

Kennedy Urges Spotlighting AIDS



By Larry Bush

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.) is spearheading an effort to give AIDS more political visibility before the Senate and the Reagan administration. Kennedy, who was part of a team effort that added \$30 million to the Senate appropriations bill to fund the Public Health Emergency Fund—only to have the extra money dropped in a Senate-House conference committee in early October—now has garnered the signatures of 14 senators on a letter requesting that Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) hold AIDS hearings in the Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources.

Among the senators cosigning Kennedy's letter are three of the four Democratic senators seeking their party's nomination for the presidency in 1984: Alan Cranston (Calif.), John Glenn (Ohio) and Ernest "Fritz" Hollings (S.C.). Only Gary Hart (Colo.) is missing.

Republican heavyweights on the letter include Sen. Lowell Weicker (Conn.), who is chair of the appropriations subcommittee on health issues, and Mark Hatfield (Ore.), chair of the full appropriations committee. In all, seven of the 17 members of Hatch's committee signed the letter, but observers noted that among the missing Democrats was Ivan Eggleton, the Missouri senator who was McGovern's first vice presidential nominee in

1972 and later party to a lawsuit against his niece for charging that he was involved in homosexual vacations in Key West, Fla.

While Kennedy's staff suggests that the letter primarily will help keep political visibility on the need to monitor the Reagan administration response to AIDS, others such as the Federation of AIDS-Related Organizations lobbyist Gerald Connor and National Gay Task Force Washington representative Jeff Levi are hoping that Hatch will decline the request for hearings.

The key concern is the make-up of the Hatch committee, which is controlled by Republicans who are on the New Christian Right side. Those include Jeremiah Denton (R-Ala.), the ex-POW; John East (N.C.), a Jesse Helms protégé; Paula Hawkins (Fla.), a Mormon like Hatch; Don Nickles (Okla.), outspokenly anti-gay; and Charles Grassley (Iowa).

Kennedy pitches his hearing request with that make-up in mind, noting that "Senate hearings would focus national attention on the health concerns involved in this issue, rather than involving the Committee in a moral dispute."

Overall, Kennedy raises many of the issues that were also aired in the Weiss hearings in August in the House, and the Waxman hearings in Los Angeles in 1982.

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See Classified Form Inside back cover

MONTROSE VOICE

The Newspaper of Montrose Nov. 11, 1983 Issue #159 Published Every Friday

Whitmire Wins Community; GPC Not Totally Pleased

By Robert Hyde

Houston's municipal election is over, but in its wake remains several scars and many questions brought on by the sensitive and somewhat strained relationship between the city's mayor and Houston's Gay Political Caucus which has left a bad taste with many members of the gay community.

The past week has seen what some have called a "radical confrontation" between the GPC and Kathy Whitmire, a popular mayor dodging gay issues for television cameramen, a vocal GPC president trying to whip a crowd into political abandonment and a mayor pausing in the secrecy of her election night hotel suite to address and dodge the sensitive questions that have arisen over the last few days prior to election eve.

Reports of events began last Friday evening, when Mayor Kathy Whitmire toured the community's gay bars with At-Large Position 4 candidate Anthony Hall in tow, have been conflicting and will, ultimately, call to account the good faith of some of the more vocal members of the community, as well as the GPC's relationship to the community as a whole. Questions will also be raised as to just how far will Houston's mayor go to support the gay community which has so overwhelmingly endorsed her.

For the last several years, the mayors of America's largest cities have courted the gay vote, and San Francisco's Diane Feinstein, New York's Edward Koch and Los Angeles' Tom Bradley set precedents to be mirrored two years ago by Kathy Whitmire in her first bid for the city's top management position—that of visiting gay bars near election day.

Last year, Mayor Whitmire made the tour of the bars under the umbrella of the community's Gay Political Caucus. This year, he did not, even though GPC members contend that she promised to do



Montrose-area councilman George Greenias (center), an easy, non-controversial winner in Tuesday's election, addresses GPC Election Central crowd. Mayor Kathy Whitmire, foreground, listens. GPC President Bagneris, far right, had earlier worked crowd up with statements unfavorable of Whitmire.

PHOTO BY BILLIE DUNGAN

so up until the last minute.

"We contacted over five people in the mayor's office," said a GPC member and a reported aide to state representative Debra Damburg, "who told us that she would go on the tour." Then at the last minute, we were told that we had not been properly scheduled."

Whether or not this scheduling difficulty regarding GPC's bar tour coincided

with GPC's failure to endorse Mayor Whitmire's favorite in the council race, Anthony Hall, over Nikki Van Hightower is a matter of conjecture, but it did set up a confrontation between the GPC and Mayor Whitmire in Mary's Lounge, at 1022 Westheimer, that brought the community face to face with problems the GPC and Mayor Whitmire have regarding their mutual political interests.

It was near midnight last Friday when the mayor and Hall entered the popular Montrose bar—after visits to the Brazos River Bottom, Miss Charlotte's and Rich's—preceeded minutes before by their touring acouts who are well known to the politically active in the gay community.

