

1960



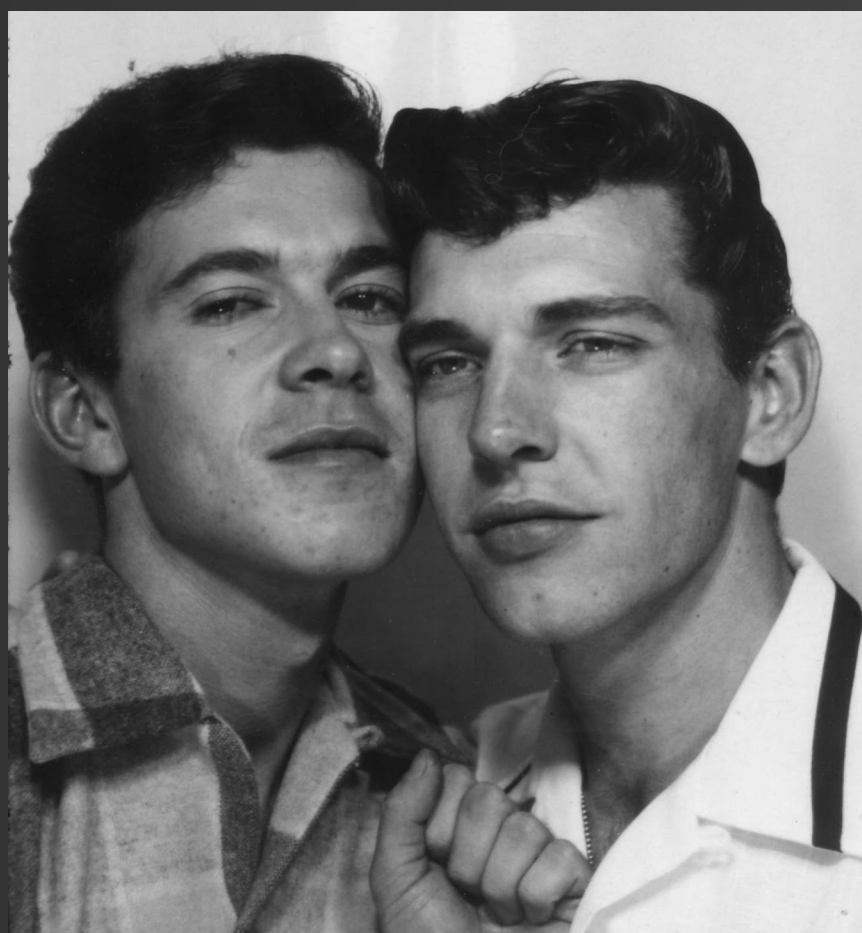
NATIONAL

¹⁹⁶¹ Hollywood studios alter the production code to allow the depiction of gay men and lesbians in movies, if the subject is treated with "care, discretion and restraint." However, most gay characters in films of this era are miserable, suicidal misfits who frequently kill themselves or others.



NATIONAL

¹⁹⁶¹ The Mattachine Society of Washington, D.C., conducts the first gay rights protests at the White House, the United States Civil Service Commission and the Pentagon.



NATIONAL

¹⁹⁶² Illinois is the first state to decriminalize homosexual contact between consenting adults.

Homosexuals Proud of Deviancy, Medical Academy Study Finds

By ROBERT FREEMAN

Homosexuals have gone back just the glass of conservatism and now argue that their deviancy is "a desirable, stable, acceptable way of life," according to a report issued yesterday by the Committee on Pseudo-Science of the New York Academy of Medicine.

The report is the final authoritative study of homosexuality by a recognized organization representing all branches of medicine, a spokesman for the committee said. Public concern on sexual variability has been confined heretofore to the psychiatric branch of the profession, he declared.

Homosexuality is an "illness" that can be treated successfully in "some cases" but is more easily dealt with by early preventive measures, the report concluded.

The study takes strong issue with the contention of spokes-

The 'Gay' World Takes to the City Streets

By [illegible]

There are homosexuals that their aberration makes them merely "a different kind of people leading an acceptable way of life." Exposed homosexuals now go even further than this, the committee found.

"They would have it believed that homosexuality is not just an acceptable way of life but rather a desirable, stable, preferable way of life," the report goes on. "For one thing, they claim that it is the people who owe to the problem of the population explosion."

The committee's findings were said to apply to homosexuals everywhere, not just in New York. Various authorities have estimated the number of

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NATIONAL

¹⁹⁶⁴ Gay exposé in *The New York Times* startles the nation. Other mainstream publications soon offer their own analyses.

Clockwise from top: *The New York Times* May 19, 1964, *Life* June 26, 1964, *Time* October 31, 1969



LOCAL

The Blue Tempo

¹⁹⁶⁰ Saugatuck's Blue Tempo is one of West Michigan's "gay bars" even though that isn't the owner's intent. According to proprietor Don "Toad" Davis, "I opened the bar in 1960, the summer the Big Pavilion burnt down. The business was good for three years, and about 1964 is when the gays started to take over. The gays didn't like the jazz music." Taste in music aside, Davis serves his LGBTQ patrons, in violation of Michigan's liquor laws.



Don Davis

Located at 349 Culver St. in Saugatuck [by Coghlin Park today], the bar is on the lower level of the building. The interior has an "artie atmosphere," featuring Toad's hand-painted murals and mannequins in German uniforms, booty from Toad's World War II service. When the Kalamazoo River is high, the riverside patio floods, requiring guests to walk on wooden planks. Despite this inconvenience, The Blue Tempo attracts musicians from around the country to play jazz music. Douglas Dunes co-founder Carl Jennings is a bartender. The Blue Tempo burns down in 1976.

