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“Undesirable Elements”: New York City’s Gay Press Before Stonewall, 1960-1969

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In July 1969, readers of the *New York Mattachine Newsletter* (put out by New York Mattachine, the city’s largest and oldest formal gay group) found five mimeographed sheets inserted into their copies of the magazine. Titled, “The Hairpin Drop Heard Around The World,” the article summarized the events of the Stonewall riots: the 1am bar bust, the accumulating crowd, and the decision to fight back, concluding with the following declaration:

Homosexuals are tired of waiting. After all, we can’t be put off with the old line that things will improve in the next generation and our children will lead better, happier lives. Most of us aren’t going to have children, and we have to struggle to make our own lives better. If the traditional means of winning reform cannot work in this age...then possibly the only place for those of us

who care about reform is in the streets.¹

How did the gay movement arrive at this point, and how did periodicals like the *New York Mattachine Newsletter* aid in the construction of physical communities and constitute communities in themselves? I attempt to answer those questions by examining periodicals aimed at gay men in New York City during the 1960s. This period is a useful one to examine as it contained social movements that shifted social norms and opened up space for increased communication between LGBT people.

1 Addendum to The New York Mattachine Newsletter, July 1969. Box 142. The LGBT Periodicals Collection. Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library. Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations. (Henceforth “The LGBT Periodicals Collection”).

Notably, the 1969 Stonewall riots kickstarted the mature phase of the LGBT rights movement in which the movement made its major legal and social/cultural advances to historical date. Thus, the period leading up to Stonewall is of particular historical interest. The paper focuses on male periodicals simply because there were more of them: the broader breadth of material provides a fuller basis for analysis.

Increased sexual openness during the 1960s created media space where gay periodicals could thrive. Pornographic magazines dropped their pretenses and became explicit locations for celebrating gay sexuality, while non-pornographic publications spread information and communication and aided in the establishment of physical communities. Both types of periodicals created communities of print, proving to their readers by their very existence that there were other men who shared their sexual and romantic interests. The explosive post-Stonewall expansion of the gay press was only possible because of, and largely arose from, the pre-Stonewall magazines.

The primary source archive examined here is the LGBT periodical collection at the New York Public Library. The International Gay and Lesbian Information Center collected these domestic and international LGBT periodicals from the 1950s through the 1990s from individual donations. Thus, the collections are often partial and fragmented. A reduction of the source material to gay periodicals produced in and around New York during the 1960s provided 19 pornographic magazines and 12 non-pornographic magazines, with runs ranging from complete 1960-1969 sets (*The New York Mattachine Newsletter*, for example) to only a single edition. The breadth of the collection is enough to counter any selection bias that could be present given the collection's random sampling of source materials.

Literature on pre-Stonewall gay periodicals is extensive in scope but lacks detailed analysis of this specific period and location. *Unspeakable: The Rise of the Gay and Lesbian Press in America* by media historian Rodger Streitmatter proved useful for framing periodicals from this area and time; it provided significant, necessary prehistory and some cogent analysis, but left out many of the key details about New York City's gay periodicals. Martin Meeker's book *Contacts Desired* provided a useful theory of mass media interaction as introduction to queer media that this paper explores, deepens, and corroborates with additional evidence from New York. David K. Johnson's *Journal of Social History* article "Physique Pioneers: The Politics of 1960s Gay Consumer Culture" provided much needed information and analysis about the development of the legal and social environment surrounding 1960s gay periodicals, although I propose to expand Johnson's thinking about the scope of the 1960s gay physique community, greatly extending his concept of what "community" means in this context.

I begin my analysis of 1960s New York gay periodicals by discussing the major trends and shifts in pornographic magazines during this time. Given the social and legal environment of the 1960s, for the purposes of my analysis I define these as magazines primarily consisting of sexualized images or drawings of nude or near-nude men, whether or not the magazine

labeled itself as pornography. This allows for an examination of physique magazines whose pretenses to non-pornographic status are among their most interesting characteristics.

It is overly simplistic to state that magazines became more explicit during this time, although that statement is largely true. Rather, it is more useful to examine changing trends and the impact these magazines had on the construction of community across three major parameters: whether or not they pretended to be anything other than pornographic and what forms that pretense took, what parts of the male figure were shown in images and whether photographs or drawings were used to show explicit material, and the ways in which magazines served as consumer hubs through which individuals could become integrated into a gay consumer community.

