

# Gay Lib seeks to establish an off campus community center

Since its inception a year ago, Buffalo Gay Liberation has felt the need for a place off-campus where gay people from on and off campus could come together, meet, talk and coordinate programs with other homophile groups. To fulfill this need, Gay Lib is presently seeking to establish an off-campus Gay Community Center.

A spokesman for Gay Liberation explained that the need for such a center should be evident to anyone familiar with places available to gays now: "The gay bars and cruising streets where gay people are presently forced to gather if they want to meet other gays are exploitative, expensive and always oppressive." He continued that these places are demeaning and create hostility and hate. According to Gay Liberation, the enormous profits the owners of such places reap are never used even in small part for the welfare or interests of gay people.

## Paranoia

Gay Liberation mandates the center be off-campus, viewing its location as essential to its success. Explaining that the social and work activities of the Buffalo Gay community are geographically centered in the Allentown-Richmond area, a gay lib member said that "we want to make it possible for people to have easy, unhampered and, most importantly, trauma-free access to any meeting place." Gay Liberation feels that Norton Hall and the campus area, in general, do not constitute such a place: "They foster feelings of paranoia in UB gays sometimes, and very often in people who have no real reason to identify with this University at all."

More importantly, according to Gay Lib, many of the gay people in Buffalo have professional

associations with the State University of Buffalo which would be endangered by their active or open participation in anything even remotely related to gay: "Their relationships and ability to work with their colleagues and students would undergo a radical, negative change. This is not to mention the fact that there is no legal protection in employment or housing for homosexuals."

## Valid fears

This means that some gay people feel that they are endangering their entire way of life and in some cases that of their family by participating in any of Gay Lib's activities in a place as public as Norton. "Given the current attitude of this society towards homosexuality, and the questionable willingness of this University to protect the rights of individuals you cannot really question the validity of people's fears: the fear that they will be branded and branded in the most literal sense," a gay lib member explained.

Gay Lib is, at this time, investigating the feasibility of several sites from store fronts to basements and churches. Under study are questions of hours and days of operation, and legal complications that may arise and how to deal with them. A possible sub-let arrangement is being worked out with the Linwood Ave. Buffalo Free School. They are also appealing to Student Association for funding and support.

A Gay Lib spokesman stated that "Gay Lib cannot hope to continue to be effective or expand its activities in any meaningful way without a 'safe' base of operations for its work . . ."