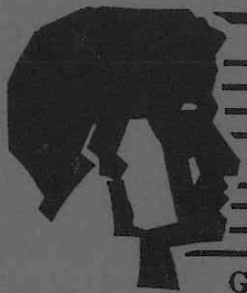


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GFC NEWS

December, 1998

GFC-Richmond • P.O. Box 8501 • Richmond • VA • 23226

President's Message:

Who Was That Masked Man?

Perhaps I should ask who was the man masquerading as Carmen Miranda? You know, the one who, for that one evening at least, had completely adopted the Carmen Miranda persona. Could've fooled me. I would've said it was one of our more accomplished show "girls" under that Chiquita banana headdress. But, no – it was GFC's very own...No, you had to have been there.

While "Carmen Miranda" certainly stole the show this past Halloween night at the Central Virginia Business and Professional Guild's masquerade, "she" was really just part of a larger show. Actually, she was part of an evening of fulfillment of fantasy for all of those in attendance. But "she" serves as an excellent example of someone taking advantage of a masquerade to adopt a persona that is vastly different from what he ordinarily exhibits. And who would've ever thought that our very own...(?) ever harbored a fantasy to "work" – and I mean "work" – a room as a show girl? But that's just the point.

I am no psychologist, but I have lived enough years and dealt with enough fantasies to have learned a few realities. I have long held to the belief that it's extremely important for a person to be able to act out some of his fantasies.

And a masquerade offers us with an excellent opportunity to do just that with anonymity. For, under the time-honored conventions of the masquerade, even if one's mask is so minuscule that it does not really hide one's identity, we are totally incognito.

We can be "Carmen Miranda" for the evening and not risk our everyday image. We can assume the persona of "Apollo" or "Miss Electra" – or even a bar dancer – and still retain our otherwise stodgy reputations. Our friends and acquaintances can know full well who is the man behind the mask. But when the mask comes off, all connection with the adopted persona ends. We become "Apollo," or "Carmen," or "Miss Electra," or a bar dancer – when we put on the mask.

And as long as we wear it, we are not ourselves, we are "Apollo" or "Carmen" or whoever. But, when we remove the mask, we become ourselves again. Under the guise of the mask – even if it a very thin disguise – we can even behave in a manner that might otherwise be considered scandalous, and it is acceptable – so long as we do not harm anyone.

At the heart of safe fulfillment of fantasy is anonymity. When among our friends and acquaintances, we need a mask. But, when among strangers, we are free to act out incognito without

the cloak of mystery. Many of us have done just this when we've traveled to a distant city. And when we return, we leave it behind us. It is good for our psychological well-being. It is good for our soul. It's part of the idea behind Mardi Gras and Carnival and even Halloween.

Usually we don't even talk about our fantasies. Not even to our closest friends. Not even to our lovers. Most often it's because we fear ridicule. We foolishly think that nobody else could harbor similar fantasies. But we all have fantasies. And while a masquerade offers us the opportunity to act them out without divulging them as such, it's important that we find other safe ways to deal with them during the rest of the year. Those who have Internet access can anonymously talk about them on-line and thereby diffuse them of their power. (And believe me, our fantasies have power over us when they are ignored.) Those who are involved in significant relationships can divulge them with their partners - and perhaps even safely and confidentially go a step beyond just talking about them.

Our fantasies take many forms: desires, dreams, wishes, imaginings. None are silly. None are trivial. They are part of us – an integral part. They should never be discounted. Sometimes it's a good idea to

deal with fantasies with the aid and assistance of a professional therapist. But most often we only need to realize that everyone has fantasies and talk about them with friends, lovers, partners, etc. Adopting the persona of "Carmen Miranda" or "Miss Electra" just once may be enough to liberate the man behind the mask to regularly talk about his other fantasies more openly than ever before. And he'll be much the better for it.

Too often we fear what others might think of us if they know about some of our fantasies. But when we stop worrying about such triviality and concern ourselves only with living honestly, we become liberated. And when we become liberated, we become fully human.

Richmond Triangle Players

RTP is seeking volunteers to help on performance nights for its remaining three productions. "Pageant" opens February 3, 1999 with regular performances each weekend (Fridays and Saturdays) February 5 through February 27. "Lonely Planet" opens March 24, 1999 with regular performances each weekend March 26 through April 17. And "Parallel Lives: The Kathy and Mo Show" opens May 5, 1999 with regular performances each weekend May 7 through May 29. Two people are needed for each night to tend the box office and the bar. If anyone is interested in helping, contact Bob Greene at 355-6218.

Minutes From November

The twentieth meeting of GFC-Richmond began at 7:40 p.m. at St. Marks

Episcopal Church, 520 N. Boulevard, Richmond. Seventeen (17) members/visitors were in attendance.

There being no scheduled program for the evening, those present went around the room introducing themselves and telling about their kids and their marital situations.

General Business:

Old -

- A social with holiday desserts is planned for the December 3 meeting.
- A potluck dinner at Dave Whites' home is planned for December 8 at 7:00
- Holiday project - a motion was made for GFC-Richmond to make a contribution to the pediatrics unit at MCV. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.
- A classified ads section will be added to the monthly newsletter. Items need to be submitted to Will Turner at least two weeks before each meeting.
- A suggestion was made to organize a support network of members who would be willing to have their names and phone numbers listed and made available.

Treasurer's Report

- We currently have \$445.71 on account.
- Our parent organization GLPCI is now called Family Pride Coalition.
- Our group is now listed in Gay Parents Magazine.

Following a social time, the meeting concluded at approximately 10:00 p.m.

Classifieds

Bunk bed set available for cheap (negotiable) price. Call Dave at 560-4351.

Calendar of Events

Date: Thursday, Dec. 3

Time: 7:30 p.m.

Place: St. Mark's Episcopal Church, 520 N. Boulevard

There is no planned program for this meeting, just the opportunity for socializing and conversation. Refreshments will be served.

Don't forget dinner at the Lighthouse Restaurant, 1627 W. Main Street, at 6:00 p.m. prior to the meeting.

Please remember to bring a children's video for our project to donate videos to MCV's Pediatric Child Life Department. Videos will be given as a holiday gift from the Gay Father's Coalition for use by pediatric patients at MCV.

Holiday Social

Date: Tues., Dec. 8

Time: 7:00 p.m.

Place: Dave White's House

There will be direction at the Dec. 3 meeting, or you can call Dave at 560-4351 for directions. This is a "potluck" get-together so whip up your favorite potluck/buffet recipe and join in for a little holiday cheer.

Put On Your Boogie Shoes

Several members of GFC-Richmond have been spotted strutting their stuff to the disco beat at Godfrey's. They invite all GFC members and friends to join them on Friday nights. They usually meet after 10:00 p.m. Dancing starts about 11:00.

For more info about GFC-Richmond, call 355-6218 or 230-2578.