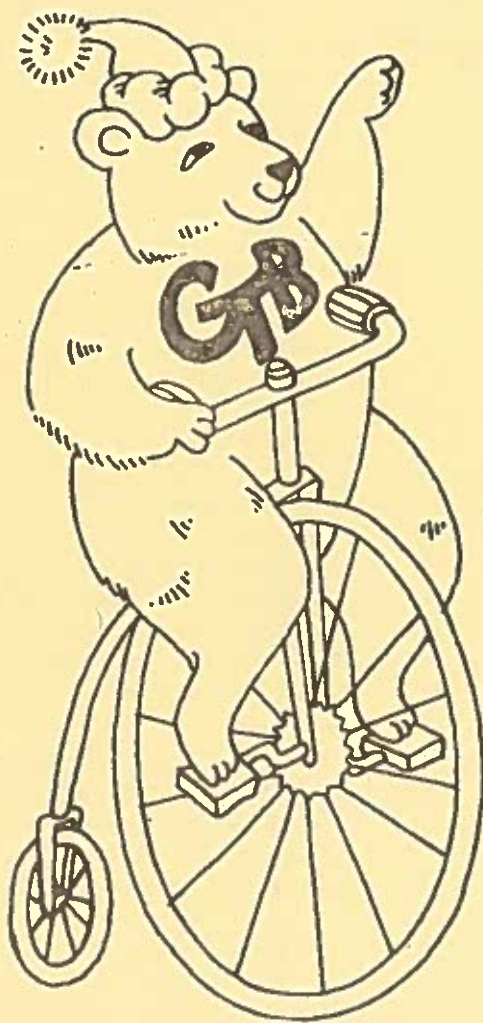
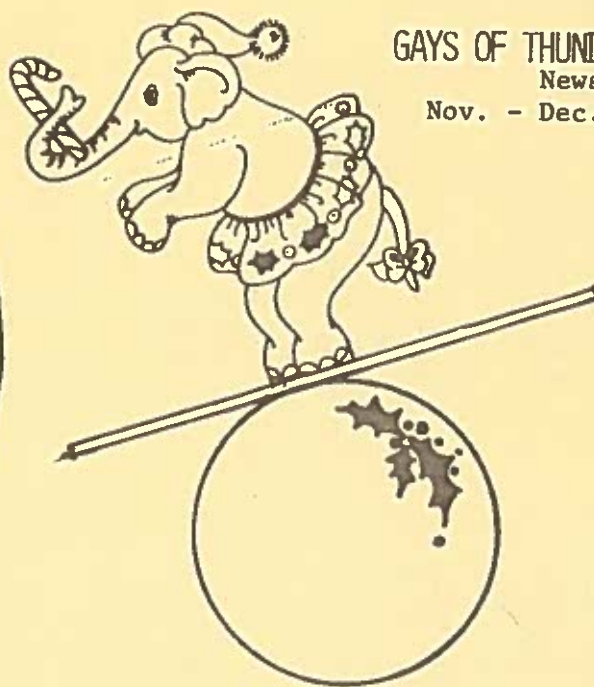




Thunder GAY

GAYS OF THUNDER BAY
Newsletter
Nov. - Dec., 1980



Merry Christmas Merry Christmas M
tmas Merry Christmas Merry Chris
Christmas Merry Christmas Merry

Thunder GAY

OUR COVER: Burt and Beulah are rolling their way into the Holiday season, wishing us all a joyous time. They appear again, later in this issue, in convenient cut-out form. Just snip along their shapely lines and presto! You have a gay tree ornament, table or mantel decoration. Cheers.

Nov. - Dec., 1980

THUNDER BAY REPRESENTED CGRO GEARS UP WINTER CAMPAIGN

Toronto (Special) - On the weekend of November 29 - 30, a meeting of the steering committee of the Coalition for Gay Rights in Ontario (CGRO) was attended for the first time by a representative from Gays of Thunder Bay. This marked the official participation of one of Ontario's newest gay organizations in the coalition. CGRO consists of 27 member organizations plus individual members and has worked for the past five years for the amendment of the Ontario Human Rights Code to include "sexual orientation" as a ground on which discrimination is prohibited.