The mayor's visit had also been preceded by several members of the GPC who plas-

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Hundreds Attend GPC Election Central

By Hollis Hood

Hundreds of voters gathered to cheer their Gay Political Caucus endorsed winners, comfort the losers and pledge support to their run-off contenders amid dancing and laser lights at GPC's election central, Numbers 2, 300 Westheimer, last Tuesday night.

As election results were televised on the wall-screen monitor, and as several GPC-supported candidates' victories were assured, GPC president Larry Bagneris said "Let's give ourselves a hand. It's time to understand and reflect on GPC. It has existed for eight years. We have realized that for any minority to get anything done, it takes a team effort," he said, referring to the GPC gay blue vote. "We're talking about human rights, not just gay rights."

"There was a 'gay' issue in 1983," said Councilman Jim Greenwood, the first of several public officials to address the gathering that evening. "But hopefully it will mark the last time there will be; there shouldn't be."

"My hat is off to GPC on yet another issue," he said, referring to the GPC convention center endorsement. "We need it for jobs, to diversify the economy and to strengthen our downtown."

Also he mentioned that the \$80,000 in the Houston budget for the AIDS tracking project was not enough, but "it's more than was in the budget last year. This needs to be treated as any serious epidemic. That needs to be done—and that will be done," he said over cheers of approval from the crowd.

Greenwood introduced the members of his family to the crowd, shook a round of hands and left for another "thank you" stop.

Early in the evening, it became clear that Anne Wheeler, the GPC endorsed candidate opposing Jim Westmoreland in the At-Large 1 race, had gleaned only about one-third of the vote. But at Election Central, she was greeted with applause and hand shakes, not unlike the reception given to persons who had won their races that evening.

"I want you to know that this lady has never been a loser in Montrose, and the results show it," exclaimed Bagneris. "She took on the biggest turd at city hall, and we'll get him next time. Westmore-

Larry Bagneris, GPC president, at GPC Election Central



PHOTO BY SHEILA DUNCAN

land will retire in two years."

A tearful Wheeler said, "I am very proud of your support. To me, Montrose is the center of the universe."

She went on to say that most of the councilpersons are supportive of human rights and of anyone who "is sensitive to all human needs and all communities."

Regarding her defeat, Wheeler said that the incumbent was elected on name identification. "There is no question that if they knew my opponent's record, they could not possibly have voted for him."

Bagneris assured Wheelers of the continued support of the gay community "150 percent, anytime, Montrose is behind you."

Les Harrington, proponent and liaison to the gay community from Texas Eastern's convention center project, told the crowd that by gay support of the successful center vote that the community "has arrived" in the eyes of downtown business. "By the political power of the bloc vote, we got their attention, and once they met us, they found out they liked us besides. We just blew them (top Texas Eastern management) away."

He said that the issue has enabled gay corporate personnel to "come out" as never before, and that building the convention center on the outside will "help clean up lower Westheimer."

Referring to repeated comments about liking gays when getting to know them, Bagneris said, "People learn that we are not out to molest their kids; we are not

interested in their husbands or their wives. All we want is our jobs and the right to raise our kids. All they have to do is meet one of us, see how we walk and talk, and they are satisfied about the kind of folks we are forever. We are interested in the quality of life, in getting potholes repaired and that buses run on time."

Nikki Van Hightower, the GPC endorsed candidate, and Anthony Hall will be in a runoff for the At-Large Position 4 spot, which was a surprise to no one, with both candidates garnering approximately one-third of the vote. Figures representing Montrose, however, indicated this area went for Van Hightower by 62 percent to Hall's 20 percent.

In reference to Hall's position on gay rights pertaining to the employment anti-discrimination issue, Bagneris said that he authored the first rights ordinance.

"Where was sexual orientation then?" he asked the crowd.

Van Hightower addressed the group saying that she knew the community had granted her great support and had been fractured in time and money, but that the campaign would continue for the three more weeks of the runoff. She asked for continued support saying "looks like there will be a runoff and I think we have the strategy for victory. We've had a lot of help from gays. I can't do it without you."

State Rep. Debra Danburg and Sherry Valentine were on hand to support Van Hightower as well.

See related story, page 1.

Montrose Mouth

Cover Boy

Guess who's on the cover of the just-released *Advocate*? Houston's own Coll Thomas.

Inside are several articles on Texas, including the lead article, "In Search of the Average Gay Texan" by Joe Baker. Joe, of Dallas, frequently has articles appearing here in the VOICE.

—○—
Lola's owner Marilyn Arnold is planning on making lots of changes in the bar—just like she's always making lots of changes to her hairdo. ... Wayne Barton, the new DJ at Mary's, is keeping the place jumping right now. And Mary's is celebrating its 13th Anniversary this Sunday all day, all night, with keg beer and champagne.

—○—
More good bar news: The 611 opens re-a-l soon with Steve and Ken. They're at 611 Hyde Park.

—○—
Danny Villa has finally figured out when he's going to hold that Zapp Clap Two, Too. It will be Nov. 21 and 22, a week from now, at Numbers, benefiting the Montrose Clinic and the KS/AIDS Foundation.

—○—
The City of Houston VD people will be at Midtowne Spa tonight (Friday), 9pm-1am, for free blood tests and gonorrhea screening. Then they'll be at JR's and the Mining Company, Sunday afternoon, 4-6pm, with the VD Buggy for more tests. And next Wednesday night they'll be at the Copa, 9pm-1am.

