

# MATTACHINE SOCIETY INC. OF NEW YORK

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October 20, 1967

Dear Arthur:

First, please forgive my lack of communication. Both personal and societal responsibilities have been keeping me very busy, and I've allowed too many things to go unattended -- one of the most important is our communication.

My father had another heart attack (though he recovered) and I had to go again to Kentucky; John and I have broken up, and I have to find some means of subsistence, and we have been through several traumatizing weeks (preceded by troubled months), and I am now going with someone else. Further, I've had a heavy speaking schedule which has kept me out of town quite a lot (26 of the last 47 days, to be precise).

I lost my first vote in MSNY at the last Board Meeting. Both the membership and the Board has always given me my way, but the Board rebelled against me at the last meeting and elected Fred Whitman to the Board to replace Paul. Fred's a good man, a hard worker, and a valuable addition, but, as you know, not my first choice.

The Board did decide that we should push for law reform this next session of the Legislature -- as you know from the fund-raising letter. Please believe you have not been left out of this project, it's simply that nothing has been done on it yet. As usual, the Board makes decisions, then runs off and leaves me to carry out the work, and I simply have not been able to get around to law reform yet, because of other pressures.

Now my schedule is lighter (I'm only booked so far for four days next week) and we have to get together and outline some sort of plan of action.

I have talked with John Lassoe at length -- he and I are good friends and we camp frequently on the 'phone and see a lot of one another. He thinks we should make strong demands of the Legislature, and allow room for them to compromise. He suggests that we get a bill (or bills) prepared, preferably by one of your friends from the American Law Institute, then he will get in touch with several legislators he knows to get it introduced.

As a member of the New York State Council of Churches and the NYCLU Legislative Committees, John assures us of their backing for a reasonable bill. I have a contact in the Association of the Bar of the City of New York who has assured us of support. John, as ~~the~~ the spokesman for the Episcopal Diocese will support it, and help bring other church lobbyists into line. Those who supported reform in '64 can pretty much be counted upon to do so again.

The rest of the job should be our burden. Bills to reform the sodomy statute, John

  
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says, have been introduced every year since 1964, though they usually got no public attention (and at least two of them even I never heard of). It will be our job to direct public attention to it, through newspapers, radio and tv, talks, etc. I've already started by devoting nearly every lecture to homosexuals law reform, and have instructed Chuck, Fred, Bob, and the other members of the Speaker's Bureau to do the same. Editorially, both the Post and Times will support such law reform, as will nearly all the columnists, including William F. Buckley, to bring the Conservatives into line (and he's Roman Catholic, too). I have assurances that at least one radio station and one television station will editorially support such reforms, too.

John has also suggested that we form small groups to call upon legislators and urge them to back the bill, and later that we encourage people to write letters to them.

He said we should consider whether to have the bill pre-filed or filed after the session starts, and to discuss it with potential backers, to see what they suggest.

I think it'd be a good idea if you, John Lasseo, Irwin Strauss, Frank Patton and I met at Frank's office next week to consider what a bill should contain, and the possibility of getting one written. Then we'll consider how to present it to backers. I'm waiting for Frank to return my call now, to set up a date convenient to him.

If you can, I'd, of course, want you to call on legislators with me during the coming months. God knows where the Society will get the money to pay our expenses, but I hope God will provide! (If He's not dead.)

Frank just called, and he would like to make the meeting for Tuesday, October 24, at 4:00 p.m., in his office, 51 East 42nd Street. This is convenient with John Lasseo and with me. How about you?

One more thing. Antony Grey is in New York and will speak on Wednesday evening. I will be out of town then, but I asked Madelin to purchase a pair of tickets for his talk. Would you like one of them? His topic is "How Can We Bring About Reform of New York's S x Laws?". (Unfortunately, MSNY's is ahead of him, evidently.) I've also written him to see if he would meet with me on Tuesday or Thursday evening, and if he accepts, I'd like you to join us.

*Dick*

P.S. You'll be happy to know that Donaldson was defeated by Strauss 87-144