EDITOR'S NOTE

This is the GAY MORNING STAR Spring issue. It is a collective effort by members of the Duke Gay Alliance (DGA) to provide an open forum for gay commentary and information—and in the process, to strengthen our sense of unity and pride as a gay community.

We publish once a semester. With more input, we could publish monthly. Weekly! Give the Duke Chronicle competition. Letters, commentary, essays, news items, and poetry are welcome. Contributions may be submitted to the DGA office (second floor, East Campus Center), or mailed to the address above.

Spring. A good time for coming out. For honest sharing.

It matters. Phil W.

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THE LESBIAN-FEMINIST AND THE GAY WOMAN

Any organization that hopes to unify diverse aims, hopes, and lifestyles in a common effort of self-discovery and of benefit to the larger community can expect internal stress whenever the needs of individuals within the group grow more urgent than general, long-term goals. During the past year, the DGA has encountered a problem of unity faced by many gay groups the country over. Many gay women are finding that they derive greater sustenance—both as homosexuals and as women—in the feminist movement than in "gay liberation" as initially organized and developed by men. As a result, many of the women in DGA have preferred to transfer their allegiance and their political energies to local Lesbian-feminist groups. Other women have felt an obligation to continue their active support of the DGA. We have solicited the following two contributions in an effort to give both points of view a chance to express themselves. It need only be said that it is the consensus of the Alliance that our common goal remains the same, whatever the form of individual commitment: the freedom to discover and to express ourselves as complete human beings, brother and sister alike.

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I. Fears and Visions

When I think about myself, I think about feminism because it is a very personal politic for me and inseparable from any part of my life. Feminism—lesbian feminism—has become my vision of the future. I am growing increasingly extreme in my perspective, in my expectations and analysis; yet every day I accept and "tolerate" a reality much less rigorous. When I am overwhelmed by hassles permeating an environment which is too, too infrequently supportive of me, when I lose the will to fight oppressive forces, I live within myself, passively. But I want to flow with all women. In my dialogue with other women I turn my beliefs over and over; I reshape then and revise then. I criticize myself when I find that I am operating from the defensive position that my solution is the only one, when an idea that is logically justified clashes with my more intuitive sense of "what's good". At my core are my separatist beliefs. I live a very separatist life which I would like to be even more separatist. I have made a decision to immerse myself in women's culture and I find that I have no time for, or support for, the men's world, insofar as there is a choice. I listen to women's music, read what is written by women, listen to the radio when women are in control of it, go to women's parties, ride in women's cars, relate to women as wholly (holy) as I can, and I find a growing strength from doing so. I discover more about myself, my rhythm, my perspective; I care more about myself; I receive invaluable support for myself, and my vital life energy blossoms. I love my friends, and when the circle is not violated (by the debilitating male world) the energy circulating among us grows and nourishes us all. I have a vision of a woman's world, and in it this circle of energy will become a total environment in which we can become the women of our most visionary fantasies, and beyond.

We ask each other, will we live through the decade? Will there be equality between the sexes? How much more violence will be directed against us as the old moral systems decay? Do we, will we, have the courage to continue? Is there any choice?

--Barbara Hednan

II. With Respect to Charlotte Bunch

The recent (February) Chapel Hill festival on feminism featured Charlotte Bunch, former editor of Furie, as a speaker for the Lesbian-Feminist movement.*--Luckily, I might add, for both lesbians and feminists. Whatever uneasiness about her credibility that I entertained before hearing her presentation was dispelled by her admirable display of competence, conviction, and ability to communicate. I left the room with the comfortable sensation that the straight folks in the audience, particularly the men, had received a mind-fill. Nevertheless, her speech reaffirmed my awareness that my own attitude (which might be called gay humanism) departs considerably from the Lesbian-Feminist position on a number of points.