Before the mid-1960s, even obviously pornographic magazines fronted a fig leaf of respectability, often maintaining the pretense that they were artistic studies or informational magazines for serious bodybuilders. Even in many near-explicitly pornographic magazines, homoerotic and homosexual imagery was accompanied by heteronormative language and a pretense to non-pornographic status. While earlier in the decade these pretenses were often elaborate (and potentially effective), by the second half of the decade these magazines began to mock their own pretensions. A sheltered heterosexual bodybuilding enthusiast or art student might purchase an early-60s physique periodical out of genuine misunderstanding; it is almost impossible to imagine such a mistake being made with the periodicals produced in the second half of the decade.

1959's *American Apollo* exemplifies both bodybuilding and artistic pretense in the early years of the decade. In its first issue, a man poses with arms akimbo holding a sword suggestively. Superimposed over him is a quote from John Ruskin about education. This photographic spread is accompanied by many similar ones, and articles about good health, sunshine tips, sit-ups, pimple remover, protein tablets, and "gems of existentialist literature."² *Physique Illustrated* described its models as "displaying the care they take with their bodies,"³ and *Beach Adonis* informed readers that they had purchased "artistry and physique exercises."⁴ Interestingly, these magazines tended to be small, quarter-page size affairs – cheaper to print given their small circulations, and easy to hide or ship in nondescript brown paper envelopes.

Central to the bodybuilding and artistic pretensions these magazines fronted were the specific types of male bodies displayed. Late-50s and early-60s magazines almost exclusively show muscle-bound and hairless male forms, often compared either implicitly or explicitly to Greco-Roman statuary and/or Renaissance painting. The debut issue of *Go Guys*, published

2 American Apollo, 1959. Box 3. The LGBT Periodicals Collection.

3 Physique Illustrated, Summer 1965. Box 90. The LGBT Periodicals Collection.

4 Beach Adonis, 1964. Box 8. The LGBT Periodicals Collection.

in Spring 1963, featured articles about San Francisco outdoor sculpture, Greek sculpture, Botticelli, and Velasquez in addition to soft-core pornographic locker-room images.⁵

The use of Greco-Roman statuary was particularly inspired, placing the male nude or near-nude form into a respectable pseudo-historical context.

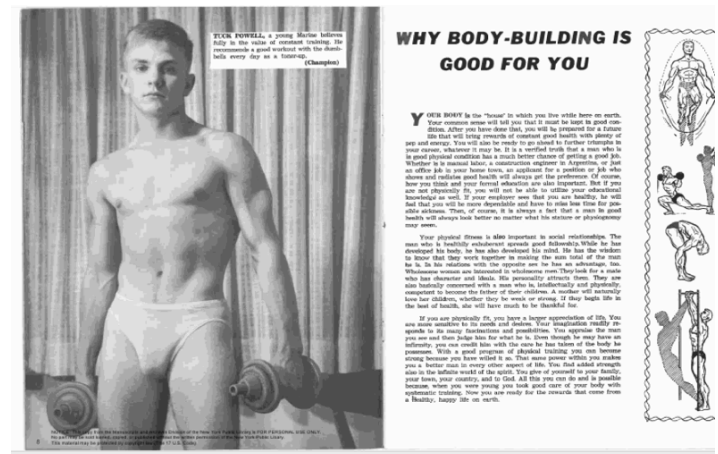
The same edition also features a remarkable – and to the contemporary eye, rather hilarious – example of the pre-



tensions to heterosexuality that these magazines pursued. A remarkable photo essay features two young, tanned, muscular blond men (nude but for jockstraps) cavorting on a beach during their spring break. The essay is accompanied by short paragraphs of description with thinly coded gay subtext. In the last of these paragraphs, however, we are informed that this beach vacation ended up with both of them happily marrying women⁶. Additional photo essays featuring men nude from the

rear were described as demonstrations of “artificial respiration techniques” and “wrestling.”⁷ Even as late as 1967, some publications maintained these thin veils of heteronormativity. *Summer Boys* featured an article about bodybuilding informing its readers that “wholesome women are interested in wholesome men. They look for a mate who has character and ideals...who [gives of himself] to family, town, country, and to God.” This text was laid out next to a picture of a seated man wearing a jockstrap, beneath which his genitals are clearly visible⁸:

As the decade progressed, however, these pretensions became coyer and toyed more obviously with the reader. *Thor* features writing that calls out obviously to the pornographic status of the images which it accompanies, even as it still grasps at the idea that the photographs are intended for non-prurient



purposes: “ONE Picture is worth 10,000 words, so here are two pictures of Ronnie and Julio. Unusually powerful muscular development to be viewed by the naked eye. Two pictures of two men. At least 10,000 words a piece should be good for at least 40,000 words. Just sit back and think about them.”⁹