—○—
Here are some important events that occurred this week in past years—excuses to throw a party.

Friday, Nov. 11: David Ignatius Walsh was born today in 1872. So that means you can celebrate that your middle name is not Ignatius.

Actually, old Iggle was a U.S. Senator from Massachusetts that became involved in a homosexual scandal in 1942. Seemingly police raided this New York "male brothel" (bathhouse?) questions C.A. Tripp in his book, *The Homosexual Matrix* and arrested manager Gustave Beekman. They then offered Beekman a deal for cooperation and he named Walsh as a customer. Newspapers plastered Walsh's name on their covers for weeks—and the Senate conducted a sensational investigation—but it cleared Walsh.

Police then prosecuted Beekman on charges of "sodomy," found him guilty and sentenced him to 20 years in prison. He served every day of it.

And special thanks to Martin Greif's *The Gay Books of Days*, from which we gathered some of this information.

Friday is also Veterans' Day.
Monday, Nov. 14: Herman Melville's *Moby Dick* was published today in 1851. And, good God, Joseph McCarthy was born today in 1908. But on a more refreshing note, Arthur Bell, gay columnist for New York's *Village Voice*, was born today in 1940.

Tuesday, Nov. 15: Pike discovered his peak today in 1806.

Wednesday, Nov. 16: Al Capone was released from jail today in 1939, three years early for good behavior.

The Voice has more news, more Houston advertising, more Houston readers.



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Anthony Hall Jr.

NBC Crew Covers GPC

By Hollis Hood

Political clout may soon replace AIDS as the major gay-related newsmaking issue during the coming national election year, and NBC's Nightly News was in Houston recently to film a demonstration of bloc vote power which gays seem to be exhibiting in politics.

When Congressman Gerry Studds came out of the closet, he brought with him a new era of gay political recognition, which is now becoming organized to the point of being a viable force in local, state and national elections.

Key West elected a gay mayor, Richard Heyman, a 48-year-old businessman.

All the Houston Gay Political Caucus endorsed candidates in the city election, including Mayor Whitmire, acknowledged the impact of the gay vote in last Tuesday's election.

In an effort to document this flux and new-found voter response, Washington D.C., reporter Lisa Meyers of NBC Nightly News dispatched a crew to film the GPC in action during the election. The crew was at Numbers 2 disco, GPC Election Central, Tuesday night.

"We picked Houston because, one, we had a crew here," said Bob Abrahamson, cameraman, "and because they (GPC) are a good example of the political influence gays have; they are very organized."

The staff, field producer Clarence Renshaw and two technicians filmed GPC members doing a mailing, in strategy sessions at headquarters, went along to Rascals and Kindred Spirits on the candidates' bar tour, as well as filming Election Central.

"Gays are exerting considerable political influence," said Renshaw, and as

pointed out in a Nov. 7 *New York Times* article. "They are unified, and they are good campaign workers."

Although not politically active throughout the country, gays have great influence in cities such as Houston, New Orleans and San Francisco.

The filming will illustrate Meyers story on *Nightly News*, but the representatives did not know when the story would air, nor how much Houston footage would be used.

"Politicians are coming out of the closet. Others are actively seeking the gay endorsement," said Renshaw.

Because gays are becoming an increasingly vocal, aggressive and politically sophisticated minority as a group, they will be gaining even more attention in the months to come, he indicated.

GPC president Larry Bagneris publicly complimented the crew Tuesday night for their "sensitivity and professionalism" in recording the events.

Gays' Dress Influencing Nongay Men

International Gay News Agency

The gay movement "has had an extraordinary influence" on male fashion, according to designer Lee Wright, who recently agreed to do an exclusive collection of menswear for J.C. Penney.

Wright says that there has been a gradual revolution in the way men dress themselves. Traditionally men would shop for themselves after the entire family was outfitted. Now, more and more males are thinking about their image and taking time to shop for themselves.

Wright attributes this change to the gay movement. "It's a known fact that gay men have a more aesthetic sensibility about them, and it carries over into the nongay community," Wright said.

Wright is the third well-known designer to join the Penney team. Halston and Cathy Hardwick are already creating collections for the store that are geared toward the Middle America customer—in other words, the budget-conscious consumer.

Gay Mayor Wins Key West Election

By Chris Church/Nite Scene
Via GFA Wire Service

Richard Heyman, 48, overcame "nongay" status to become Key West's new mayor. With a 436 vote margin, Heyman defeated Richard A. Kerr by a vote of 3605 to 3169.

Kerr's campaign stressed "morality" and the fact that he is a "conch"—the islanders' term for a long-time resident. His posters trumpeted, "Your vote will set the moral tone for our community."

Heyman stressed tourism and preservation—one the main source of Key West's income, and the other the problem of inadequate utilities.

Joe Balboniti, city commissioner and Kerr supporter, stated after Heyman's victory that news of a gay mayor "would bring more of them (gays) down here."

Heyman countered by saying that the

island's problems have nothing to do with sexual preference. "We have to preserve the character and charm of Key West so it won't become another Miami Beach," he finished.

