

Retrospective

Stonewall Remembered

by Tom Bentley

I remember Stonewall. I lived right around the corner, on Gay Street. Honest, the Stonewall was on Christopher, and Gay is a little street that comes out right near the Stonewall. I had only been to that bar once or twice; these were my druggier days, I didn't feel the need for bars. I had everything then: a gorgeous lover, a campy apartment, money in the bank, LSD in the freezer. I didn't need to cruise in bars, which is what the Stonewall was about.

I think it was on a Friday evening, because it went on the next night too. Night-time in the Village comes on slowly; the sun sinks behind brownstones and Seventh Avenue turns electric; lights that have been on all day glow brighter, lowering the sky to a friendlier level just about twenty feet above the pavement, where the lights give out and the sharp angles of the day fade into familiar darkness. Traffic on the Avenue increases and slows down by Sheridan Square. Tourists cruise the streets in Jersey Pontiacs, while young Latinos with teased hair, uptown blousing shirts, and skinny slacks pop up from the stifling subway stop to join the winos, straights and ladies of the street promenading on the sidewalk in pools of pink neon.

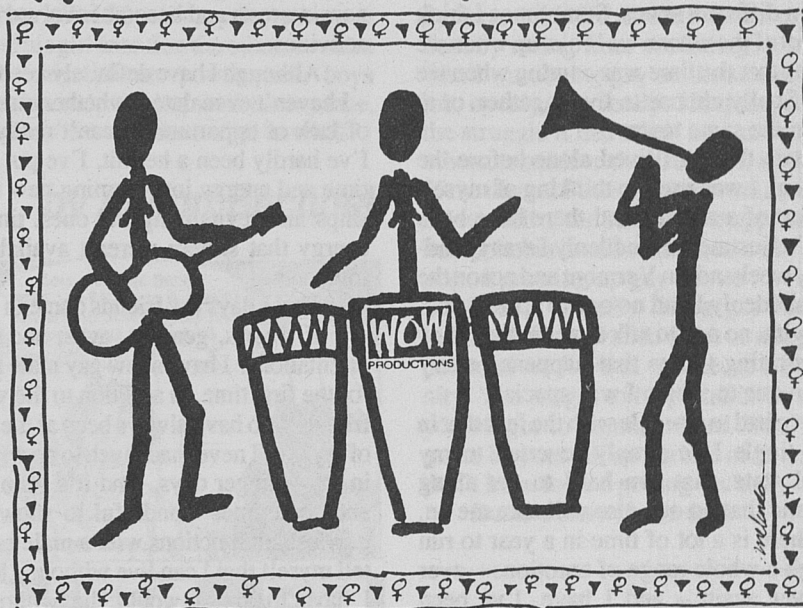
There on the Square at Christopher and Seventh, night life pounds on with the wild jazz beat echoing New York of the Roaring Twenties, Old Broadway nightclub glitz and cruising frenzy, to which a little riot or two would only add a not unwelcome syn-copation.

So when I heard the shouting and the sirens and saw the blue lights flashing, it was, quite honestly, just another Friday night in the Village, and I hardly gave it a second thought. How was I to know the most significant political event ever for the gay community was happening in my front yard? By the next night, I had some inkling of what was going down. But remember, this was the sixties and New York City; everything was significant.

It sure pulled political consciousness together over the next year. Suddenly the Mattachine Society was out and Gay Activist Alliance was in, and so were a slew of militantly gay organizations. There was talk of the Village as a "Free Zone" where blue meanies would be forbidden to tread, and drag was *de rigueur*.

(continued on page 19)

NORTHAMPTON/AMHERST



LESBIAN FESTIVAL

UMASS Campus, Amherst, MA

Shine...by the pond
Rain...Student Union Ballroom

Saturday, August 3, 1991 • 10 AM - 7 PM

FEATURED PERFORMERS

Maxine Feldman	Toshi Reagon	Suede
Umoja	Betsy Sulkind	Catie Curtis
Julie Waggoner	Jaime Morton	Justina and Joyce
Purly Gates	Lesbian Politic in Theatre	Pamela Kimmel
Zoë Lewis and Julie Wheeler as "Roy and Reggie"		

Over 40 Artists/Craftswomen • Food Vendors
Lesbians, Friends, Allies WelcomeTix \$15.00 in advance • \$18.00 day of festival
No woman turned away for lack of funds!PRESENTED
BY

TICKET LOCATIONS

ConnecticutReaders Feast, Hartford
Golden Thread Books, New Haven]MA.Lunaria, Northampton
Food For Thought, Amherst
World Eye Bookstore, Greenfield
Crone's Harvest, Jamaica Plain
New Words, CambridgeProvincetown

Pride's Gifts

VermontEveryone's Books, Brattleboro
Chassman and Bem's Booksellers,
BurlingtonNew YorkJudith's Room, NYC
Boulevard Bookstore, Albany

FMI, PLEASE CALL ANDI @ 413-586-5679

To provide access to women with environmental illness, please avoid wearing perfume or scented products