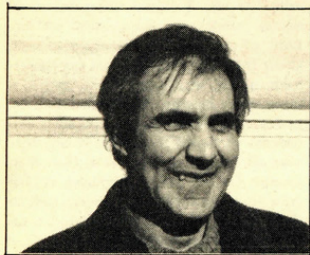


Equal Rights Hearings Continue

"I Should Have Worn My Maidenform Bra!"



BY LEO SKIR

Sunday night (November 14) I was up all night, fearful, insomniac. The next morning I might be called on to testify on discrimination against gays at the City Council hearings on Bill 475. I had typed out what I wanted to say. I re-typed it. I had xeroxed the testimony of 3 gay guys who'd experienced discrimination at the

President Robert Abrams coming out strongly for 475 as a "classic expansion of the frontier of civil rights and civil liberties."

Sanity—but not what people wanted that day. In front was former Yippie Jim Fouratt who has trouble letting a minute pass without yelling "Pig!" "Racist!" or "Sexist!" And around the hall a goodly number of such-like children looking like they were waiting to lead the revolution on the Battleship Potemkin.

They were awaiting "provocation" which now came. A Staten Island nurse holding a New Testament in her hand urged the councilmen to read Chapter 19 of Genesis on Sodom and Gomorrah. She was told by Councilman Burden that Genesis was in the Old, not the New Testament. He asked her how she related to the parable of the Woman Taken in Adultery. Was she without sin, to cast the first

fenses now open to gays were used at great cost (the case noted had financial backing from the New York Civil Liberties Union), and suggests legislation was needed.

Cheers.

Barbara Glickman, chairman of the foreign language department in a private school, said she was a lesbian and would no longer tolerate hiding behind a mask. She described her satisfying life with her lover and a child by a previous marriage, insisted that she and other gay members of the faculty worked well, were not "sick," did not seduce children. She demanded acceptance.

Cheers.

Alma Routsong of Daughters of Bilitis testified of police harassment for "selling beer without a license."

Cheers.

Morty Manford of Gay People at Col-

divert the issue."

But he's wrong. It is the issue. It doesn't matter that many transvestites out and stomp their feet.

SO:

Mrs. Charlotte Durham, employment agency counselor, had seen qualified gays as being fully qualified. She testified to a case of anti-gay discrimination she had witnessed. Applause.

Mrs. Margaret Skelar of 664 College Avenue, S.I. (two children, 6 grandchildren) spoke against having gays in the school system. "I am in the majority in disliking things contrary to God," she said.

Boo! Hissss! Boooooo! Hisssss!

Councilman De Marco: "There seem to be a lot of radiators here."

A question from the council: What injury could the homosexual do in teaching the young?

Mrs. Skelar answers in quiet surprise: They could teach them "how-to-be-a-homo."

WHAM! Yells! Screams! Jim Fouratt and Co. yelling and screaming.

It is explained to Mrs. Skelar that "homo" is a bad word like "nigger." She apologizes. Says she never uses "nigger" (good girl!), but apologies are not accepted by the Young Revolutionaries.

A Mr. Brauner-Judson, another Bible-man, explains that homosexuality is latent in all of us, that the young, so rebellious, must be led, instructed, and that whatever superior intellect "sexual deviates" possess, they lack moral character. Asked if they would not suffer by being denied jobs in education, he replied that it was suffering they brought on themselves through choice. He was the husband of the religious nurse who had testified previously. They had adopted five children. Perhaps they had taken to heart St. Paul's dictum, "It is good for a man not to touch the body of a woman."

At any rate, he was hissed at and boo'd at.

Harry Weitzer of the Religious Society of Friends testified against the religious injunctions based on the story of Sodom. He said the inhabitants of Sodom had been punished for violation of hospitality, not sodomy. He also spoke against the appeal to "nature." He cited the reports of homosexuality throughout the mammal kingdom from Wainwright Churchill's *Homosexual Behavior Among Males*. (So if the other mammals do it, do you have to?)

Cheers! Whistles! Foot stomping.

Alan Ross testified he could lose his child-welfare worker job if his homosexuality was part of the record. His supervisor knows, also knows he is an excellent worker. He gives the report to the council.