Gay Membership Splits Council of Churches

Orthodox churches will "recess their situation," according to a spokesman, should the National Council of Churches approve membership eligibility for the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches, a 27,000 member denomination and haven for gay Christians, reports the Religious News Service.

New Texas Gay Newspaper Started

The Star, a new bi-weekly gay community newspaper, is releasing its first issue this weekend in Austin and San Antonio.

The newspaper, a 16-page tabloid, is owned by the Montrose Voice Publishing Company of Houston, which also publishes the MONTROSE VOICE and *Dallas Gay News*.

"This completes the Texas Triangle," said publisher Henry McClurg. "We're now serving Texas' three major population areas with three local, community-involved professional gay newspapers."

Another bi-weekly gay newspaper published in San Antonio is the independent *Calendar*. *The Star* will be published on opposite weeks of *The Calendar*, giving the area a new edition of a gay community newspaper each week.

The Star will feature local San Antonio and Austin stories each issue backed with national columns and features, including Brian McNaught, Peter Harrison; Roz Ashley, Arthur Lazere, Sharon McDonald; health advisor Dr. Harvey Thompson; political activist, professor Dr. Dan Siminowski; Allen Young; and Jack Sturdy's movie reviews.

Ed Martiney is news editor of *The Star* and Rico Young is advertising manager.



First edition of "The Star" appears this weekend in Austin and San Antonio.

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LEBANESE PEACE TALKS

BEN SARGENT

GPC Not Totally Pleased; Many Not Pleased with GPC

continued from page 1

tered Mary's with their bright red stickers urging voters to support the GPC bloc vote, a vote that clearly excluded Hall. Slickers were posted to cars parked around the bar and on some of Mary's patrons, whether they wanted to wear them or not, reported one of the bar's managers.

Upon entering the bar, Mary's surprised crowd greeted the mayor with shouts of "Keep Kathy"—the slogan painted on the front of the building—and the shouts of elation continued while the mayor walked through the bar, shaking hands and speaking with its patrons.

At the rear of the bar, however, Mayor Whitmire's progress was stopped by members of the GPC who joined together and refused to let the mayor pass, and the bar manager, until other patrons of the bar forcefully broke the GPC blockade, an event which has received both confirmation and denial from GPC affiliates, as well as the owner and managers of Mary's.

Rep. Danburg, an avid supporter of the GPC, addressed the Friday night episode at Mary's. "A few GPC board members were up at the bar getting drinks. They didn't try to block the mayor. They were there to observe. There was no confrontation and no argument."

Another GPC member (who wishes to remain anonymous because of her public position) said: "There was no confrontation with the mayor. We have no problem with her. She walked in, saw our GPC bloc vote stickers, but I didn't confront her. I didn't even talk to her."

However, another GPC member (Danburg's affiliate) mentioned that the mayor offered her her hand and asked, "How are you, (name withheld)?"

"I said not one word to her," the GPC member said. "I didn't respond, because I was genuinely hurt."

This GPC member further commented that she believed her organization felt abandoned by the mayor because of Mayor Whitmire's decision to tour the city with the GPC, rather than with candidate Hall.

"But we're not out here to sell candidates," the member added. "We're here to generate votes. But Anthony's her (Whitmire's) man, and that's who she's pushing."

It will be a matter of time before the incident at Mary's bar will be made clear to members of the community, an episode many members regard as an embarrassment to the gay community as a whole.

Mary's owner, Jim Farmer, did contact the VOICE in an attempt to make public his feelings regarding last Friday's episode: "Mary's would like to apologize to the mayor," he stated. "For the rudeness and actions of certain members of the GPC which occurred at my bar last Friday night."

After leaving the bar in her silver Continental limousine, Mayor Whitmire rode with Hall to Bacchus, a popular bar for gay women, where he was enthusiastically escorted, and then to The Copa, where she entered the packed disco to Donna Summer's "She Works Hard for the Money." After touring The Copa, much as she had done at the previous bars by walking through the crowd, shaking hands and speaking with its patrons, a video of a male stripper was stopped for the mayor to take center stage.

"Remember me next Tuesday," she asked the crowd in a strained voice, brought on by a severe cold and laryngitis, and was applauded by a crowd shouting approval.

Then she introduced candidate Hall, who told the crowd, "Let's don't turn the clock back four years," referencing accomplishments made by city council over that period.

The following evening, the GPC conducted its bar tour, sans Whitmire, and with what was reported as a considerable success, despite an unpleasant confronta-



Whitmire on tour at Mary's Lounge Friday night—with no GPC umbrella



These two people (Nikki Van Hightower and Anthony Hall, both considered friends of the gay community, were the front-runners and are now in a runoff for City Council Pos. 4. Whitmire supported Hall. GPC chose not only to endorse Van Hightower, but to also "target" her race as a necessary win. This angered many in the gay community who felt that that energy should have gone into more clear-cut races.

tion with Councilman George Greenias, who, like Mayor Whitmire, supported Hall.

GPC's tour consisted of Rep. Danburg and candidates Nikki Van Hightower and Anne Wheeler.

Councilman Greenias had been invited by the GPC to go on the tour and had made arrangements to meet the tour at 11:30 Saturday evening at Rascal's, provided that candidate Hightower was not along. "Greenias had been assured by Bagners that Hightower would not be on the tour," reported one GPC member who was at Rascal's at the time. "Then when he saw her get out of the limo, he went back inside and had a drink."