By 1965, startup magazines felt free to begin to distance themselves from the bodybuilding excuse. *Young Champ* declared proudly in its first issue that it was “not a formal bodybuilding magazine. It rather combines the art of physical grace, muscularity, and beauty—with the art of photography. It is designed as a showcase of the well built man.”¹⁰ This language of the celebration of gay sexuality was not limited to *Young Champ*. By 1966, the magazine *Master* could discuss a bar in New Orleans where “campy” bartenders protected gay patrons.¹¹ Discussions of gay sexualities and spaces on the printed page created space in which readers could be integrated into

5 Go Guys, Spring 1963. Box 53. The LGBT Periodicals Collection.

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid.

8 Summer Boys, 1967. Box 104. The LGBT Periodicals Collection.

9 Thor, 1964. Box 11. The LGBT Periodicals Collection.

10 Young Champs, Issue 1, 1965. Box 119. The LGBT Periodicals Collection.

11 Master, January 1966. Box 74. The LGBT Periodicals Collection.

gay communities.

The various items of clothing, props, and specific poses that concealed male nudity gradually shifted from enforcing the pretense of non-pornography to winking at the need for any coverings at all. Adapted from the competition garments of bodybuilding, posing straps served as the primary mode for enforcing non-nudity in gay male pornographic magazines during the 1960s. Typically little more than two patches of fabric with string around the sides, these straps left little to the imagination, often showing clear outlines of genitalia underneath.¹²

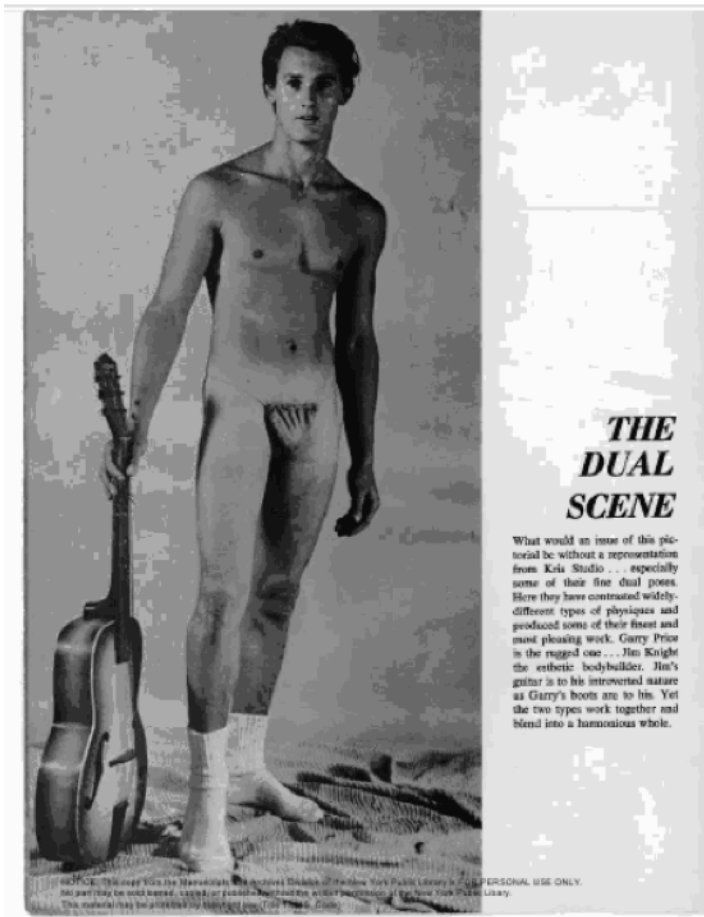
By 1962, legal codes were fairly clear around the consumption of photographs of men in posing straps: the Supreme Court in 1962's *MANual v. Day* decision found that these photographs were not "patently offensive" and were therefore protected by the First Amendment.¹³ Nude photographs operated on a shakier legal footing: the magazine *Butch*, produced out of

found that the fully-nude photographs were not obscene: "the rights of minorities expressed individually in sexual groups or otherwise must be respected. With increasing research and study, we will in the future come to a better understanding of ourselves, sexual deviants, and others."¹⁴

