

MUGWUMP

Splaaaaaat!

by Aime Phillips and special alien writer

Another traumatic week.

We misplaced the remote control at home for two days. It was horrible. I shudder to think of all the extra commercials I was forced to sit through. Imagine how my subconscious mind has been affected by this experience. I still haven't recovered from the four solid hours of American football AND commercials. I'm thinking of buying one of those whistling key chains to attach to it in case it falls between the cushions again.

Good news for students everywhere!!!

Alcohol consumption can be beneficial!

According to a staff member who wants to teach elementary children, choosing to drink for stress reduction could actually be termed as a healthy decision. Yes, instead of just saying no, like I was taught, she tells me that according to an article she was forced at gun point to read (I'm sure) titled Health Education in Schools "Smoking and drinking are two ways in which people cope with and reduce the effects of stress, and as such both serve important and health-giving functions." (1989, British Journal of Sociology of Education, 71)

Oh my God!

What are they teaching our teachers of tomorrow?!!!

Oh no! Aliens are coming! They're taking over! And they're pretending they're me! Read on at your own risk!!

Last Saturday night while drowning in the pool of drool that was accumulating in the binding of my Psych textbook, I was awakened by a phone call from a friend of mine. "Let's go out to the Social Club! I wouldn't have called, but I've been out every night this week and I've worn out all my REAL friends!"

All right! Something to do tonight. As soon as I hung up the phone (and carefully wiped my face), who walks into the office? (Yes I was sleeping at the Bruns at 8pm on a Saturday) Another friend of mine (much better looking) who wanted me to go to the Skydiggers concert in the Cafeteria. Wow! Two offers in one night! But oh-oh - a dilemma. How can I get my friend #1, who wants to stake out the Social Club for a certain someone, to go with us to the concert (or by herself to the Social Club)? I know, I'll just play it cool and see what happens.

Bad idea. Picture this: flashback to junior high. Girl #1 and girl #2 giggle in the hallway about boy #1. Boy #2 who is in the next room (the better looking friend) thinks that they are talking about him. When they try to explain the situation to him, he insists on knowing who boy #1 is (and you thought women were supposed to be the nosy ones)

OK. This is the plan: Mad dash to the Social Club - he's not there. Inspiration!! I know, I'll tell her that *he* will probably be at the concert. Yeah, then I won't feel guilty about friend #2, and I'll get to see the concert. Mad dash to the concert and we grabbed the last two tickets...that brought the ticket count to half capacity. We got nicely settled at the concert (which was really good) and my friend #1 noticed that 'he' wasn't there. I don't think she was surprised.

Anyway, for spite she dragged me (and my better-looking friend) back up to the Social Club after the concert. (*He* wasn't there either). By this time, however, I was feeling pretty happy (reducing my stress) and my better looking friend was getting bored, although he was getting even better looking by the minute. We waited around for a while but when no-one showed up I left with my even better looking friend. The last I heard, my friend #1 met a really great guy (so too bad to buddy who didn't go to the Social Club last Saturday night).

SSSPPPLLLAAATTT!!!!!! OOOOPS, more drool. I guess I'm back.

What happened? Oh well. See you next week.

OPINION

The opinions found in this column are not necessarily the views of the Brunswickan

Lesbian and Gay Liberation

The way forward

by Tony Tracy

History of Gay Struggle

On the evening of June 27, 1969, the New York police raided the Stonewall bar in a manner which had become routine over years of raids on gay bars and bath houses. However, on this occasion, as the gays were arrested and loaded into police vans, a riot broke out amongst the increasingly angry crowd, which became hostile and began attacking the police. The cops were forced to retreat into the empty bar, where they were imprisoned and forced to call their station for assistance. Four nights of street fighting, beginning at dusk and ending at dawn, followed between hundreds of demonstrators and the police, eventually forcing the cops to retreat entirely from the area.

As a result of the Stonewall Rebellion, the organized Gay Liberation movement was founded in August of 1969, with the establishment of the Gay Liberation Front (which, incidentally, chose its name as an expression of solidarity with other enemies of the American state — namely the Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese). The GLF was a militant organization which took its battles "out of the closet and onto the street," and which believed in the need for identification with a broader struggle against the system (and thus campaigned not only for gay rights, but also for an end to the Vietnam war, while making links with other groups such as the Black Panthers and labour organizations).

