

Gay lib movement—'a whole attitude toward life'

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and
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Everyone should go to a Gay Lib Rap session at least once. Although one may return still committed to one's "way of life," one will probably leave the session with a liberal education and greater understanding of what gay libbers think.

The rap sessions are held every Thursday night on the UT campus under the leadership of Jeff Beane, who readily admits he is "gay."

"The gay lib rap sessions are an outgrowth of the gay lib movement," Beane said. "In the sessions, we discuss problems that gay people have."

"Gay lib rap sessions are not just centered at UT, but on many campuses and in many areas coast to coast," said Jim Fleenor, an East Tennessee State University student. "There is a group at Emory in Atlanta. There, they are more outspoken than we are—freer—and there are more women in the group."

"There is also a group at Lawrence, Kansas. A class on the Gay Lib movement is offered for

credit at the University of Kansas," another libber added.

"The rap sessions here are frequented by people in various professions," he continued. "Some ministers, high school students, clerks, secretaries, and numerous other professionals participate in the sessions."

At the rap session last Thursday, 18 persons attended. Two elderly men were in the group—one was a grandfather. Although there are some female members of the group, according to Beane, none were at the meeting.

Although the group members readily identified themselves at the meeting, most asked that "our names not be used; not because we're ashamed of what we are, but because of the social stigma and the resulting consequences."

Beane informed the group that they would need a new leader. He said he was moving to California permanently in a couple of weeks, "because it's more gay."

The group defines itself as "gay" rather than "homosexual."

Nick Flandung, a gay libber said, "Homosexual" and "gay" are not to be confused. In "homosexual," the emphasis is on

the word "sex." "Gay" does not indicate that the relationship is purely physical, but that one's whole attitude toward life is predominantly male-oriented."

Plans were discussed to operate a gay switchboard this fall. "The switchboard will be manned at certain hours by a gay person and will provide the caller with various general information," Beane said.

One person suggested that each gay person bring a straight friend to one of the sessions.

"Some straights may come if they know other straights will be there," one libber said.

"Maybe encouraging the straights to come to some of the sessions may help them understand what gay lib is all about," said Beane. "This way we can get rid of some of the misconceptions they have about gay libbers."

A libber who refused to be identified contradicted with, "I doubt it. Even then, people will be afraid to ask questions because others may see their interest. They are afraid that asking questions will make others suspect that they have ulterior motives and will wonder what those motives are."

Another added, "A lot of people come to these sessions and the first thing they say is, 'I'm not gay, I'm just doing a paper for a class assignment.' They want to make sure their motives are clearly stated and understood, because of their fear of being labeled by society."

Another added, "Some people are interested in the results of Gay Lib, but they don't want to get actively involved in the movement. Their interest in the gay life is purely social. Their serious life is separate from their gay life and their activities may be limited to an occasional night out with another gay person. When you're in the public eye, especially since you're considered by society as deviant, you have to be very careful."

"More open criticism comes from strangers who have found out we're gay than from our friends or relatives," he continued. "When our friends or relatives find out, their first reaction is disbelief. For instance,

they'll say they can't understand how you can look at an attractive girl and not feel anything."

"When my father found out I was living with another guy, he was really shaken up. He said he couldn't understand why I would want to live with a guy when there were so many willing, beautiful girls around."

"It's as hard for the straight male to understand why we prefer men, as it is for the gay male to understand the straight's preferences for women."

The group agreed that because of societal opinions, they sometimes find themselves being extremely defensive about gay people.

"For example," one said, "the papers played up the homosexual crimes in Texas. When any discussion came up about it, I

found myself being defensive. Then I asked myself 'why do I have to be so defensive? Gay people have their deviants just like other groups in society.'

He used the terms "M" and "S" and "Drag Queen" as examples of deviants within a gay group. "M" and "S" refer to gay people who believe in masochistic and sadistic sexual excitement. "Drag Queen" is used to describe a gay male who dresses and acts like a woman. The gay lib group expresses the same type of disapproval of their behavior as the straight society does, he said.

In spite of social rejection by the straight society, gay libbers feel there are advantages to being gay.

"It is easier for a gay person to have a sex encounter than straights," one said. "If you are a stranger in a large city you can use certain books and find out where the cruising areas and bars are for gays. In a matter of minutes a gay person can make a pick-up. I am told it may take a straight person a number of days."

"We can have more sex, too," he added. "If we want to, we can have sex every night. We don't have to worry about getting pregnant."

Another gay libber said, "One of the things women libbers are complaining about is that society dictates that man is in the dominant role and that the woman belongs in the passive/A

gay male can submit to sex in a passive way as well as a dominant way. Sex is not forced into a mold, but is left to the imagination, experimentation, and agreement of the persons involved."

"We're not as different from other people as society would make us," another libber said. "We're not all sissies who like everything all frilly and nice, either. We do a lot of masculine things."

"The only way that we're truly different from others in society is in our sexual preference," he continued. "We prefer someone of the same sex and they want someone of the opposite sex. That's the only difference."

Counseling class offers new openings

The Rehabilitation Counselor Education program has announced that a few openings are available for the September class.

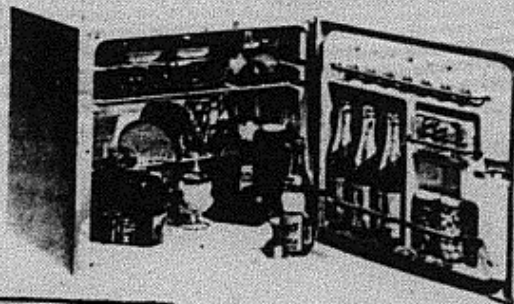
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