Ms. Bunch's arguments may be summarized (perhaps somewhat loosely) as follows:

1. Sexist society is supported by relationships in which women define themselves in relation to men (e.g., daughter of, wife of, mother of). Likewise, sexist society

*Note: Charlotte Bunch, currently a Fellow of the Institute for Policy Studies in Washington, is a Duke honors graduate (Women's College Class of '66); among her distinctions as a student: University Symposium Committee, co-chairman of the YWCA, White Duchy, and president of the University Christian Movement.
is undermined by relationships in which women define themselves in relation to other women.

2. Heterosexual relationships are relationships in which women define themselves in relation to men, and lesbian relationships are relationships in which women define themselves in relation to other women.

3. Therefore, the lesbian is a natural standard-bearer for the feminist cause, since the lesbian is the epitome of the woman-identified woman.

4. Furthermore, the existence of lesbianism as an alternative to heterosexuality for women provides powerful psychological and political support for the feminist cause.

5. Finally, Lesbian-feminists will achieve their goals by working primarily with other women, not by working with gay men.

In response to all this, I agree that lesbianism is a groovy thing (I am a lesbian myself), and I agree that sexism is destructive. But I'm not sure about the inevitable connection between lesbianism and any philosophical or political stance. Nor am I convinced that women who fight sexism effectively by becoming "woman-identified", or that straight women can become "woman-identified" by becoming lesbians.

Let me dispense with the last notion first: straight women don't become lesbians for political reasons. It is true that a woman who has heretofore behaved as a straight woman, but who is really more turned on to women than to men, can outgrow her inhibitions and fears about her own sexual orientation and become a practicing lesbian. But the "turn-on" response to either sex (or both sexes) is not something one arbitrarily acquires as an adult. Most lesbians I know have day-dreamed about sexual and emotional encounters with women from childhood onward.

As for the ideological neutrality of lesbianism, I think the best illustration is the case of the lesbian relationship which incorporates the traditional, rigid roles found in most heterosexual relationships. I'm not referring here to sexual roles (who's on top in bed) so much as to social roles (who's making the important decisions and using the other woman to support her own personal striving). This kind of thing happens all the time in lesbian relationships, and probably for the same reason as in heterosexual relationships: it is a convenient trade-off in which each party (in different, symbolic ways) is relieved of the responsibility of becoming a complete person.

In other words, a woman can be "woman-identified"--even lesbian--and still be involved in a sexist relationship. I think what we need are more "self-identified" women (whether heterosexual or lesbian) who are competent and assertive and yet (unlike most straight men) strong enough and kind enough not to use other people is pursuit of their own goals.

If we define the objectives of feminism in this way, gay men are as much a part of the struggle as gay women are. Gay men, too, have trouble achieving mutually supportive relationships between equally self-motivated individuals. If lesbian-feminists can convince themselves that we are all part of the human struggle to outgrow social dominance and dependency, perhaps we will get there sooner.

--Lou Sawyer

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The NEWSLETTER welcomes reaction and comment on these essays for possible use in future issues.
NEW GAY RAP GROUP AT UNC-CHAPEL HILL

For the past few months, gays at the UNC-Chapel Hill campus have been meeting for a weekly rap session. Meetings are scheduled for 8:00 PM, Monday evenings, at 218 Pittsboro Street in Chapel Hill.

Weekly topics have covered a great range of issues relating to the gay community, the oppression we face and the need for liberation. While the group was originally conceived as little more than a weekly rap group, support for expanding our scope was immediate and strong.

We experimented with a Gay Coffee House on Friday, March 29; the results encourage us to hope we can make it a regular event next year. The group also intends to file for official student status in the near future as the Carolina Gay Alliance.

All members of the gay community in the Chapel Hill area—both students and non-students—are welcome to participate in all of the activities of the group.

--- M.G.

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DUKE GAY ALLIANCE ON WDBS-FM

The first DGA Men's Group radio program was aired April 2, 1974, at 6:00 PM, on the WDBS-FM Crosswords show.

After months of talking, planning, procrastinating and playing musical chairs with responsibility, I decided that something really needed to be done, and scheduled a time with Rob Conroy of WDBS to record the show. Working with a deadline seemed to help, for by March 17, Aden had formulated a top-notch program format (with a little help from me, of course). On Monday, March 18, Aden, Phil, Tom, Ed, Arthur, Wally and I met at the WDBS studio to record the broadcast.