THE BLUE TEMPO

"SAUGATUCK'S FUN SPOT"

PRESENTS LABOR DAY WEEKEND, 1964

"Top Musical Entertainment"

THURS., FRI., SAT., SUN., MON. mids - 9:00 p.m. and JAZZ SESSIONS SAT., SUN., MON. at 4:30 P.M.

THE BLUE TEMPO Jazz Combo

Bob Nelson	.....	Piano
Ralph Lewis	.....	Trumpet
Harry Orr	.....	Clarinet, Alto Sax
Norm Lamb	.....	Piano, Vibes
Fredrick Plummer	.....	Drums
Bob Snyder	.....	Bass

.... PLUS

Many Noted Jazz Musicians Throughout the Weekend

Playing the Best in Jazz - Dixie - Dance

We Serve Sandwiches — Coffee — Choice Drinks

Our Prices May Seem High
— But then, So is Anything of Value.

OPEN YEAR ROUND

with Live Music Fri., Sat., Sun.



Photo believed to be the interior of the Blue Tempo, date unknown.

"I'll never forget when John Polka, Bert [Jane's husband] and I went to the Blue Tempo. John and I loved to dance together so we were having a big time. This was when most women were wearing wigs so these fellas are walking by and lookin' at me because I'm big gal and had this wig on. Everything was fine until a man asked Bert to dance."

— Jane Van Dis, Saugatuck resident, SDHC interview 7/31/07



LOCAL

Bob Damron's Address Book

¹⁹⁶⁴ Bob Damron self-publishes the *Address Book*, a pocket-size guide listing the gay bars he knows from his travels across the U.S. Just like the *Green Book* for African-American travelers, the guide advises the gay traveler where to stay or hang out safely with the slogan "See America. Find a friend."

¹⁹⁶⁵ Saugatuck appears in the 2nd edition. Subsequent listings in what will soon be known as the *Damron Guide* track the growth of Saugatuck's LGBTQ options. "Toad" Davis refers to the guide as "the little gay Bible" and is shocked to discover The Blue Tempo had been listed for years.

SAUGATUCK
(Summer resort near Holland, Mich.)
BLUE TEMPO BAR (M) (an interesting beach nearby)
ELMS HOTEL (H)

Clockwise from upper left:

The Elms Hotel located at 132 Butler Street in Saugatuck

Damron Guide cover and listing codes from the 1969 edition

The first, modest mention of Saugatuck in the 1965 guide

bob damron's '69 address book

\$3.50

EXPLANATION OF LISTINGS

* Very popular
BYOB Bring your own bottle
C Coffee, soft drinks & food. Usually open late after hours have closed.
D Dancing
G Gals, but rarely exclusively
H Hotel, motel or other overnight accommodations
M Mixed crowd and/or tourists
P Photo club, make head inquiry as to admission
PE Pretty elegant, usually jacket and tie advised, if not required.
R Restaurant, usually serving diners. A* after this symbol does not indicate quality of the food served, but popularity of the bar.
RT "Ranchy Type" usually downtown establishments, often commercial.
S Shows, often impersonation or record pantomime acts.
SM Some Motorcycle, although rarely exclusively. Don't confuse with "M-S", which means mixed crowd - shows.
YC Younger and/or college crowds.



LOCAL

North of Oval Beach

^{1960s} The idyllic 175 acres between Oval Beach and the mouth of the Kalamazoo River is widely known as Saugatuck's nude beach.

Privately owned by Frank Denison, the land is exempt from local public nudity laws. Gay, bisexual and "curious" men comprise the majority of the sunbathers, although straight nudists also take advantage of this unique area.

An attendant at a guardhouse charges an entry fee and signs threaten nudists with arrest but sneaking past the guard and evading patrols is common, even adding to the fun. On summer weekends dozens of men are sunning, partying or hiking the numerous trails through the dunes. In town, some residents are unsettled by the growing scene.

²⁰¹¹ The City of Saugatuck, with the help of the Land Conservancy of West Michigan, acquires the entire property. This makes the area public land and puts an end to the era of Saugatuck's nude beach.



Above: Nicki Gallas at the beach guardhouse, 1980s.

Left: Nudity is not a requirement. This beach game includes team shirts, a referee and a pompom squad.



NATIONAL

¹⁹⁶⁹ Fed up with police harassment, gay, transgender and queer people forcibly resist arrest in a police raid on the Stonewall Inn in New York City's Greenwich Village. Although there had been earlier protests, the six days of clashes after the raid come to be known as the Stonewall Riots, or the Stonewall Uprising, and serve as a catalyst for the gay rights movement in the United States and around the world.

A letter in response to "The Nest," a short story in the August 25, 1966 *Commercial Record*, captures some townspeople's attitudes about the nude beach.

"It is with considerable trepidation that one walks past the fence for there is the strongest possibility that you will run into free-flowing alcohol and nude bathing; as to taking a Nature walk in the dunes, we tremble to think of what form of nature you might gaze upon, or what the consequences might be. Everyone complains about the college crowd, but the group that lies in "the Nest" are twice the problem. We believe that sex, in any form, is a private thing, and there is no reason for the citizenry of Saugatuck to be subjected to a daily display of scorn and resentment when they "trespass" on the territory of "the Nest."

— *Commercial Record*, September 1, 1966

FEEDBACK

What do you remember from the 1960s?

Fill out a feedback card and we'll post your comments here.