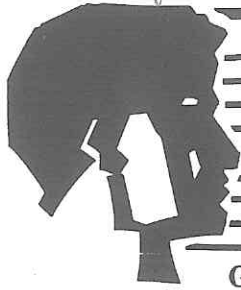


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GFC NEWS

August, 1998

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A Midsummer Night's...Dream?

President's Message

My apologies to the Bard of Stratford-on-Avon, but as I settle down to write this, I am reminded that it is now midsummer, and I wonder where the first half of this time of regeneration has gone? *Tempus* does indeed *fugit*, and all too quickly.

The swift flight of summer, a passage that seems all the more swift with each passing year, reminds me that the years march on with equal speed. And that prompts me to realize that, if my life is to have any lasting meaning, I must make something of it and not squander what time remains for me. *Carpe Diem!*

At the time I was contemplating my emergence from almost 35 years of denial and suppression, I was bitter about having possibly lost the opportunity to find any happiness at all in my remaining years. I was approaching my 50th year in this mortal toil. When I perused the personal ads there seemed to be no lack of guys seeking relationships (?) with a "similar same" age 25 to 35. Oh, there were the 20 year-olds looking for a daddy to support them. I wondered if I'd completely missed the boat.

However young I might feel in terms of attitude, my body would never be

youthful again. Oh, I could do things to improve my physical condition. But I would never know what it might be like to be 25 again with a full head of dark hair and a naturally hairless back. I envied much younger men who had managed to early on come to terms with their attraction to other men.

This phase did not last long: only until I decided to tell all! That "seminal" event not only marked my own coming to terms with my sexual orientation and affectional preference but it also marked the beginning of my taking responsibility for my life and for my own happiness.

I was well aware that much that happens in life is beyond our control or influence. And I began to realize that to expend emotional energy anguishing over these occurrences was a total waste. Better that I focus on those things I could control or influence. And I eventually began to discover that the more I addressed those things I could control, the greater influence I had on those things I could not control. I learned that we are indeed masters of our own fate.

At the heart of all this epiphany was the discovery that to assert ourselves, we must know ourselves. That meant introspection. What gives me joy? What causes me sorrow? Out of this self-examination came the self-

awareness I needed to pursue the remainder of my life with gusto. And in the four seemingly short years since my emergence I have lived – truly lived – more than in all the preceding years.

Looking back, I wonder whether or not I'd have found as much joy in life had I dealt with my sexual orientation in my youth. I think not. For I doubt that I'd have acquired the maturity (?) that comes from struggle.

With the summer of '98 now half gone, I realize that I most likely will not get the opportunity to do the one thing I'd so wanted to do; spend a week at the beach. Perhaps next year – if I'm still around. But, my summer has not been a waste and the remainder will not be fruitless either. It comes down to a question of relative importance. Spending a week at the beach has more to do with "reclaiming" lost youth than anything else. Spending a week in the Catskills will instead give me an opportunity to experience a part of this country that until now might as well have been in a foreign land. And as it is with respect to the summer at hand, so too must it be with the rest of my life; make the most of each opportunity that comes my way.

Time does indeed fly; but I can seize the day, if I so choose. It's up to me and nobody else. That said, I can repair to my chamber to sleep and perchance to dream.

Calendar of Events

Date: Thursday, Aug. 6

Time: 7:30 p.m.

Place: St. Marks Episcopal,
520 N. Boulevard

There will be no formal program for the August Meeting. We are planning a wine & cheese social with a short meeting and an opportunity for us to discuss things going on in our lives.

To make the wine "tasting" a bit more interesting, please bring a bottle of wine with the country of origin or the name the same as the first letter of your last name. GFC will provide the cheese, crackers and non-alcoholic beverages. Bon Appetit!

Minutes

The sixteenth meeting of GFC-Richmond began at 7:40 p.m. at St. Marks Episcopal Church, 520 N. Boulevard, Richmond. Ten (10) members/visitors were in attendance, including three (3) Board members.

The meeting began with socializing among the members and sharing refreshments.

Program: Andrew Payne, a massage therapist, explained various types of massage. Andy educated the group as to the physical benefits of massage therapy to the body and went over various techniques for individuals to use with a friend/partner. Some of these techniques were demonstrated to the group with Randy Phelps being the initial and willing "demonstratee," enjoying Andy's expertise. Several others in the group then practiced on each other. Several members of GFC (not all in attendance) had

already sought Andy's help. His practice is called "Absolute Relief" and he works out of the Symmetry Salon on Libbie Avenue.

General Business – Old:

- Randy Phelps is planning a social at his home on Thursday, July 23. Invitations will be mailed out shortly.
- Bob Rodgers talked about a grant program through the University of Richmond Chaplain's Office that is being pursued as a service project for GFC-Richmond. The grant money would be used to establish a permanent website to support the children of Richmond area gays.

New: Bob Greene has a photo exhibit at the Richmond Public Library.
Treasurer's Report: We have approximately \$295.00 on account at present.

The meeting concluded at approximately 9:30 p.m.

Recommended Reading:

A Boy Named Phyllis by Frank DeCaro. Growing up gay in the seventies in New Jersey. A wonderfully funny and touching memoir of an Italian-American boy.

Life Outside by Michelangelo Signorile. A report on gay men, sex, drugs, muscles, and the passages of life. Signorile advances a critique of the attitudes and ideologies that have shaped the "gay scene." He also explores the growing phenomenon of the "deurbanization" of homosexuality as more gays come out in the suburbs and small-town America.

The Best Little Boy in the World by John Reid. The classic account of growing up gay in America. It is the story of a normal boy growing into maturity without managing to get rapped into or taunted because of his homosexuality. Sensitive and humorous.
(Books available at Barnes & Noble)

Selections from In Your Eyes – Quotations on Gay Love

*"The one I love most lay
sleeping by me under the
same cover in the cool night
In the stillness in the autumn
moonbeams his face was
inclined toward me,
And his arm lay lightly
around my breast – and that
night I was happy.*

- Walt Whitman

*"He seemed to take to me
quite naturally and
unbiddenly as I to him: and
when our smoke was over, he
pressed his forehead against
mine, clasped me around the
waist, and said that
henceforth we were married;
meaning, in his country's
phrase, that we were bosom
friends; he would gladly die
for me, if need would be.*

- Herman Melville,
from Moby Dick

*"Love and sex are just tow
steps in the same process. If I
love you, I want to give you
my trust, my tuna sandwich,
my body. You will value my
friendship and respond."*

- Anonymous, from
The Gay Report by
Karla Jay and Allen
Young