Where Are We Going?

by Lex Watson & Sue Wills

This is very much a Where Are We Going piece, written as a re-affirmation of our basic aims viewed in the light of a change and a half of existence for the founding branch.

First and foremost it is increasingly necessary to reaffirm that C.A.M.P. is a political organisation. Unlike all the others, we cater to homosexuals in Sydney - and that society and its laws to the extent necessary to gain full equality and rights for homosexuals. Were the situation in 1970 satisfactory for homosexuals, this would not create just another social club, but it would be a somewhat structured movement rather than a society in the normal sense. We hold that it must be made to work this way too.

For there is much more diversity of interest within the movement even than this. For some the view of church leaders and the church are a source of great concern, to be discussed, debated, and hopefully in most cases, changed. To others, the church is of little concern.

To a significant extent, age is a source of diverse demands on CAMP. The needs of older members socially are not necessarily the same as of younger members, and despite the primary aim of the society which is political and directed outwards against society at large, we must always bear in mind that it is the quality of our own lives which is the ultimate rationale for this. To provide social opportunities for camps outside the commercial camp world, to provide a more humanised meeting place, an action which we have willingly adopted. For a variety of reasons - cultural background, family, jobs and so on - some of us find it much easier to accept out homosexuality than others. For those who are worried about their sex role, CAMP is establishing a Homosexual Guidance Service (HGS) which will use qualified people to provide individual assistance, small group discussion sessions and referral to sympathetic psychiatric help. Equally importantly, HGS will be trying to reeducate the widely accepted notion that homosexuality is a 'personality disorder' and hence 'be cured' - especially where the method of cure attempted is aversion therapy.

Married homosexuals are another special area of concern with very different problems from most of us. Transvestites are another. Some would like to pursue hobbies within a camp context and perhaps turn these activities towards the promotion of our aims - a drama group doing both straight theatre and devising some street theatre of the type used very effectively by Women's Lib would be a great asset.

There are other areas of concern to us that we should be working on too. For example, there is a definite need for the formation of a sex education group which can prepare submissions to the Education Department to ensure that in any sex education programs for schoolchildren, the matter of homosexuality is discussed and that it is discussed impartially.

There is also an indication that we need to establish our Legal Aid group, and publicise its existence, and we would like to provide CAMP Employment Advisory Service to offer advice on who will employ known homosexuals and to tackle discrimination in employment.

All these matters, and probably many more, should be possible within CAMP. Now that the NSW branch has a formal constitution, it is important to show that CAMP is more of a movement than a society, that it is a formalised collection of groups who set their own various aims and go about achieving them. The executive should provide a co-ordinating point only for the various groups and for special activities which involve the total membership, such as Sexual Liberation Week.

Sex Lib Week is the last week in July, timed in memory of the passing of the Sexual Offences Act in Britain on July 27, 1967. But that week will not be the end of it - it is intended to be a nationwide festival providing activities of interest to all our members and an opportunity to involve closely related groups and organisations outside CAMP. It is intended to publicise and discuss the total position of homosexuals in Australia - to air our grievances and make known our demands, to show the public and the politicians that we exist and that we exist in large numbers with significant support.

After a year under John and Chris, we are sufficiently established to launch such a public drive. As the start of our campaign for the federal election in April, this is an opportunity which is the beginning of our political activities.

Friendship is so much more tragic than love. It lasts longer.

Oscar Wilde

CAMP INK MAY 1972

Perth Scene

Question: When is an advertisement not an advertisement? Answer: If it appears in the Sunday Australian. The proposed Campaign Ad, financed by the Shin's branch, was not used when we were informed that the editor of the paper had refused to accept it for unspecified reasons. It seems that feature articles on drag-culture, prostitution, even homosexuality and other emotionally charged subjects are ok. Cigarettes can be freely advertised (there are fags and fags). There is no suggestion that there is an organisation in this country which tries to drag Australia screaming out of the eighteenth century to be strongly resisted.

Fortunately we were able to place the ad in the Saturday Australian of April 8th - not as satisfactory, perhaps, but at least giving us some public exposure. If they find that circulation doesn't drop alarmingly, we might be able to use it as a lever to get it into the Sunday edition next time. Maybe one of the Eastern States, being closer to the centres of influence can have a go in a couple of months. (Will the Sydney Branch please stand up.)

With the approach of the colder season the WA Branch has moved indoors for the regular Sunday night pot-pot dinner and drinks and the changeover has been highly successful. To serve hot meals to a varying number of hungry mouths causes some logistic problems, but if the Hotel Parnelia will do it, so can we. We promise to keep the incidence of Parnelia down to a minimum. In any case, as we have a medical practitioners' locum service right next door, professionalism will always be readily available.