

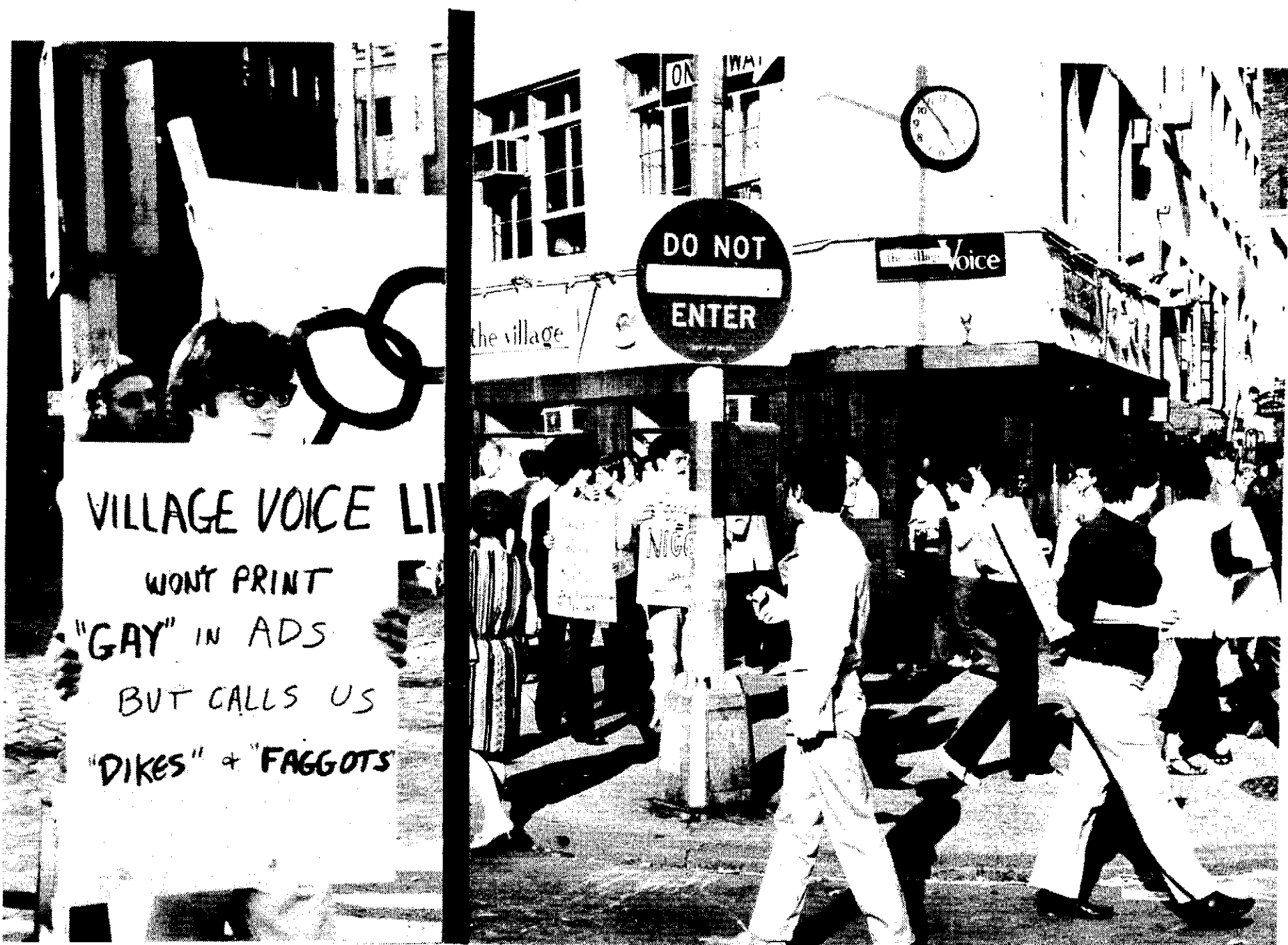
*You move on those little cracks and  
you think: Isn't it amazing  
I can do this!*



gay liberation  
front



who had unknowingly filled their sacks with pregnant nuggets



How completely the *Voice* was untouched by Mailer's concept of the moral and sexual revolution can be demonstrated by examining their Classified Advertising policy towards the Gay Community.

In the August 7th issue of the *Voice*, members of Gay Liberation Front placed an ad in the Public Notices section of classifieds. The substance of the ad dealt with requests for articles, photographs, art work, etc. for COME OUT. The lead-in to the ad read "Gay Power to Gay People." Our friendly community monopoly newspaper accepted the ad with payment in full and then before printing simply deleted "Gay Power to Gay People" without the knowledge or consent of G.L.F.