Increased gay sexual and legal self-confidence was mapped neatly by the decrease in size and thickness of posing straps. While posing straps were brief-shaped, thick and covered the upper thighs of the models in May 1963's edition of Jr., there were tight, g-string-based, erection-revealing posing straps scattered throughout the January 1966 edition.¹⁵ Posing straps sometimes appeared in mesh, as in 1967's *Young Physique*, in which the straps are (intriguingly) being worn in the shower.¹⁶ *Butch* began publishing nudes in 1965 as mentioned above, and after their court victory celebrated with a nude photo captioned, "This photo was declared NOT obscene in a Federal Court."¹⁷

Even when magazines couldn't give their readers fully explicit photographs in their pages, they could sell those photographs by correspondence. David K. Johnson has argued that many physique periodicals formed essential locations in which gay men could join a consumer world built around their sexual expression, citing the many advertised opportunities to "become a part of the physique world" by joining pen pal clubs, responding to bookstore advertisements, purchasing more explicit photographs, and ordering slides or film strips.¹⁸ More explicit photographs could be purchased from less-explicit magazines which served as catalogues for the more lucrative and expensive explicit material. As Johnson argues, "before there was a national gay political community, there was a national gay commercial market."¹⁹

Throughout its 1963 issues, *Go Guys* informed readers that "for a more provocative look," they could "order the more sensational pictures we didn't publish."²⁰ January 1966's edition of *Man Alive* contained coded reviews of gay-friendly bars in New Orleans and advertisements for gay book services and more explicit photographs.²¹ Many magazines examined in the research for this paper—including *101 Boys*, *Physique Illustrated*, and *Thor*—promoted the photographs from individual photo services that could be contacted directly for the purchase of additional photographs. The February 1966 edition of *101 Boys*, for example, described a model as "a great big



Minneapolis, which published full-frontal nude photographs starting in 1965, faced legal backlash with a federal court obscenity prosecution in 1967. In this landmark case, the judge

12 Beach Adonis. May 1964. Box 8. The LGBT Periodicals Collection.

13 David K. Johnson, "Physique Pioneers: The Politics of 1960s Gay Consumer Culture," *Journal of Social History*, Summer 2010, 879, JSTOR.

14 Johnson, 881.

15 Jr., May 1963 and January 1966. Box 64. The LGBT Periodicals Collection.

16 *Young Physique*, 1967. Box 119. The LGBT Periodicals Collection.

17 Johnson, 881.

18 Johnson, 884.

19 Johnson, 867-868.

20 *Go Guys*, 1963. Box 53. The LGBT Periodicals Collection.

21 *Man Alive*, January 1966. Box 71. The LGBT Periodicals Collection.

new DISCUS discovery” and offered the contact information of DISCUS to individuals seeking more pictures of him.²² An example of a typical purchase spread is below, from July 1967’s *Big*.²³

The siting of physique magazines at the center of the gay male consumer world—and their significantly larger circulation numbers compared to non-pornographic material—meant that they served as essential introductions into gay community. In 1956, *Physique Pictorial* began including the addresses of ONE and *Mattachine Review*, two national non-pornographic gay magazines for interested readers, even

availability of this community through pornography was of vital importance.

Other gay men could also be found through non-pornographic means. In New York City, the gay community used non-pornographic publications to spread information about safety and provide space in which the physical community could publicize itself, gain membership, and extend its reach to men who could not attend physical meetings. Rodger Streitmatter downplays the importance of these New York-based magazines in his history of the gay media in America, leaving out New York publications except for ones which interfaced with the counterculture. By ignoring *Eastern Mattachine Times* and the *New York Mattachine Newsletter*, as well as the other small periodicals produced by clubs and membership organizations, Streitmatter impoverishes his analysis. He describes the “explosive” growth of post-Stonewall gay periodicals in New York without accounting for the gunpowder.²⁵ Without the increased confidence aided and demonstrated by the brasher and more open gay periodicals of the late 1960s, the Stonewall riots could not have occurred.

New York City’s branch of the Mattachine Society began publishing its own independent newsletter in the mid-1950s. By the dawn of the 1960s, the New York Mattachine Newsletter was a small, quarter-page sized mimeographed booklet with obvious care taken in its design and presentation. The fall 1960 editions were primarily concerned with elections and discussion group meetings throughout New York City. Reports of the topics of various discussion groups—active groups on the Upper West Side, Brooklyn Heights, and Greater Brooklyn are mentioned—were included, along with information about how individuals could attend group meetings.²⁶

These group-meeting descriptions reveal one of the primary ways in which periodicals were used for community construction during the early 1960s. Martin Meeker has argued that mainstream media articles about homosexuality provided an important portal into the gay community for men. Newspaper articles about homosexuality included the names of major organizations. Men could then contact those organizations and be linked to circulating publications, and, if they lived in a major urban area, local meetings.