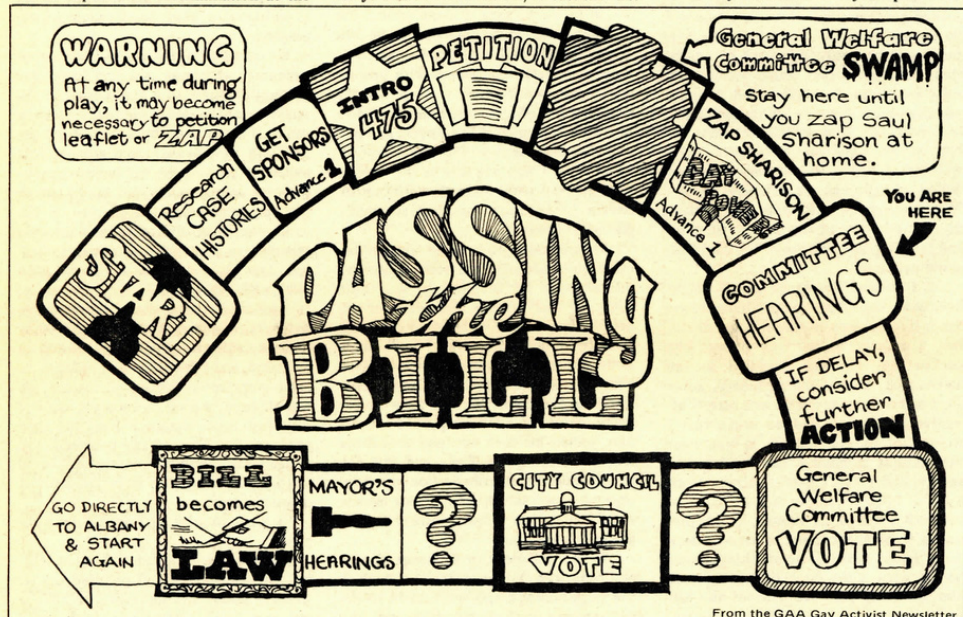
I feel very out of this cheering and hissing, as I did even in high school with our-team/your-team.

Arthur Bell (our team!) speaks, says at once that he has no intention of giving testimony after these Bible-toting sob-sisters (he has been sitting next to Jim Fouratt who is Mao-toting, angry-brother. Mao is Good. Bible is Bad. Cheer Mao. Hiss Bible. Our team. Your team. Bow-Wow!). "I am a homosexual and I am a human being. I don't have to listen to this shit."

He is talking as a *Village Voice* reporter. Carter Burden on the council is *Village Voice* publisher. Bell tells De Marco he—Arthur Bell—put De Marco down in his report in the *Village Voice*.

"Good," says De Marco, "The *Voice* being against me in my district stands in my favor."

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From the GAA Gay Activist Newsletter

YMCA—this to be given to the council.

No use. I was fearful.

No cause, it turned out. I WAS called. I DID give my testimony, but I was one of 25 people and my testimony was most pallid, tame, unnoticed. I had dressed up real straight—in a suit—bought for me by my father for a family funeral with hopes that someday I would put it on and get a real job. If he only knew I was using it to make an appearance as Public Homosexual.

I should have worn a dress. I had even thought of it since the last hearing. Councilman De Marco, one of the 15 council members of the Committee on General Welfare which was hearing our testimony, had visions of hordes of transvestites during the last hearing on the 18th of October.

Now when I came to the City Hall hearing chamber on November 15th, 10 a.m., I saw his dreams fulfilled. There was Sylvia and two sisters in full drag.

I was sorry we hadn't faced the issue head-on, earlier. I thought of the reaction of a king in a Scandinavian country (I think it was Denmark, in World War II) who, when all Jews were ordered to wear yellow stars, had them placed on his clothing and those of his family. We gays should all have worn dresses.

The session opened with Ethan Getto reading a statement of Bronx Borough

stone? She explained she was without sin since Jesus had taken her sins on him. She also referred to St. Paul's condemnation of homosexuality (but did not mention St. Paul's condemnation of marriage or his desire to keep women silent in public).

Another True Believer, a George Canaris, sole member of the Young Voters League of the Bronx, spoke. Mr. Canaris was young in heart rather than body. He spoke with the advice of his "religious leader," one Charlie Shaefer. His friends had told him to "give them hell," ("them" being the members of the council) for encouraging homosexuality. He explained to the members that the only reason homosexuals would enter the school system was to solicit children.

The man was thanked politely by the council and hissed impolitely by the audience.