Despite this brief episode which some members of the community see as yet another breach of community trust by the GPC, GPC president Bagners said, "The tour worked like clockwork. We were supported at every place."

Rep. Danburg did not see the Greenias incident as being overly important. "He did not want to appear to be supporting Nikki Van Hightower," she said. "He felt by going on the tour with her that would implicate his endorsement (of Hall)."

The divisions between the mayor, the gay community and the GPC came into sharper focus election night.

While the GPC celebrated its victories at Election Central at Numbers, 2300 West-

heimer, Mayor Whitmire's supporters gathered downtown at the Sheraton.

After her victory speech where she saw her reelection as a referendum "to make this city the greatest city in the world," the mayor held a brief press conference, prior to which time she invited the VOICE for a private interview later in the evening.

In her suite at the Sheraton, Mayor Whitmire was hesitant about addressing her relationship with the GPC and was adamant about the confrontation at Mary's which had disturbed many people in the community.

"I don't know what you're talking about," she said of Mary's incident. "I really don't even want to talk about any such rumor mongering that you're getting into right now."

Asked if she had felt abandoned by the GPC during this race, the mayor replied, "I certainly don't."

But the mayor was aware of the uncertainties and of what some deemed a lack of appropriate representation within the community, but she sought to "rise above" when addressing the VOICE.

"I think in a citywide campaign you have to get votes from every part of the city, and the Montrose area has always been an important part of my constituency," Mayor Whitmire said. "I live in Montrose, and in every election when I've run, I've always gotten a strong vote from Montrose."

"I think that the support that I have gotten from that area really transcends any kind of political factions within the area," she added, "and I'm glad about that. I certainly don't involve myself in the fights between the factions."

Then Mayor Whitmire turned to the issue of gay rights and how she views her last two years in dealing with the issue.

"I have always been a supporter of human rights," she said quietly. "And at times, certainly in my last campaign, that fact was used against me—the fact that I had support within the gay community was used against me—and I think at that time we saw that even though it was a very bitter part of our campaign, we were able to do enough work to overcome it. I think that some progress has been made at developing a larger base across the city of people who see the virtue of supporting basic human rights for all people."

Meanwhile, across town at GPC's Election Central where patrons of Numbers, the politically minded in the community and GPC's members and advocates awaited the arrival of the mayor, GPC president Bagners addressed the crowd in what will probably be his last large-scale address to the gay community as president of the caucus, since officer elections for the organization are scheduled for the first of the year.

Bagners, in a masterpiece of political rhetoric, expressed the disappointment he felt with Mayor Whitmire, and before the mayor arrived, he proposed vacating Numbers in an attempt to have the community mirror his disapproval of her efforts with the gay community over the past two years, despite GPC's endorsement which greatly influenced her reelection.

"I just received a telephone call from a successful mayor of the City of Houston who just carried the Montrose precincts to the tune of 90 percent," he told the gathering just before 1:00 a.m. "And that's a few things I wanted to say to her. I wanted to say, first of all, that accountability begins now and tomorrow. Now we will not tolerate retreat of responsibility to our constituency any longer by candidates who receive our support," he said, alluding to the possibility that she might not appear.

"In all minority struggles, the task of obtaining basic human rights is difficult at best. Our message is clear," he shouted. "Your message and the message to these people who sacrificed to work and work out for the Gay Political Caucus in this community—our message is clear. We're in this for the duration of this fight for equality, because none of us are free until we're all free. We believe, we really believe," he emphasized, "that a great society is spawned in the sanctity of privacy. That's are issue: the right to privacy."

But along with that comes the courage of the individual, the wisdom of tolerance, and most of all, the joy of the human spirit. That's the important line that lies with us," he emphasized.

"And I was referring to Kathy Whitmire, and I was going to say that the days of Cinderella are over with. They are over," he shouted. "The clock has struck midnight and reality has become our fairy godmother."

After being interrupted by more applause, Bagners continued: "It should take no compromising to give people their basic human rights. That's what we're about. After working eight years in this organization, after working through Gay Pride Week, after working through an election just like the rest of these people up here," he said, referring to the crowd. "I had the mayor of the City of Houston say to me, 'I'll come, but I understand that they're some TV cameras there.' I said, 'That's correct.'"

"We're proud of the fact that CBS came to us and asked to film a documentary, but we told them to 'go get screwed' because they had done such a bad job with gay power and Gay Pride Week. Then NBC

came to us and we said we'd love to work with you, providing that we don't have to work with local TV cameras. You send us a crew from New York City, and we'll give you everything you asked for. And those three men have been absolute gentlemen. They have gone into gay bars, they have respected you because they realize that if they turn a camera on you that you can lose a job, whether it be \$5000, \$10,000 or \$15,000 a year, it's still an income.

"And I explained that to the mayor of the City of Houston and the board. Well, I'm willing to come if there are no TV cameras."

"And I said to the mayor, the way I'm supposed to do as president of an organization that delegates responsibility among the board members who represent every background, every group, everyone in this community, I said to her, 'I'll call you back in five minutes.'"