To explain this mechanism, let us use a hypothetical individual living in Brooklyn in the early 1960s. Perhaps confused about his sexuality, he wished to receive more information or attend a discussion group. If he heard about national Mattachine in the news, he could contact them and be directed to New York Mattachine. After beginning to receive their newsletter, he could then find out about the Brooklyn Heights discussion group and begin attending. My findings corroborate

though homophile movement leaders tried hard to dissociate themselves and their organizations with the tawdry physique magazine industry.²⁴

While Johnson analyzes the consumer market of physique periodicals with skill, he sees the purchase of additional commodities beyond the magazine itself as an “interactive experience” essential to entry into the physique community. I, however, argue that the physique community was even larger, including everyone who purchased such a magazine with the intent of using it in a sexual manner. The simple availability of a pornographic magazine to a specific individual implies that there are other people who wish to purchase it—others who share a similar sexual interest in the nude male form. Individual consumers of these magazines could thus understand that the availability of the magazines as products implied a market and thus the existence of other gay men. In a world in which many gay men were unable to identify themselves publicly for fear of losing housing, employment, and social privilege, the

22 101 Boys, June 1966. Box 83. The LGBT Periodicals Collection.

23 Big, July 1967. Box 94. The LGBT Periodicals Collection.

24 Johnson, 883.

25 Rodger Streitmatter. *Unspeakable: The Rise of the Gay and Lesbian Press in America*. Boston: Faber and Faber, 1995.

26 New York Mattachine Newsletter, November 1960. Box 155. The LGBT Periodicals Collection.

ed this: there is evidence that letters were forwarded among the organizations, and some discussion about that process.²⁷ Lists of publications and local organizations nationwide appeared in virtually every issue of virtually every homophile magazine, and they even maintained clearing house newsletters and newsletter indexes to aid this inter-organizational communication.²⁸ Here, I expand Meeker's argument to discuss the mechanics of the semi-observed gay media, and how information was split between public and private to aid in the construction of communities that existed both in the real world and on the printed page.

In 1964, New York City's outpost of the Mattachine Society split its newsletter into two - *Inside Mattachine* (later renamed the *New York Mattachine Newsletter*), and *New York Mattachine Newsletter* (later renamed the *Eastern Mattachine Times*). The announcement ran in the December 1964 edition: "*New York Mattachine Newsletter* will continue to direct itself towards the public, in general, and *Inside Mattachine* will direct itself towards the membership by carrying details of meetings, activities of the society, and qualifications of the quarterly business meetings and committee reports."²⁹ Implicit in this split was the notion that the distribution of information and the construction of community within the printed space of these publications needed to be segregated between the innermost membership and any individual who wished to purchase a copy. Publicly available magazines needed careful self-censorship to not destroy reputations or out closeted members.

The contents of the internal newsletter divide into two broadly defined categories: one in which the Mattachine community could criticize or promote itself and other elements of the homophile movement, discuss and document the organization's bureaucracy, and make frank appeals to members; and a second in which media portrayals of gay people could be discussed, advertisements from (often covertly) gay businesses could be discreetly posted, safe cruising spots could be identified, and information about dangers to the community could be spread. The latter category was also covered by the published magazine, but the newsletter's appeals on these issues tended to be franker and more revealing given the intended audience of the publication.

Within the first category, documentation of the organization's extensive bureaucracy occupied much of the newsletters, especially in the years 1965-1967. But for the then-controversial subject matter, these sections of newsletters are familiar to anyone who has ever seen a newsletter from any other volunteer membership-based organization or church. Individuals wishing to become more involved in the Society

could find minutes from meetings, discussion of the election of new elected board members, and appeals to attend decisive meetings and vote in them.

January 1965's newsletter brought a typical call to action to members: "[membership] is a responsibility. Each member has the responsibility of contributing in whatever way he can to the achievement of MSNY's goal."³⁰ This "people-to-people" dialogue was to be pursued through financial donations, attendance at meetings, and the contribution of individual private talents to the aims of the organization.³¹ The March 1965 edition contains a particularly pointed criticism of members who were absent at a recent bureaucratic vote. September 1965's edition contained more calls to action—to write articles for the newsletter and the published magazine, and to attend meetings. Additionally, from September 1965 on many newsletters contained calendars with information about not just the society's public meetings but members-only events often held at private homes.