Within an hour, we had taped a group discussion of several topics, such as the problems and emotional pain often arising from strained or severed relations with friends and parents; the need for personal identity, self-acceptance, and a sense of community. It was difficult at first to talk freely about the pain each had experienced in the course of dealing with his homosexuality: so many of the wounds were still fresh, unhealed, or newly opened. Some of us were rather relieved to move into areas easier to talk about—aspects of lovers and other sex-partners, and the question of sex-for-fun-not-procreation; being held, holding, the harmony and inner peace one may sense in sharing between friends and lovers....

Finally, what, if anything, we felt homosexual men might constructively say to heterosexual men (aside from "off our backs!"); a general feeling emerged that men, straight or gay, are victimized not only by abusive labels, but even more by unrealistic and stifling role-expectations of "masculinity" and "macho". This seemed especially well-demonstrated, we said, in view of the usual habit of reading tenderness, touching, or gentleness in a man as effeminate and weak. So much for constraining stereotypes.

During other portions of the program, Aden read poems by Cavafy and Whitman. Arthur quoted a speech given by Allen Ginsburg at the trial of the Chicago 7; Tom read from his article on the DGA in the 1973-74 Duke Y University Experience.

We all wish to thank Rob Conroy and WDBS for their interest and help with the technical and aesthetic aspects of the recording. Hopefully, the success of our first effort will arouse more interest and action for other programs. Anyone interested in helping with future shows should contact me at 684-4364, or call the DGA office at 684-3043.

--- Nick Kyriazi
SEASONS

1.

After all this time
here I am again
wanting what I cannot have
crying over his smell on my collar
that will soon fade.
Have I learned nothing, then?
Will I never have enough?
What is it I need?
the impossible
the excessive
one too many
Always I reach for
what is beyond my grasp
Always I try to ingest the unreal
To make nine
what always is outside.

The pain is not theoretical
the tears are real
My ideas of desire
are illusions, sophism.

Oh, hell, let me out of here,
I'm sick and tired
of my ass-backwards heart.

11.

now I have come out
here in the woods with you
the smell is the same
but your tanning body
cat-cradled against my own
feels like an answer
the hollows of your body are pools to drink from
to bathe in
your glistening flesh gives me an image of myself
your eyes reflect green leaves the sky and the white sun

we make love on the ground
and melt into the warmth
iii.

A day of no shadows
Sun a glazed bulb
dogs and undergrads run about
chase each other around trees
and fall panting
in couples
on the dead leaves
I walk slowly
noisily
singing in my dreams
soft private strains

a day of cold cars
and kleenex
people all day
almost-tears
(the sweet ones)
at night
letters to you
singing to you
dreams for you

I have found a rhythm of sorts
that is
you are a song
I sing
a poem I read
to the world

iv.

My room
Rug red on the floor
Black night thru the windows
The air a sifting net
    floats down down down
    in quiet
    finality
And on the bed we bristle and burst into flame.

--A. Kaplan
MISCELLANY:  LITTLE LORD FAUNTLEROY
AND THE COLLECTIVE UNCONSCIOUS

"We must be relevant."
"Yes, but what's relevant to teenagers?"
"Well, for instance, social problems."
"What kind of social problems?"
"All the new horrors--homo-
sexuality, drugs, alienation, pre-marriage sex."

--So goes an imaginary dialogue
in a recent attack on current trends in
juvenile literature (The Horn
Book, Feb. '72), one may now add
teen-age abortion. But in pleading
for a return to the eternal verities, the
reviewer tends to gloss over the
fact that mayhem and morbidity have
been staples of children's fare from
the beginning, whether in the form
of sadistic folktales, or the scarce-
ly more subtle cruelties of the Up-
lifters, from A Few Sighs from Hell,
or The Greens of a Damned Soul (1658)
through Anecdotes of a Boarding-
School; or, an Antidote to the Vices
of those Useful Seminaries (1781) on
into such grotesque Victorian pieties
as the one hundred Death Bed Tri-
umphs of 1857.