Despite a 1977 recommendation by the Ontario Human Rights Commission in the report, "Life Together", as well as support from religious, labour, social and political groups, the Ontario government has steadfastly denied gay people a place in the community. When legislation was recently introduced to broaden the coverage of the Human Rights

Code, gay people were once again deliberately excluded. The only possibility now will be an attempt to have "sexual orientation" included when the bill is studied in committee - probably early in 1981.

DRAFT APPROVED

The CGRO steering committee meeting spent much time approving the draft of a brief which will be used to lobby members of the Legislature. There was also discussion of the need to lobby throughout the province, to show that gay people are part of the social fabric of the province. During the meeting, a consensus emerged that, while the political lobby is important, CGRO should shift its longterm emphasis to the question of education, both in the gay community and in the community at large.

Grass-roots organizing, information-sharing (see page 5), cultural exchanges, and public education

are among the areas already in the planning stages, and the focus of CGRO will be in these directions in the future.

On a personal note, it was exciting to participate in this meeting of gay groups from around the province, and to realize that we are part of a large and growing community.

THUNDER BAY ORGANIZES

Here in Northwestern Ontario, there is work that needs to be done in the Human Rights campaign. Gays of Thunder Bay will be lobbying local MPPs to encourage their support for a "sexual orientation" clause and will be approaching the media with press releases and information in an attempt to develop public awareness of the issue.

You can help in the process as well. The more pressure there is on the politicians, the less possibility there is for the issue to be ignored. We encourage you to write letters supporting the "sexual orientation" clause, to your MPP (Jim Foulds or Mickey Hennessey in Thunder Bay), to

Contact GTB if you have any further questions. You can write CGRO at the address listed hereunder:

CGRO,
P. O. Box 822,
Station A,
Toronto, Ontario
M5W 1G3

CONTRIBUTORS:

We wish to thank the following dedicated souls who worked the long hours to present this special Christmas issue:

Michael,
David,
Doug,
Burt & Beulah.



Premier William Davis, to Liberal leader Stuart Smith and to NDP leader Michael Cassidy.

Also included below is a petition form which you are encouraged to clip and send to CGRO. In addition, financial assistance is required for CGRO to carry on the campaign. We urge you to make a financial contribution to CGRO, and to become a member (\$10 for a year) if you have not already done so.

I believe that lesbians and gay men ought to have the same protection against discrimination as is provided to their fellow citizens and to members of other minority groups. I support the specific inclusion of sexual orientation in the Ontario Human Rights Code as a ground on which discrimination is prohibited by the Code.

Signature

Telephone

Name (please print) Last, first, initial

Address: Number, Street, Apartment

City, Town

Province

Postal Code



FIRST ELECTION OFFICERS ELECTED - CONSTITUTION APPROVED

T. Bay (Staff) - A crowd of approximately thirty people attended the offices of the Gays of Thunder Bay on November 18 in this group's first ever formal election of officers. As well, the group unanimously approved a constitution.

There were ten openings on the GTB executive committee with the interim president, Dave, being acclaimed the new president. GTB officers also include Kirk as the treasurer, Doug as secretary, Kim as office manager, Terry as phoneline co-ordinator, with Michael, Barb, Patrick and Rick elected as members at large.

A disappointment to some officials was the fact that if the new president is a male, the vice-president must be female and no women stood for the position. It was agreed that women should be enticed to the group as it serves both of the sexes.

The executive will serve a full year's term with the post of vice-president left open.

Another post left vacant was that of the chairperson of the fundraising and social committee chairperson. It was the feeling of many of those present that this particular post was very time consuming and could pose an especially difficult

...And a special thank you to our Fort Frances correspondent for keeping us in touch.

task. In the meantime, the new executive has appointed a small number of persons willing to take on organizing tasks for individual functions and left broader planning to the group as a whole.

In another unanimous decision, the membership fee of ten dollars per year was set. It was felt the fee would include membership in

Gays of Thunder Bay as a whole and not to be misconstrued with a fee for membership in a club when that time comes.

Highlights of the constitution included officially naming the group, its objects (see box), head office, membership requirements, and the composition of the executive.

Article 2: "Organization")
The objects of GTB shall be GAYS OF
The objects of GTB shall be:
a. To provide services and facilities, including a social club, to meet the social, cultural, psychological, educational and spiritual needs of the gay community;
b. To act as an information and referral source to members of the gay community and the community at large;
c. To strive for legal equality and for social acceptance of individuals of differing sexual orientations.
Article 3: Head Office
The

The GTB constitution clearly outlines the objects of the group. As stated above, GTB is not only concerned with the establishment of a club but is involved with education, referrals, and striving for legal equality. The group is associated with the Coalition for Gay Rights in Ontario which is currently lobbying the provincial government for the addition of a "sexual orientation" clause to the Human Rights Code.