After another outburst of applause, Bagneris continued: "Then I took my board outside, and I explained to my board the request of the mayor of the City of Houston, and my board said to me if Kathy Whitmire, who makes \$80,000 a year, can't face the NBC cameras the way we did after taking our votes, well, then, we're going to take it to you, but you decide what you want to do with that."

"We've been tempted with a taste of freedom!"

Bagneris was interrupted at this point with shouts of "Holla" from the crowd. "But let me guarantee you that it's an artificial taste of freedom, and now we want the real thing. We want the real thing," he shouted. "We want to have the same rights and privileges and protection under the law." Then, quieter, he said, "It's simple. We want to keep our jobs, we want to choose the places we live in, we want to raise our kids if that's our blood. That's the bottom line."

"But the real bottom line is that we want for the people we've worked for, we've worked for, we've suffered for to stand with us side by side until we've accomplished the goal of total freedom for every gay man, for every lesbian in the City of Houston," he said to thunderous applause.

"I've got four more months as president of this organization, and it would be easy for me to continue to play the facade, but I have had it up to here," he shouted to more applause. "I have no desire whatsoever to play anybody else's facade. If you can find the time to ride in a black day parade, an Irish day parade and a Mexican-American day parade, well damn it, you can find the time—when these people have suffered through an election—to come out and find the time to say thank you."

After the crowd quietened, Bagneris propositioned them: "Now what we're going to do is let you decide if you're willing to continue—because we boast all over the country that... we have a pro-gay mayor—we are elected and dictated by you what you want to do. Well tonight, we're not going to make the decision. You do the work. You've stood up and lost your job, and you make the decision. We want to know," he shouted, "we want to see the show of hands of how many of you—now that the TV cameras are gone—would like to see the mayor of the City of Houston."

The crowd voted overwhelmingly to see the mayor, and there were shouts of "We want her here!"

Bagneris continued: "This is not a mob. We're going to control ourselves like we always have, like ladies and gentlemen. Okay? And we're going to conduct ourselves as adults."

Then Bagneris tried his final attempt at voicing his disapproval. "Now I want to know how many of you would like to just call it an evening and when they arrive decide that we've had enough partying and go home and let them come and visit anybody that they want to visit because we're not interested!" The crowd screamed, "No!"

"The problem right now is I want you to realize that she's just been elected the mayor of the City of Houston. I want you to promise me, should she come in that front door—because I'm not lying to you—I've never lied to you—I want you to promise me that there'll be no hecklers from the

crowd, no shouting, and we'll stand here and listen to what she has to say, and we'll applaud her on the way out. And let me tell you why. Let me tell you why," he shouted. "And the first person that is rude with the mayor of the City of Houston will have to deal with me. Why? Because these members who stand with you tomorrow afternoon at 5:30... have a meeting with the mayor of the City of Houston. We have a meeting that's guaranteed. Will you support us the Gay Political Caucus by acting like ladies and gentlemen? Will you support us when we go in tomorrow and give her a list of the many things we want done in this city—this her second time around? Will you support us in what we want from the mayor of the City of Houston?"

After the crowd promised to cooperate, Bagneris continued: "I have your word, and I've always trusted you." Bagneris then told the crowd to keep their clothes on and not embarrass Houston's gay community the way so many had embarrassed theirs in San Francisco.

"I beg you, do not embarrass us." It was later reported in the VOICE that Mayor Whitmire listened to Bagneris' speech to the crowd at Numbers via a walkie-talkie in her limousine.

Mayor Whitmire's only comment was reported to have been, "I just wish they wouldn't be taking this attitude." Minutes after Bagneris' spoke, the mayor walked onto Numbers stage to record applause.

"Holla," she said in her strained voice. "It's great to see all of you."

After more applause, she continued: "I just want to say that tonight we had a wonderful experience because they told us that we couldn't do it. They said it was a fluke last time. And I just want to congratulate all the people that worked with us. It takes a lot of work, it takes a lot of dedication."

"We had strong opposition this time. We had opposition that spent a million dollars against us. But because you did the work, because you worked with us, we were able to win and were able to win big."

After the applause died, she said, "And I think this says a lot about this campaign and the people that worked in it."

The mayor then excused herself due to her voice, and introduced George Grenias, "a good friend of mine and a good friend of yours."

Then Grenias made a statement that sat uncomfortably on the shoulders of many in the crowd. "These few people up here (the GPC board members) are perhaps the closest to you in terms of representing the community. We don't forget it for a minute that we're in office. And don't let anybody let you think that we ever forget that we welcome, we acknowledge and we respect your support and we ask for it again, and again and again. We thank you. We both thank you."

"You all have done wonderful things in the last four years," he continued, "from '79 when the council changed. There is so much left to do. Don't lose sight of what the goal is. The goal is progress for this community, for this city. Stick with us. We're moving forward. We're gonna get it. You keep at it. You can't lose. And as long as we stick together, there's no goal we can't accomplish. We are united. We are one."

Robots Replace Humans

Will the age of robots usher in life after death? Neil Frude thinks so, says a recent issue of *Omnis*.