Discussion and complaints about media portrayals of gay people were often present. March 1967's newsletter denounces the now-infamous CBS Reports documentary on homosexuality, pointing out its narrow focus on only certain individuals and types of individuals, and its many factual inaccuracies and prejudices. Additional complaints about Harpers' articles and other external media portrayals written by members served as testing grounds for public rebuttals that were then published in *Eastern Mattachine Times*.

As the newsletter grew, its production values rose, and soon advertisements were being accepted even in this members-only publication. The January-February 1968 edition included an advertisement for "investors in a new Turkish Bath," advising interested and open-minded parties to call the advertiser directly, "NOT...THE MATTACHINE OFFICES REGARDING THIS MATTER."³² By the end of 1968, several advertisements for gay bookstores and what few non-mafia-run gay bars existed appeared regularly in the newsletter, as could lonely-hearts ads, and even ads for "Space-Age Computer Matchmaking."³³

Cruising — where it could take place, and what the dangers were — also provided a popular subject of discussion within the newsletter. July 1968 featured the debut of "D.D's New York," a gossip column with information about cruising spots. A typical excerpt:

RIIS PARK is still active (Bays 1 and 2) for sun and surfers...but be careful in the bathhouse. OK to cruise,

27 Mattachine Newsletter Index, 1962. Box 75. The LGBT Periodicals Collection.

28 National Homophile Clearing House Newsletter, 1967. Box 78. The LGBT Periodicals Collection.

29 New York Mattachine Newsletter, December 1964. Box 80. The LGBT Periodicals Collection.

30 New York Mattachine Newsletter, January 1965. Box 80. The LGBT Periodicals Collection.

31 Ibid.

32 New York Mattachine Newsletter, January-February 1968. Box 80. The LGBT Periodicals Collection.

33 New York Mattachine Newsletter, September 1968. Box 80. The LGBT Periodicals Collection.

but don't touch! IF you own a car, take a trip to JONES BEACH between parking areas 6 and 9 (that's right - 69) and check the areas in and around TOBAY. My beachcomber friends tell me that the fuzz has already begun to raid the TOBAY area.³⁴

The frankness of the tone and subject matter demonstrate the relative safety that community members felt in expressing themselves within the spaces created in the private publication. The organization, however, took care to ensure that the newsletter did not *explicitly* endorse any illegal activity. "D.D." clarified: "I'm not endorsing ACTIVITY in public - only publicizing cruisy areas in the city. After you make out, take them home. As Mae West used to say, a man in bed is worth two in the bush."³⁵

Such a discussion of cruising would have had no place in *Eastern Mattachine Times (EMT)*, which wrote for a public audience and thus with much more discretion, seriousness of tone, and polish. This periodical mostly focused on legal and political battles of importance to gay men and women and critiques of mainstream media representations of and articles about them. It tended to focus on movement minority politics, consistently referencing other civil rights struggles and placing what it called "the homophile movement" at the heart of a comprehensive civil rights agenda.

Each edition of *EMT* contained a comprehensive listing of homophile organizations around the country, with names, addresses, and telephone numbers: the May 1965 edition promoted these addresses alongside recaps of events in New York and Washington, DC featuring activists Barbara Gittings, Frank Kameny, and Hendrick Ruitenbeek.³⁶ The magazine thus displayed its intent to communicate with a broader regional audience, bringing what it could of New York's more concentrated gay community out to individuals who did not have physical access to meetings, organizations, and events. A typical page of events listings is included here, from January 1966. Note the event listing and address of a new "homophile" publication on the left, and on the bottom center summaries of speeches from the ECHO conference of homosexual activists:³⁷

The March 1965 edition of *EMT* further exemplifies many of these trends. An editorial on the inside front cover advocated for the Weiss bill for civilian police review, asking individuals to mail petitions and associating New York Mattachine with "The American Civil Liberties Union, the New York Civil Liberties Union, the NAACP, and other civil rights

organizations."³⁸ A special section entitled "You and the Law," written by Mattachine hero Frank Kameny, gave advice to individuals if they were arrested or federally interrogated, telling them to avoid discussion of their employment, to plead not

January, 1966 Eastern MATTACHINE Magazine Page Five

The address of TANGENTS, a new homophile publication, was omitted from the last issue of this magazine. It is: 3473½ Chahuenga Blvd., Hollywood, Calif.

PUBLIC MEETING
Feb. 16 '10
Myths About Homo-sexuality
Donal MacNamara
FREEDOM HOUSE
20 W 40th St.
8:30

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seems to me, after reading the materials out there, that the homophile movement has been so effective that what these conferences may amount to is the movement's opportunity to see if the heterosexual speakers have kept up with all the literature the organizations are putting out!"