NUMBER CHANGED PHONELINE "PHONEMENAL"

T. Bay (Staff) - Aside from an unexpected and awkward change in phone numbers, the GTB phoneline has been termed "a phenomenal success" with calls continuously pouring into the office.

Volunteers are on the phone on Wednesday and Friday nights from 7:30 to 9:30 answering calls from gays just coming out, persons wishing information about the group, for the dates and times of social functions and many other requests too numerous to mention. On one evening alone, 69 calls were registered in two hours of operation.

Volunteers note that many of the calls are harassment but are cheerful to say that they remain "cool" and try to point out the positive aspects of the gay lifestyle.

When the change in telephone number occurred, organizers were taken aback by the way it was done. In a letter to GTB dated Monday, November 17 but not received at the GTB office until Friday, a company representative advised GTB that the number would be changed that very afternoon. To make matters worse, the directory assistance operator or any other operator, had not been informed of the change so that callers to the phoneline only received a busy signal. Sometime over the weekend operators were advised to intercept and notify callers of the change.

At a GTB meeting the following Tuesday, members decided to notify

(See Phoneline - Page 5)

PHONELINE (CONT'D)

the various papers of the change. As well, Dave reports he contacted the city phone utility and received assurance that the new number (345-8011) will remain permanently with GTB.

The phoneline is open 24 hours a day and dialers hear a recorded message with information on happenings and other advice. Counsellors can be reached on the phoneline on the nights and times mentioned earlier.

Terry, the phoneline co-ordinator advises that volunteers are required to man the phones on an occasional basis. Training and a resource directory are available. Some counsellors sit and train with working volunteers before going onto the line.

EXPERIENCE '81

Guelph (Special) - In February of 1981, Guelph Gay Equality will be hosting a resources-sharing weekend in that city for gay groups from around the province. Called, "Experience '81" the three day conference will be attended by GTB members - the number is not yet known - who will share in the organizational and functional experiences of their diverse groups.

According to literature from the experience organizers, "gay liberation groups in southern Ontario are gradually developing a complete range of human services, specializing in all facets of community development, from peer counselling to politics, child welfare to gay bus-

iness. Many organizations have a background of nearly a decade of service.

"We must now begin a longterm effort to spread our collective experience to those of us who live in places where the effort to survive as a gay person makes it that much harder to 'start from scratch'."

The organizers have set three main goals. They are to permit an open discussion of approaches to organizing, educating and developing community among gay people; encourage participants to contribute their knowledge to a common resource pool for the use of other groups; to make the weekend a memorable one - good times, new friendships, open communication for participation from across the province.

This promises to be an exciting and invigorating experience for anyone participating and all those who may wish to attend a urged to do so. It is possible that transportation - flights, etc. - might be had for a cheaper fare if there is a good enough turnout and we act soon. If you wish to attend, contact GTB or tell Dave. Dave can also provide persons with more information about the event.

GTB HOLDS REGULAR MEETINGS every Tuesday. Our office is # 7, 214 Red River Road (Downtown Thunder Bay North). Meetings begin at 7:30 and by mutual consent are limited to 2 hours.

QUESTIONNAIRE: CLUB A PRIORITY

T. Bay (Staff) - Although the final tabulations have yet to be made, the questionnaire GTB has been circulating indicates that most people want a club.

The questionnaire which has been circulated for some time and most recently at the annual meeting, asks respondents for what they consider their priorities for the organization. GTB may use the results to set priorities for the new year.

So far, all the respondents indicated they want a club. And most feel the club should be composed of membership and guests only. Not surprisingly, most would like a dance floor, disc jockey and quiet area.

One official stated that he thought the former club, 'Backstreet' influenced the responses. That club was open two nights a week and the questionnaire showed most people satisfied with that arrangement.

At the bottom of the list for many is the function of political lobbying. The answers were split on a three-part question asking for ranking of priorities for a social club. It included the functions of a community centre, political lobbying and social services - the phoneline and counselling. All but two of the respondents ranked community centre and social services at about even. It is felt a community centre could best serve the varied interests of a group like Gays of Thunder Bay.