It is perhaps not unsurprising to
find even homosexuality among Mother
Goose's brood--as in "Robin and Ri-
char" were two pretty men/ They lay
in bed 'till the clock struck ten,"
etc. And that most genteel of chil-
dren's writers, Frances Hodgson Bur-
nett, is responsible for fixing in
the public mind--for several gen-
erations, at least--a standard image
of the effete little panty-waist
with long blond curls and velvet
suit with sash and lace collar. As
a result, "Fauntleroy" still appears
in lexicon of modern American slang as
a term for an effeminate man. (The
1972 supplement to the Oxford English
Dictionary, more tactful, reports
that the term is applied "often
ironically, to a child of the gentler
nature....") Even Mrs. Burnett's
choice of name for her little hero
was inauspicious: in the earlier
19th century, "Fauntleroying"
meant "forgery", after an English
banker executed in 1824 for that
offense.

But while it was scarcely her
intention in her most successful
novel to give a bad term a worse
connotation, Mrs. Burnett reveals
a curious ambiguity of purpose in
a later, less-well-known work,
Little Saint Elizabeth and Other
Stories (1890). In the undeniably
maurating title story, another
little heir with irrepresibly
charitable instincts flits about
her New York town house in a nun's
habit, much to the disgust of her
bachelor uncle Bertrand--who, as
author and illustrator make clear,
is rather more than simply an ef-
fete Gallic dandy; he is shown in
mannered posture sporting a luxu-
rious ankle-length frocked astrak-
ahan, snickering through his handle-
bar moustache as he remarks on
Elizabeth's eccentric garb: "And
that impossible dress! Why do you
wear it again? It is not suita-
ble."

More suggestively, "He always
rose late, and this morning he was
later than usual as he had had a
long gay dinner party the night
before. It was nearly twelve be-
fore she heard his door open."

---And even then, little Elizabeth
is forced to eavesdrop outside the
breakfast-room as Uncle giggles
with an early visitor. But Mrs.
Burnett is generous: by the end
of the story, "as for Uncle Ber-
trand himself, he became very fond
of her, and sometimes even helped
her to dispense her charities. He
had a light, gay nature, but he
was kind at heart, and always dis-
liked to see or think of suffering.
Now and then he would give more
lavishly than wisely, and then he
would say, with his habitual grace-
ful shrug of the shoulder--"Yes,
it appears I am not discreet. Fi-
nally, I think I must leave my
charities to you...."
Executive Director of the Children's Book Council, allows a 72-year-old lady to observe to his 14-year-old protagonist, "I read somewhere that about ninety percent of American male babies are circumcised at birth, automatically." (It may be simply a matter of breathtaking inaccuracy that the title of the book is Remove Protective Coating a Little at a Time.)

But to the same author we are indebted for a new departure in the treatment of homosexuality in juvenile books, I'll Get There, It Better Be Worth the Trip (1969) manages to avoid patronizing satire and unconscious indirection in presenting the subject directly, with sympathy and honesty. Donovan's breakthrough has been followed by others, notably Lynn Hall's Sticks and Stones and Isabelle Holland's The Man Without a Face (both, published in 1972 for ages 12 and up, were nominated for a Newbery Medal)—though each retains a certain amount of the sentimentality shared by adult novels of the genre and involves characters not entirely free of stereotypical touches (Arthur Bell, reviewing Miss Holland's book for the New York Times Book Review, describes it as "a sort of homosexual Summer of '42"). In the Glass Room (1971), despite the promise of the dust-jacket that "in a perceptive novel of two boys drawn together as much by their similarities, Mary Towne illuminates that moment when every young person has his first true glimpse of his own pattern of life," the story itself culminates in a crisis of concern, rather than of explicit emotion.