At the regular Sunday meeting of G.L.F., general outrage was expressed at the assumed right of the *Voice* to censor classified ads. The feasibility of an action against the *Village Voice* was discussed and dismissed on the basis of insufficient evidence. GLF, however, felt that the *Village Voice* had committed itself to a morally bankrupt policy. Classified ads represent a community service, and are not the newspaper's main income source. Therefore, it should follow that classifieds should be verbally expressive of individuals who are paying for the service.

We decided at this point to submit another ad using the word "Gay". The opportunity presented itself again in the issue of September 4. GLF then used the *V.V.* Bulletin Board to advertise a dance for Friday night, September 5th, using the lead-in - Gay Community Dance. Again the ad was accepted when and as presented. Next day the person who placed the ad received a call from *VV* which explained that it was the policy of *VV* to refrain from printing obscene words in classifieds and *VV* thought "Gay" was obscene. When questioned why anyone would consider such a word obscene, the *Voice* said that the staff had decided "Gay" was equatable with "fuck" and other four-letter words, and that either the ad would have to be changed or the ad could not be printed. Since "homosexual" was also not acceptable,

and since GLF wanted the ad for the dance placed, we accepted their only admissible substitute, "homophile" (which is a genteel bastard word not included in most dictionaries). The *Village Voice* also promised a written explanation of their opposition to the words "Gay" and "homosexual." GLF "deviously" planned to utilize this explanation as the basis for a civil rights suit (Civil Rights Law of 1964: denial of rights of free speech by a public or quasi-public institution). But true to tradition, the *Voice* promised more than it delivered, and we never received such a written explanation.

Undeterred, GLF began proceedings with our lawyers for suit in Federal Court. At this point we finally met Ed Fancher, when we were forced to deliver a letter stating our proposed action to his home (since Mr. Fancher was never available in his office). At this time we asked to speak to him about the *Voice* Classified policy. He refused to discuss the issue with us (as he had once before by phone) and mumbled that we should not have done such an outrageous thing as to have come to his place of residence, while he politely but firmly closed the door in our faces.

While GLF considers itself open to reason, it also reserves the right to take appropriate action based on the reality of a given situation. Clearly, we felt Fancher had closed the door on dialogue. At the general meeting of September 7th, a course of action was decided, a course of action which included a picket line and other street actions.

The day Gay Power laid itself on the line for the first time started at 9 a.m. on September 12, 1969, with much communal coffee and even more communal confusion. Ed Fancher arrived at 10 a.m., received a proclamation of our grievances, and promptly disappeared through the door into *VV* bureaucracy.

At 4:30 p.m., during the peak of the demonstration, a member of GLF submitted a classified ad saying "The Gay Liberation Front sends love to all Gay men and women in the homosexual community." The pic-

ture outside the *Voice* was characterized by a chanting picket line, a supply of 5000 leaflets being rapidly exhausted, and large numbers of people signing the petition charging the *Voice* with discrimination.

At this point, Howard Smith emerged from the door of the *Village Voice* (to boos from the crowd) and requested three representatives from GLF to "meet with Mr. Fancher". Once inside and upstairs, the representatives encountered a cry of outrage that GLF has chosen the *Village Voice* as a target (sooo liberal we are). The suggestion was made that we negotiate the three points in dispute 1) changing classified ads without knowledge or consent of purchaser, 2) use of the words "Gay" and "homosexual" in classifieds, and 3) the contemptuous attitude of the *Village Voice* toward the Gay Community. GLF explained that the two issues involving classified ad policy were not negotiable and that the substance of the paper should be of legitimate concern to a responsible publisher. Ed Fancher replied that the *Village Voice* exercised no censorship of its articles, and that if a writer wanted to say derogatory things about faggots, he could not in good conscience stop him. Fancher also said that we had no right to tamper with "freedom of the press."

This GLF accepted with the absolute understanding that Gay Power has the right to return and oppose anything the *Village Voice* staff chooses to include in the paper. On the Classified Ads policy he conceded completely. He said that not only would the *Voice* not alter Ads after payment, but that in Classified Ads the words "Gay" and "homosexual" per se were no longer issues. One of the GLF representatives in the upstairs office stepped to the window facing Seventh Avenue and flashed the V for Victory sign to the waiting crowd below. WE HAD WON!