

STATEMENT OF ARTHUR C. WARNER FOR THREE-YEAR TERM ON BOARD OF DIRECTORS

There is today one overriding test by which the effectiveness and viability of any homophile organization can be judged, and that is its ability to relate to the revolution which has occurred amongst gay people in our society. That revolution assumed its most visible form in the Christopher Street demonstrations of 1969, with the result that June 1969 has now the same meaning for gay liberation as July 1789 once had for bourgeois liberation. After destroying the "Stonewall" of the homosexual ghetto, this revolution revealed the existence of a gay "third estate", proud and fearless, no longer willing to cringe before the Establishment, and determined to demand its rights as free men within a professedly free society.

Too many Mattachine members are still imbued with an organizational chauvinism that ill comports with the needs of the times. The days when Mattachine could claim, with evident satisfaction, that it was the only homophile organization in New York are fortunately gone forever. Gone, too, are the petty autocrats who presided over most of the pre-revolutionary gay groups, jealously guarding their satrapies against all interlopers. As one of the few genuine old-line homophile groups, Mattachine has a contribution to make, but it can do so only if it rejects any notion of "going it alone". No homophile group can be relevant today unless it maintains the closest contact and cooperation with all other gay groups in its community, for unless gay people hang together they will continue to be hanged separately. This means that the effectiveness of any Mattachine officer or Board member can no longer be judged merely by his attendance record at exclusively Mattachine functions. The test is not what one does only for Mattachine, but what one does to further the cause of gay liberation as a whole.

If we recognize that gay liberation, rather than enhancement of Mattachine as an organizational entity, is our true goal, it is clear that all of us must work within the context of that goal. It is high time to realize that Board members whose activities cover the entire gay scene, and whose work for gay liberation is performed wherever there is a need for their services -- regardless of the organizational banner under which that work is performed -- are assets to Mattachine. Members should understand that such persons bring to Mattachine a breadth of vision and a knowledge of current developments in the now-rapidly-moving homophile movement which our Society sorely needs.

It is within this context that I seek reflection to the Mattachine Board. Nine months ago I would not have sought reflection. Then I was asked to head the Mattachine programme of weekly visitation to gay prisoners on Riker's Island. I reorganized the programme, and opened it up to participation by members of other New York homophile groups. As a result, some of the most effective and dedicated members of the Mattachine prison-visiting committee -- an actual majority of its members -- are not themselves Mattachine members but belong to other gay groups. It is no exaggeration to say that, without this infusion of new talent from fraternal organizations, the programme itself might have foundered. Mattachine has benefitted from my co-chairmanship, with Prof. Walter Barnett of the University of New Mexico Law School, of the National Committee for Sexual Civil Liberties, a national organization, composed mainly of lawyers throughout the country working for repeal of the sodomy laws and of other criminal sanctions against homosexuals. This committee was responsible for the removal in 1970 of a most noxious solicitation provision in the original version of the proposed new Federal Criminal Code, which was last year submitted to the Congress by the National Commission on Reform of Federal Criminal Laws. (I wrote the brief for this purpose.) The same committee last year distributed to the New York legislature the two official memoranda from the entire New York homophile movement arguing for repeal of the New York sodomy and homosexual solicitation laws. (I wrote the two memoranda.) These were subsequently distributed in other states where penal law reform is under consideration, as a result of which the Nebraska Penal Law Revision Commission recently decided to withdraw a proposed solicitation statute and to recommend that there be no such criminal provisions for that state after it had seen our New York memorandum on the subject. The New Jersey Criminal Law Revision Commission has agreed to consider changes in the New Jersey solicitation statute as a result of our committee's representations. (I am presently writing the New Jersey brief for this purpose.)

I have been an active member of the Mattachine speakers' bureau for several years, and am on the speakers' panels of the G.A.A. of New York and the G.A.A. of New Jersey, activities which have increased my effectiveness for Mattachine. Many of Mattachine's New Jersey speaking engagements are turned over to me, and I often invite someone from the G.A.A. of N. J. to share the platform with me. This has proved singularly effective, since two speakers have far more than twice the impact of one. It was my proposal as a Mattachine Board member which caused

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the Board to send a delegate to the national gay conference in Chicago in February, where plans were concerted for gay representation at the forthcoming national political conventions of both political parties. I was also responsible for the Board's decision to have Mattachine participate actively in the work of the New York committee currently arranging for this year's "March on Albany".

Because I am not engaged in outside employment, I am able to devote full time to the gay movement. I solicit your support in reelecting me to the Mattachine Board where I should like to continue working for both Mattachine and for the movement as a whole.

Respectfully submitted,

Arthur Warner