Mr. Sharon, who was heading the hearings, told the assembled gays that he would adjourn the hearings if the demonstrations continued. The demonstrations continued and he did not adjourn. Whenever someone said something the gay audience liked, they clapped and stomped their feet. Whenever someone said something they didn't like, they would yell New York City, notes that the homosexual "discretion" is eventually forced to be perjury, cites cases where the legal de-

umbia spoke about being denied a lounge for gays at Columbia University.

Cheers.

Mrs. Helen Peason of Staten Island explained that the bill was a disservice to "discreet" homosexuals who did not pride themselves on a life which was against *God and Nature* (Staten Island and the Bronx seem to have a lot of God and Nature).

Wild hisses and boos.

Richard Amato presenting himself as connected with the Democrats of Queens gave evidence of discrimination collected as head of Gay Activist Alliance's Fair Employment Committee. A councilman remarked that he was avoiding the central problem: "What if we employ a Mr. Shultz on Monday and Tuesday we get a Miss Shultz. That's the problem. I just saw two people in dresses trying to get into the men's room—"

The two people in dresses—no three—in the balcony—Sylvia & Co.—called out and began to come down. The guards ran to stop them. A councilman said, "Let them come down."

Sylvia explained that they wouldn't let her in the ladies' room and she used the men's.

De Marco to Richard Amato: "Maybe the bill doesn't go far enough for you. Shouldn't it include transvestites?"

Richard Amato to De Marco: "Don't

Equal Rights Hearings

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Gloria Steinem of National Women's Caucus: "Women have a great stake in the humanist revolution."

Joan Valenti, Public School teacher, grades 1 and 3, says she has no objection to gay teachers.

Cheers.

Dr. Fritz Fluckinger notes that the homosexuals form 3 to 4 million, a large group which needs minority protection. He gives examples of previous cases of discrimination in civil service including aren't gay or that most gays aren't transvestites. That's where the line has been drawn (as it might with Jews, saying the orthodox with long beards are the "objectionable" ones. At that point Jews don't say the Smith Brothers aren't Jewish and that most Jews aren't orthodox-with-beards. Jews say let-them-in! WITH-their-beards!).

About this time I spoke, just reading from my paper. Cheers.

Dr. George Weinberg both read his statement and spoke. He summed up the

case for gay employment enfranchisement rationally and beautifully, gave his own clinical experience of the general ability of homosexuals to function normally and even well, logically turning on the two chief arguments against enfranchisement:

1. Popular opinion. Weinberg: "Many people have anti-Negro sentiments, but the law must grant and protect equal rights for blacks, not reflect a prejudice."

2. Influence. "If a child has five homosexual teachers and one is effeminate, why would he imitate the effeminate teacher?"

Cheers.

Guy Charles spoke out for gay anger, citing cases of discrimination amid cheers. When Sharison asked for less heat, Guy replied that gay patience was exhausted with the 9-month delay before the hearing.

Cheers.

Muriel Derr, a Christian, spoke for gay rights.

Cheers.

And then—Bebe spoke! Bebe was wearing a more-or-less male outfit, pants and a blouse, but her home-grown small breasts and long fingernails gave a sufficiently androgynous appearance to make her a fit representative for the transvestites.

He spoke well, clearly, to the point, giving his name as Anthony Scarpi. He had gone to parochial school. De Marco tried to maneuver him into intimating that he blamed the school for his "condition" but Bebe hilariously tossed the question of bad influence on the heterosexual lap. "Look around you!" he told the council, "We all went to heterosexual teachers! And look at us!"

De Marco was very happy. Calling Bebe "Anthony" (no Mr. and Mrs. or Miss), he asked him if he thought he could serve in the police force.

Bebe said yes, he thought he might help in such fields as female impersonation.

I felt uneasy about De Marco's happiness. I felt he thought Bebe had exposed the simple unreasonableness of the gay demands.

But no, he simply defined the frontier. Defined not by gays, who usually did not wear dresses, but by straights who saw gays as de-manned dressed men (as feminists were Bloomer Girls—women in pants).

I felt that the bill would not pass.

It was late. I had to leave. They were thanking Anthony (Bebe!) for adding a note of levity to the proceedings.

Yassah, boss! We sho are glad you like dat minstrel show!

Levity. Thank you for the levity.

A third hearing will be scheduled.

Levity.

Are we going up?

With all deliberate speed.

Levity.

Fairies do fly.

Higher, and hotter.

To be continued . . .