In Canada, a wave of attacks by the Toronto police on gay bars and steam baths throughout 1980 and 1981 (in which hundreds of gays were arrested as "found-ins" or "keepers" of a "common bawdy house") resulted in a militant demonstration by over 3000 lesbian, gay and sympathetic supporters in downtown Toronto in February of 1981.

In the late 1980's, a new nation-wide militant organization of lesbians and gays was formed with the name *Queer Nation*. Angry demonstrations against homophobia and gay-bashing were organized for the first time since the 1981 protests. Queer Nation was successful at organizing demonstrations on a regular basis, and began to make linkages with other oppressed groups.

In June of 1991, I attended a Toronto demonstration against the Reform Party organized by a coalition comprised of socialist groups, Black and Native organizations, trade unions, abortion rights activists and Queer Nation. Links were clearly made between these various constituent groups within this coalition, to the extent that, at one point in the demonstration, all of the participants (including a large contingent of Steelworkers, amongst others) chanted the slogans "We're here, we're queer, get used to it" and "Racist, sexist, anti-gay... right wing bigots go away!", together with slogans proposed by the labour groups and others. It is in such a linkage of struggles that the answer lies for gay liberation, as well as for the end of racism and sexism in our society. For without such a linkage in struggle amongst groups which are the most oppressed and exploited (women, natives, people of colour, lesbians/gays, workers), the individual struggles of each of these groups will be far more easily contained and defeated. Unfortunately, Queer Nation failed to continue to build those linkages, and over the year that was to follow, the organization began to collapse.

Against Separatism

While Queer Nation was clearly militant and activist oriented, its lack of a clear political perspective caused the group to close down over the summer of 1992. The focus of Queer Nation on "identity politics," which led to an inward focus on how gays identify and define themselves, as compared to an outward focus on changing the world, caused the group to lose sight of the way forward in organizing larger demonstrations which would make links with others who are fighting against the system and mobilize people into becoming militant activists. Additionally, Queer Nation maintained aspects of a gay "separatist" politic which argued that gay oppression is caused by heterosexuals, rather than concrete social and economic conditions within class society. However, oppression is a social relation that is structured into the political economy of capitalism, and not simply the result of some "bad ideas" on the part of some "straights". The separatist argument isolates gays from heterosexuals, which divides those fighting for gay liberation from potential allies. Thus Queer Nation failed in developing a basis for mobilizing straight people who support gay liberation, as well as failing to unite concretely with other oppressed groups to fight the social system which causes oppression: capitalism.

For United Action and Struggle

It is important to strive for unity with anti-racist and womens' groups by taking a firm stand on issues such as racism and reproductive rights. However, gay liberation is essentially a class issue, as the fundamental division in society is based on class. Lesbians and gays within the working class are by far the most oppressed and the least likely to be "out". Thus it is important for gay activists to organize within trade unions to pass resolutions condemning homophobic practices within the workplace. Additionally, it is important to look towards the working class as the key to liberation, for while the divisions inside the working class — between gay and straight, black and white, man and woman — seem to be all-powerful, workers' struggles break those divisions in a small way and form a basis for unity. Lesbians and gays must fight for an end to all exploitation and oppression in order to be liberated from the prejudices and repression that distort and destroy sexuality. The smashing of oppressions and the end of exploitation can only come, however, by cutting at their social root, capitalism, which is based on promoting division and hatred to divide and rule. Therefore, the way forward for lesbian and gay liberation involves broadening the struggle to include the struggle against the capitalist structure of our society.

As Frederick Engels, in his 1884 book *The Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State*, pointed out:

"What we can conjecture about the way in which sexual relations will be ordered after the impending overthrow of capitalist production is mainly of a negative character, limited for the most part to what will disappear. But what will there be new? That will be answered when a new generation has grown up: a generation of men who never in their lives have known what it is to buy a woman's surrender with money or any other instrument of power; a generation of women who have never known what it is to give themselves to a man from any considerations other than real love, or to refuse to give themselves to their lover for fear of the economic consequences. When these people are in the world they will care precious little what anybody today thinks they ought to do; they will make their own practice and their corresponding public opinion about the practice of each individual — and that will be the end of it."