Also available were the popular slogan buttons. One of the favorites being worn was EQUALITY FOR HOMOSEXUALS, referring to the movement's campaign to secure for the homosexual, as a homosexual, complete equality with his or her fellow citizens.

But the button that stole the show was LET'S LOVE ONE ANOTHER. As one DOB member said, "Half the impetus for a Great Society is in that little message."

SCANNING THE SPEECHES

If the ECHO 1965 conference didn't offer a clear forecast for the homosexual citizen in the Great Society, it did provide plenty of advice for the homophile movement, as well as commentary on institutions in our present society. Some of this advice and commentary was even contradictory.

Psychoanalyst-social philosopher Ernest van den Haag cautioned organized homosexuals not to picket and not to get their cause mixed up with any other causes, while author-educator Paul Goodman advised the movement to ally itself with all other liberal causes.

Mr. Goodman proposed that the ideal state of being will bring "roses to the cheeks," but he then went on to recommend to the homosexual all the kinds of burdens and worries that, however elevating, would probably take those roses out.

Mr. Goodman, who talked on "The Homosexual Citizen in a DECENT Society," declared that in a decent society, the word homosexual probably wouldn't be used, whereas attorney Gilbert Cantor said that in the Great Society, the homosexual as such would have a symbolic function and would continue to stand for "other-mindedness, diversity, and individuality."

Mr. Cantor championed diversity within a culture and advocated that a new Great Society take its cue from the old great society, ancient Greece. On the other hand, psychotherapist and researcher Ralph Gumlach discussed speculations about the male citizen of ancient Greece as narcissistic, self-aggrandizing, and "a poor father and husband." He didn't say how such a personality produced the Greek society which he characterized as "the fount of our western civilization."

Both Dr. Gumlach and SEXOLOGY editor Isadore Rubin touched on the 1964-style idea that shaping of

guilty, and to complain to Mattachine and to relevant authorities if they received any "ridicule, gibes, insults, taunts, jeers, or other improper behavior."³⁹ The advice provided in these sections is tinged with a palpable sense of panic:

On matters having in any way to do with homosexuality, say NOTHING; "no-thing" means NO thing; and "no" means NONE AT ALL, with NO exceptions. It does NOT mean "just a little." [...] Do not attempt to exercise your judgement as to what may or may not be harmful to discuss. Close the door firmly and absolutely to discussion or comment upon ANY and EVERY aspect of homosexuality and, in fact, of sex generally.⁴⁰

34 New York Mattachine Newsletter, July 1968. Box 80. The LGBT Periodicals Collection. Manuscripts and Archives Division.

35 Ibid.

36 Eastern Mattachine Times, Volume 10 no. 4. May, 1965. Box 28. The LGBT Periodicals Collection.

37 Eastern Mattachine Times, Volume 11 no. 1. January, 1966. Box 28. The LGBT Periodicals Collection.

38 Eastern Mattachine Times, Volume 10 no. 3. March, 1965. Box 28. The LGBT Periodicals Collection.

39 Ibid.

40 Ibid.

This focus on dignity and stoicism as opposed to louder activism would later come back to haunt Mattachine, leading to its demise in a post-Stonewall era of gay activism defined by brashness and openness..

Eastern Mattachine Times accepted ads from the start. Public service announcements from its publishers were particularly prevalent - in January 1966, *EMT* ran a column ad advising anyone who felt a "victim of police entrapment" to "help stop these abuses... and notify Mattachine of your case."⁴¹ Advertisements for gay products and services reflect the consumerization of gay society and culture as public gatherings of gays in designated spaces and neighborhoods became more acceptable: for example, hair removal services and greeting cards were advertised throughout 1965.

Organizations significantly smaller than Mattachine used their newsletters in similar ways. One of my most remarkable findings was the September, 1967 issue of *Black and Blue*, the newsletter of the (gay) New York Motorbike Club. Made up of mimeographed sheets stapled together, the newsletter offers a remarkable glimpse into a particular gay haven in 1967 New York, and shows us how this community used its newsletter to organize and publicize events and remind members of the community that existed beyond their individual organization.