The Welsh psychologist says that after you're gone, your friends may be able to console themselves by having a cup of tea with your mechanical double at the wake. Frude says robot technology will someday produce "look-alike vinyl shells" programmed to mimic speech, gestures and attitudes. They may even be able to "physically interact" with loved ones.

Frude admits his notion is "profoundly disturbing," but he says "it's something akin to a bid for immortality."



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Gays Busted for Wearing Police Uniforms on Halloween

By Ernie Potvin
Via GPA Wire Service

LOS ANGELES—Two men were arrested for impersonating a peace officer after leaving Rufflers bar in West Hollywood Halloween week-end, following a uniform theme Halloween party.

Von Scruggs was dressed as a California Highway Patrolman, and his friend William Marley was in a Los Angeles Police Department Uniform. Neither of them wore authentic badges, utility belts, holstered weapons, handcuffs or batons. Scruggs said they were both members of a uniform club.

After rounding the corner from the bar, Scruggs and Marley were surrounded by six CHP patrol cars, arrested and taken to the West Hollywood Sheriff's Station where they spent the night. Their costumes were confiscated, and they were charged with the misdemeanor which carries a maximum penalty of up to six-month imprisonment or a fine of \$500 or both.

Scruggs said some of the officers tried to provoke them with name calling and harassment, but they refused to respond to it.

He said that the clothing had been purchased from a uniform store that services CHP and LAPD officers, and explained how they told the sales clerk they were not sworn officers when buying the patches.

The store swore they did not sell the uniforms without the purchaser showing the proper ID.

An entirely different picture was painted by Sgt. Norris Solomon of the LAPD who coordinates relations with the city's numerous private patrols. Sgt. Solomon said that he is unaware of any law prohibiting the sale of the uniforms to civilians, and he knows that all the uniform sales companies do it. He said his office asks private guards to mix-match the pieces so they aren't confused with a sworn officer's. Nevertheless, an individual nightclub guard may try to dress identical to the LAPD uniform, and when he is discovered, they will tell him to change it.

"Wearing of a police officer's uniform may or may not be legal," said Solomon. "It depends on whether or not there was intent to deceive the public."

He cited the movie industry as the notable exception.

Next we checked with Western Costume, the film industry's largest supplier, and got two conflicting responses. One of the higher-ups in the men's rental department said they "most emphatically do not rent police uniforms to the public." He said they get lots of requests for cops, Nazis, nuns and priests, which they will only supply for bonafide theatrical use.

Another employee said that's not true. "They're just concerned about making costumes that might be considered in bad taste. As for uniforms, there's ways to get around it. We'll change some little detail, like the width of the pant striping or a slightly different badge, and let them go out."

As for priests, Western Costume made up an absolutely exquisite Pope for one Halloween celebrant who apparently was not arrested for impersonating the Pontiff.

Neither were any of the costumed cops at the Uniform Sabath party held at Duane's, another gay bar, the night following Scruggs and Marley's arrests.

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Boy Scout Fights to Get Back Old Troop

By Dion B. Sanders
Via GPA Wire Service

BERKELEY, Calif.—Attorneys for the Boy Scouts of America said in October that they will appeal a court decision ordering an openly gay Eagle Scout to be reinstated as an adult scout leader.

The California State Court of Appeals in Los Angeles upheld on Oct. 6 a lower court ruling that the BSA's 1981 ouster of Timothy Curran, 21, whose homosexuality was revealed in a newspaper article that year, was "arbitrary and capricious."

BSA attorney Malcolm Wheeler said from Los Angeles that the BSA maintains a policy of not permitting "girls, gays and the godless."

Wheeler said that "one of the ideas of Scouting is to get kids out in the woods—removed from everyday problems, one of those problems being sexual relations."

Curran disputed the assertion, saying that he found it "highly offensive. They obviously think that because I'm gay, I'm going to molest kids, and that's a garbage stereotype of gays in general and a personal insult to me."

Curran went on to assert the fact that most cases of child molestation involved girls being molested by heterosexual men.

David Park, BSA national director, said previous attempts "by several boys who refuse to acknowledge the existence of a Supreme Being, as well as several females," were unsuccessful.

In fact, one of the ten "Laws of Scouting" states that "a Scout is reverent ... toward God."

A spokesman for the American Civil Liberties Union said, however, that that particular policy is unconstitutional, on the grounds that it violates an atheist Scout's First Amendment rights.

"The First Amendment, while it gives us the right to worship as we please, also gives people the right not to worship at all, if they so choose," the spokesman said.

California Superior Court Judge Robert Weil ruled last July that the BSA must prove "a rational connection between

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homosexual conduct and any significant danger of harm to the association," before the BSA can expel anyone who is gay.

Curran asserted that "it will be difficult for the Scouts to prove I'm immoral. They made me an Eagle Scout; they gave me the Order of the Arrow (one of Scouting's highest awards). They've gone to great lengths to prove how moral I am," Curran continued, "and now, they're trying to kick me out simply because I'm gay. There's no way I'll let them do that to me without a fight."

Park responded, "We just don't think parents want homosexuals in the (Scout) troops."

While national BSA leaders are opposed to Curran's reinstatement, local officials have openly welcomed Curran back.

David Potter, scoutmaster of Troop 37 in Berkeley, said that "if you wanted to select a person who has been the ideal Scout, that person would be Tim Curran."