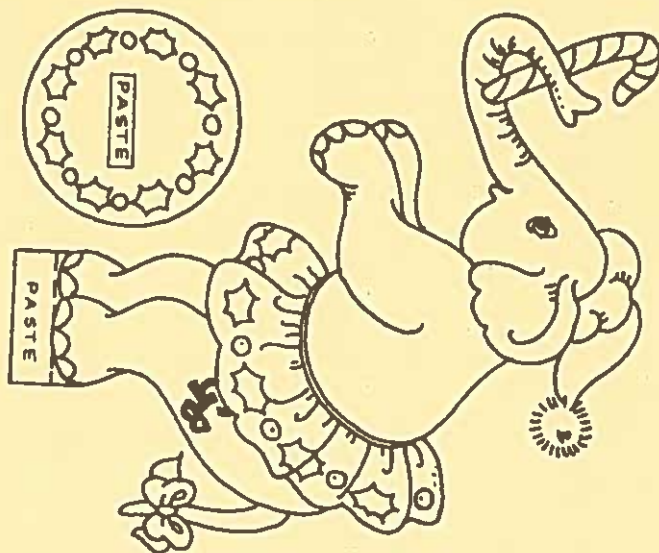
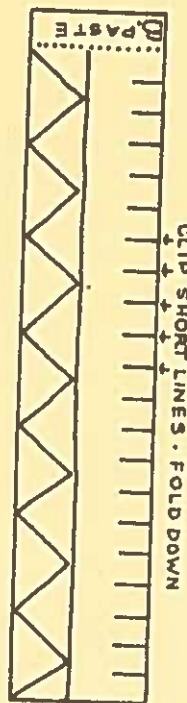
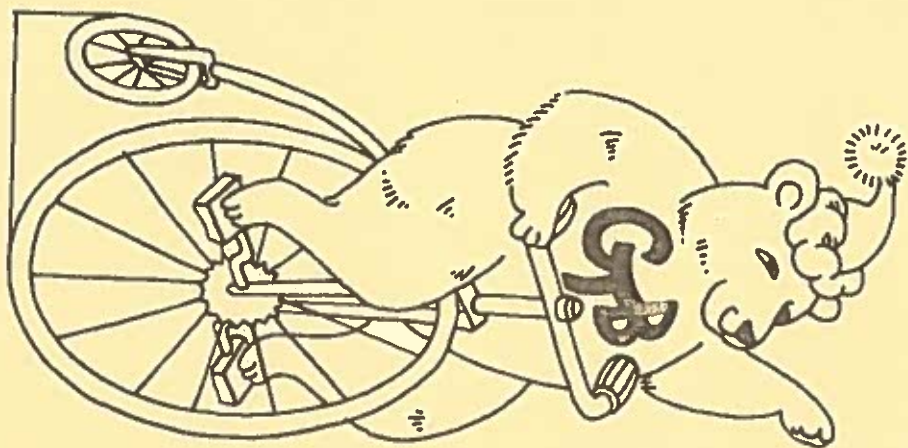
Some of the comments included the desire for minors to be let in and someone humourously indicated the need for a "back room".

Most of the people answering the questionnaire said they would be willing to volunteer for working at a club on a casual basis.

Official results of the questionnaire will be placed in a future issue of Thunder Gay. If you are interested in writing down your views, you can pick one up from Doug at the next GTB meeting on any Tuesday night before mid-January.

Membership in GTB is ten dollars per year. Benefits of membership include information about upcoming activities and future issues of this newsletter (printing and mailing costs mean that we can only send it to paid-up members. See the GTB treasurer at a Tuesday meeting, or send in your name and address plus ten dollars to: GTB, PO Box 2155, Thunder Bay, Ont.

There will be at least one GTB New Year's Eve houseparty, and possibly two. Phone the information line: 345.8011 to confirm details. These houseparties have proved to be a good way for people to meet each other in an informal social atmosphere. They generate some revenues for GTB's operations. And they generally are a good time. We are always looking for new hosts to open their doors for a gay party. Keep it in mind...



HERE THEY ARE JUST AS WE PROMISED. COLOUR THEM, PAINT THEM, CUT THEM OUT. PUT THEM ON YOUR TREE, WINDOWS, DOOR, HANG ONE ON YOUR CAT'S COLLAR. HAVE A MERRY TIME.