Set up as a private club, as were many gay bars to avoid liquor-licensing law, the club opened in fall of 1966. The newsletter, interestingly enough, takes the concept of the gay bar for granted - the opening editorial, celebrating the club's one-year anniversary, reminisces about "how much needed the club was...it was almost impossible to go drinking anywhere if you were wearing leather."⁴² It goes on to contain a write-up of the anniversary party, congratulatory telegrams from other gay biking clubs in Europe, a who's who section of the club's officers including their names and photographs, information about motor biking around New York, minutes of general meetings, thank-you notes to individuals, calls to action for members to contribute to the newsletter, general meeting minutes, and photographs and notes from a club-organized trip to Europe.

The anniversary party write-up is a useful example of the ways in which individuals not present or active could be enticed into joining the organization's physical activity. Details as small as invitation text and the types of food in the buffet were included. But for the accompanying photographs of buff, leather-clad men, this segment might read like a church bulletin. The inclusion of full real names and places of employment of many members and officers throughout the newsletter indicates that internally-distributed private communications were considered safe spaces by gay men in which they could self-identify as gay and discuss their lives, community, and identity

openly.

This increased confidence in private spaces was necessary for an event such as the Stonewall Riots to occur. When they did, however, the existing periodicals reacted to Stonewall with a mixture of tempered joy and worry about their lack of relevance to the countercultural gay movement then developing, while a host of new periodicals sprung up in the following weeks and months. The *New York Mattachine Newsletter's* response, examined briefly in the introduction, is a good example of these reactions. The initial article celebrated the riots as "the first gay riots in history," praised "swishes" (meaning drag queens and effeminate gay men) for their role in leading the riots, and included the militant statement about taking to the streets quoted in this paper's introduction.⁴³ Subsequent issues, however, hemmed and hawed about the phrase "gay power" favored by radical protestors—Mattachine ended up adopting the phrase, but merely placing it at the bottom of its traditional list of proposed reforms, including an end to police harassment and public acknowledgement and respectability.

New publications, on the other hand, demonstrated openness and confidence about gay identity and gay power in new and radical language. Printed on newsprint and issued much more frequently than the usually-monthly homophile magazines, these new papers served as the foundation of the 1970s and 1980s gay press. A fetishist magazine called *The Inner Tube* contained pornographic crosswords and advertisements for fetish gear featuring male genitalia.⁴⁴ In its first issue, *Gay* advocated fighting back against bar raids and contained articles about "the danger of the heterosexual."⁴⁵ In fact, so many new publications were popping up that one of them, a newspaper called *Gay Ways* full of lists of bars and ads for nude photos, opened its first editorial by saying, "What?! ANOTHER GAY NEWSPAPER?"⁴⁶ In a move that brings us full-circle, back to Mattachine and the pioneering homophile press, the newspaper (apparently short for content) included the entire December 1969 issue of the New York Mattachine Newsletter, reproduced and printed in its middle few pages.

The 1960s gay press served as a central component of community and identity for New York's gay men. It provided mechanisms by which they could find each other and safe space in which they could explore their sexual interests, discuss problems of identity and policy, and come to a progressive political consciousness. The central message sent by the existence of these periodicals was this: you are not alone, there are others like you; you are part of a community. Physique periodicals created a community in which queer sexuality could

41 *Eastern Mattachine Times*, Volume 11 no. 1. January, 1966. Box 28. The LGBT Periodicals Collection.

42 *Black and Blue*, September 1967. Box 9. The LGBT Periodicals Collection.

43 Addendum to *The New York Mattachine Newsletter*, July 1969. Box 142. The LGBT Periodicals Collection.

44 *The Inner Tube*, 1969. Box 62. The LGBT Periodicals Collection.

45 *Gay*, December 1, 1969. Box 39. The LGBT Periodicals Collection.

46 *Gay Ways*, 1969. Box 52. The LGBT Periodicals Collection.

be explored and celebrated. Private newsletters put out by organizations extended the reach of their communities beyond the physical world and into print. Newsstand publications provided avenues for introduction into the gay community. Without the developments in these periodicals in New York City, Stonewall and the mature phase of the LGBT movement would not have been possible. For gays in New York, the 1960s opened with the timidity and pretense of the tamest of the physique magazines, and ended with the post-Stonewall newspaper *Come Out*, which printed on the first page of its first edition: "Come out for freedom! COME OUT NOW! POWER TO THE PEOPLE! GAY POWER TO GAY PEOPLE! COME OUT OF THE CLOSET BEFORE THE DOOR IS NAILED SHUT!"⁴⁷

Or, as the (possibly apocryphal) drag queen reported to have started the Stonewall Riots said as she smashed a trash can through a window: "We ain't taking this shit no more."

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47 *Come Out*, June 1969. Box 17. The LGBT Periodicals Collection.