Of the lot, Donovan's I'll Get There deserves wider circulation among gay readers who may have missed it, both as an amusing and moving story and as an example of just what can be done in the unlikely framework of a gay novel for young people. The elements of plot are simple: since his parents' divorce, 13-year-old Davey Ross has been relegated to the Massachusetts coast with his grandmother and his pet dachshund. When Grandmother dies, Davey goes to New York to live with his mother—an alcoholic and abrasive ad-woman—in her apartment in Chelsea, where Davey is enrolled in a nearby Episcopal school (imaginary). He and Altschuler, the school jock, are drawn together in a friendship that eventually, with unexpected intensity, expresses itself in sex—naturally, and without premeditation on either side. While Davey is still confused by the episode, his dog is run over, and he interprets the accident as somehow a punishment for what he has done. After weeks of solitary struggles with guilt, Davey's need to settle the issue erupts in a fist fight with Altschuler in the school shower. The resolution is beautifully handled, with neither advocacy nor sensationalism: clumsily, the two boys begin to reach a clear and affirmative understanding of each other that augurs well for their future growth—in whatever direction—as genuine human beings, rather than as self-tormenting stereotypes.

Davey tells the story himself in the raggedly inconsistent style of a normal, bright kid—part self-conscious smart-aleck, part nascent intellectual, part sensitive introvert—that is much more plausible than the artificially homogeneous jargon of a Holden Caulfield (or, for that matter, a Tom or Huck). And although the format is essentially that of the school novel, the usual wash of murky and inchoate passion (as in A Separate Peace) is happily absent. Like Mrs. Burnett, Donovan occasionally amuses himself with the reader over Davey's head ("The next week we tie a nonsectarian school, but in a few days we slaughtering some more Episcopalians") but minor incidents and amusing touches of characterization—whe-
ther derived from invention or observation—satisfy one's sense both of art and life (a school chum's weekly allowance based on the cost of living index; Mr. Ross's impulse to legitimize his new fiancée's Jewishness by taking Davey on a tour of Sephardic cemeteries in the city).

It remains to be seen, when a novel like I'll Get There makes the Honor Roll of the staid Horn Book, whether we live in a time of moral progress or merely a period of moral flux; whether the essential seriousness with which Donovan presents his story and its issues will at some future date seem old hat, or merely a curious aberration. One generation's relevancy is another's yawn, squirm, or giggle. Still, for now, one hopes that I'll Get There will contribute towards an atmosphere in which the problems of honesty in relating to others can be faced with greater clarity and compassion. As for the question of corrupting a minor reader, I suspect that children of all ages do not understand in a personal way what they read until they are ready to.

--- C. Stillman

**SPRING REPORT**

Prospects for the Duke Gay Alliance are brighter than ever before. The institution of an Executive Steering Committee within the organization for sorting out ideas and for planning projects has been extremely helpful; more people now have the opportunity to become directly involved in the business side of gay liberation. We feel the Committee has made the Alliance more representative of and responsive to its members and to community needs. However, it doesn't replace individual member input and participation. One project that will require a great deal of energy and commitment from members and others interested is our co-sponsorship of a benefit dance with the Duke Y for a community group such as the Edge-nton Center, to be held on Campus early next Fall. We hope in projects such as this to enhance gay-straight relations on campus—and it would be good to see gay people from all over the area dancing and enjoying themselves in an open environment rather than in the segregated atmosphere of the bars.

DGA activities this past semester have included speaking engagements before various groups. In the largest to date, eleven members of the Alliance spoke with the Duke undergraduate class in Human Sexuality; response from professors and students has been quite favorable. In order to meet the remarkable increase in the number of speaking invitations received by the DGA, more persons—especially women—are needed as speakers for next semester.

The DGA will be what its members make it, and go as far as our interested, active participation carries it. As this first full year of meetings comes to an end, I feel that we have overcome most of the internal difficulties that plagued us last semester. Still, in order to be the viable gay liberation group we can be, we need more active participation from members, more ideas, and honest sharing among ourselves. We need a greater sense of the joyfulness that comes in working together among those involved in a uniquely personal, yet collective revolution; an affirmation of love and sexual expression between members of the same, as well as the opposite, gender. Much remains to be done; but we have come far, and there is good cause to feel proud and encouraged. I think it's a worthwhile trip.

--- Tom Benson, Chairman