeable straight teenager by a gang of toughs. Like Billy Joe McAllister, the youth ends up leaping to a suicidal death. And what excuse can there be for Mr. Capote starring in

Murder by Death, a film that does for transvestites what *Taxi Driver* did for cabbies?

It must have taken a lot of courage for ex-pro football player Dave Kopay to come out of the closet, but where is he? What does he have to do to get a headline? Rob a Brooklyn bank? Stage a kidnapping? Torture and kill twenty-seven boys in Texas?

Most straight people would be shocked that a homosexual, like Kopay, looks and acts at least as "normal" as they do. And just imagine how disillusioned they'd be if they knew we've been doing it for decades in Hollywood and on Broadway.

There are, of course, some gay heroes—many, in fact. The problem, however, is that they are either invisible as homosexuals or else they're traitors sporting a heterosexual disguise. If a special Grammy were given for the singer of best heterosexual love songs, who would win the award? Johnny Mathis, Barry Manilow, David Cassidy or Elton John?

In a magazine appropriately titled *After Dark*, there was an interview this year with Barry Manilow: "I'd never been there (the Continental Baths) before—it was... well... Turkish baths for men—and there would be girl singers there too; it was really a mind-blower... it was the freest audience I ever worked with."

In the same vein as Manilow's liberal pat on our backs, singer Johnny Mathis said recently in an *Advocate* interview that he donated a substantial amount of money to a gay health clinic; that he is an avid reader of our foremost gay publication; that only when gays become more visible will they become freer; and that he would never come out in a publication and say he was "anything." And he didn't. But at least he's consistent.

As for Elton John, if his latest album *Blue Moves* is the artistic expression of a bisexual, then it's a sure bet that bisexual liberation will have nothing to do with Elton's morose and gloomy vision of life and love. More importantly, Elton has become a cheap sell-out to his presumed heterosexual buying public. Why, in all these productive years, has he never sung a single positive utterance for gays? Doesn't he know anything about gay love? Doesn't he care? Exactly what kind of bisexual is he?

If nothing else, he certainly owes gay people an apology for *All the Young Girls Love Alice*, a song that depicts young lesbians as women with a choice: being victimized by aggressive "middle-aged dykes," or having to throw oneself before an oncoming train. We could use his support, but if this is all he has to offer, we must never stoop to accepting it.

With all the "liberals" and self-proclaimed bisexuals (Gore Vidal, Rod McKuen, et al.) speaking out these days, one begins to wonder if unqualifiedly gay men really exist. Are we just figments of a homophobic imagination? Will we have to exhume the corpse of Charles Laughton to find out?

The reason we need gay male heroes is because we all remember growing up gay without them. If we couldn't quite see ourselves as the Lone Ranger, Tom Sawyer or John Wayne, who did that leave? Bette Davis, Lucy and Patty Duke?

From time immemorial, men have been conditioned to define their manhood primarily in terms of their ability to dominate women. Gay men are not interested in dominating women, and as such we are defined as mere pretenders to masculine titles by those who are. Straight society copes with us by refusing to take us seriously. The reason we're not front runners is that we aren't even in the race. In a patriarchy like ours, we are left to choose between the comfort of invisibility or the oppression of honesty. From either side of the closet door, we all (deep down inside) still want to be men. And we can.

It's time to replace the term "coming out" with "becoming honest." It's when we equate gayness with goodness and integrity with strength that we become our own heroes. That's what self-pride—and gay pride—is all about. ■

—Rich Berkowitz



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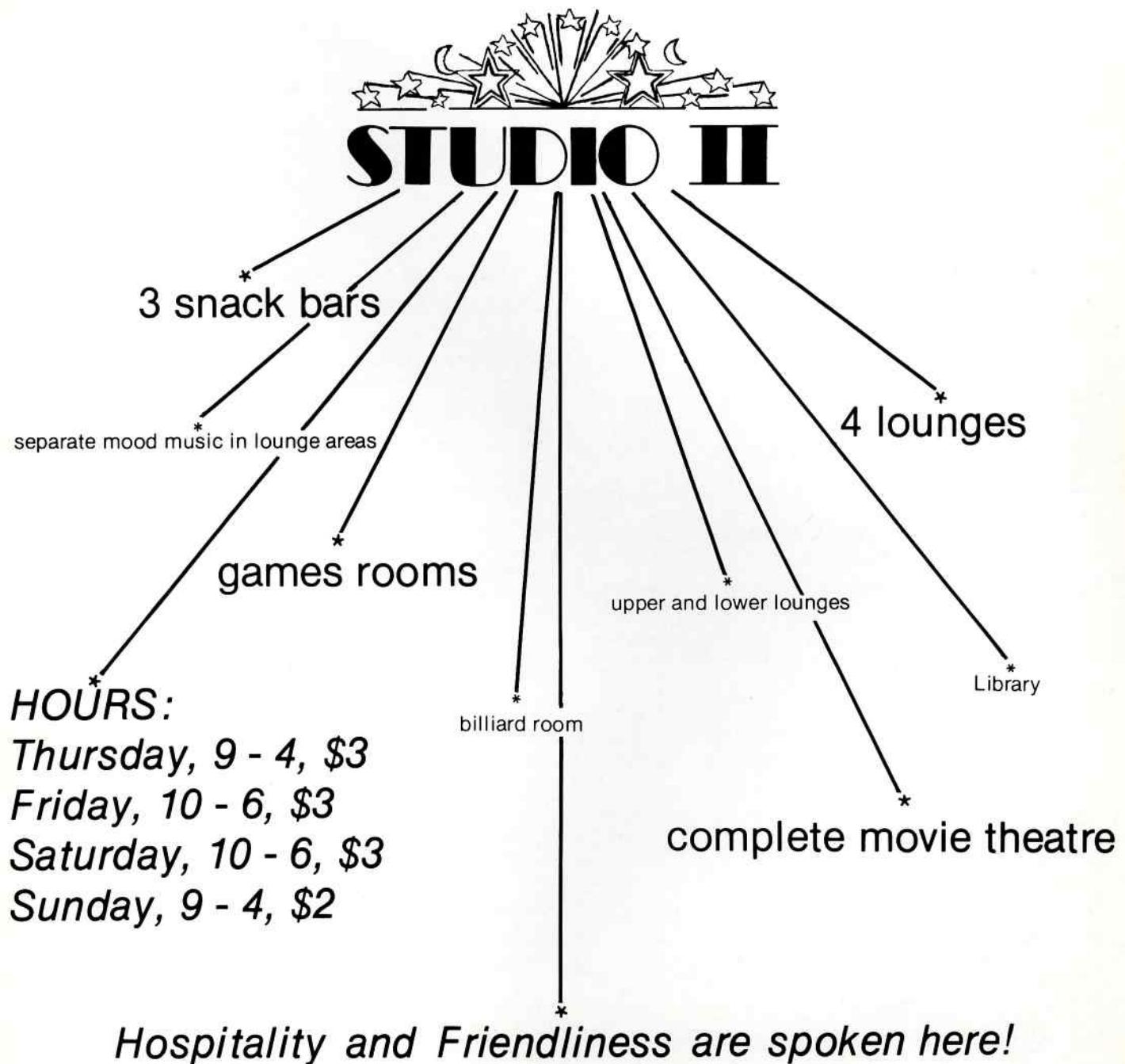
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