In an editorial, the *Oakland Tribune*, the newspaper that made public Curran's gayness in 1981, said that when questioned about Curran being gay, nearly all of the members of Troop 37 said, "So what? We don't care." The editorial continued, "And why should anybody care?"

The editorial concluded that the true measure of a Scout's worthiness is what he does in his capacity as a Scout, not what he does in his private life.

Gay Porn Star Killed

Falcon Studios model "Dick Fisk," 28, was killed Oct. 31 with his lover and the driver of another vehicle in an early morning auto accident in an Atlanta, Ga., suburb, Marietta.

Fisk, whose real name was Frank Ricky Fitts, and his lover Billy Joe Howard, 22, were enroute home.

As reported by Atlanta's *Cruise News*, police said Howard was driving when his



Dick Fisk in Falcon photo

car crossed the center lane and struck a pickup truck driven by Stewart Rhette Wallace, 31, of West Marietta.

Fisk had recently appeared in the *Mandate* and *Torco*. His major film endeavor was Falcon's *The Other Side of Aspen*.

He had recently been employed at Atlanta gay clubs.

Moscone, Milk Assassinations Still Heated Issue

By Dion B. Sanders

Via GBA Wire Service

SAN FRANCISCO—With the fifth anniversary of the assassinations of Mayor George Moscone and openly gay city Supervisor Harvey Milk approaching, the Justice Department in late October refused to either confirm or deny a local TV news report that Attorney General William French Smith had been urged not to prosecute their convicted killer.

KGO-TV reported that Smith received a recommendation from the department's criminal division that former Supervisor Dan White, who shot Moscone and Milk to death at point-blank range in their City Hall offices on Nov. 27, 1978, not be prosecuted on charges that he violated their civil rights.

John Russell, a Justice Department spokesman, told *The Sentinel*, a local gay newspaper, that the White case "is still being examined by the criminal division, and no new decision has been made."

Russell added that although he does expect a decision to be reached soon, "I can't tell you just what soon is."

A spokesman for U.S. Attorney Joseph Ruonello expressed total surprise by the KGO-TV report. "Not only have we not heard about this so-called recommendation, but if it had been given, we would have been informed."

Ruonello himself was quoted by the *San Francisco Chronicle* as saying that "I would expect to be the first to know (if a decision had been made). We have no information about any decision that has been made."

The report was attacked by the longtime lover of Milk as "totally off-base." C. Scott Smith, the sole heir to the Milk estate, claimed that contrary to KGO-TV, "other news sources said a recommendation had not been made yet."

Moreover, Scott Smith said, the report was broadcast on a Monday when the Justice Department received new information on the case "only that weekend."

John Wahl, the attorney representing the Milk estate, was quoted by the *Chronicle* as saying that the KGO-TV report was "a trial balloon by the Justice Department."



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AIDS Funding in Britain Not Major Issue

By Lindsay Taylor
International Gay News Agency

LONDON—The death of a hemophilic in Bristol from AIDS has led to further calls for the British government to allocate more money to fight the disease.

Another hemophilic in Cardiff is among the 20 common cases of AIDS in Britain. Both men are believed to have contracted the disease from contaminated supplies of clotting agent Factor VIII imported from the United States. The U.S. currently supplies more than half of Britain's Factor VIII, and the government cutbacks in funding mean that the United Kingdom will not be self-sufficient in blood products, at least until 1985.

Although the British Hemophilia Society (BHS) has contributed around 25,000 pounds (about \$37,000) toward research to find a way of insuring that supplies of Factor VIII are free of AIDS, Social Services Secretary Norman Fowler has refused to increase governmental funding of the project.

At a meeting in late September, junior Health Minister Lord Glenarthur told the hemophilic organization that the government was unwilling to expand its AIDS research because this would mean that other medical research projects would have to be cut.

The hemophilic group now plans to join with gay groups, organizations concerned with intravenous drug users and health service trade unions to form an AIDS Action Committee.

This Action Committee aims to put pressure on the Department of Health and Social Security to treat the AIDS problem with more urgency and to counter inaccurate reporting about AIDS in the media.

Julian Meldrum, secretary of the gay Hall-Carpenter Archives, has already made a detailed complaint to the Press Council on newspaper coverage of the disease. The committee intends to issue a regular newsletter to organizations representing all groups that are particularly at risk from the disease.

Letters

'Thanks for Reviving the Spirit'

From Larry Bagneris

Congratulations on a job well done to the hosts of both the Gray Party, held at Numbers Disco the Sunday of the Westheimer Art Festival, and also the party for us small people (under 5'7") held at Baja's.

For a moment, I thought I was in the Houston of three years ago when T-dances and parties were the themes of Houston weekends, as we celebrated the joy of knowing and accepting that we are gay.

Thank you for putting the spirit of partying back into our community.

Rascal's Efforts Applauded

From Larry Bagneris

A big thank you to the management and staff of Rascal's for the evening of October 24. The \$600 raised and donated to the Gay Political Caucus to help defray the cost of this municipal election was greatly needed and appreciated.

We could see from the production that it was a labor of love.

On behalf of the Board of Directors and the members of GPC, we thank the entire staff of Rascal's for their contributions and continuing support.



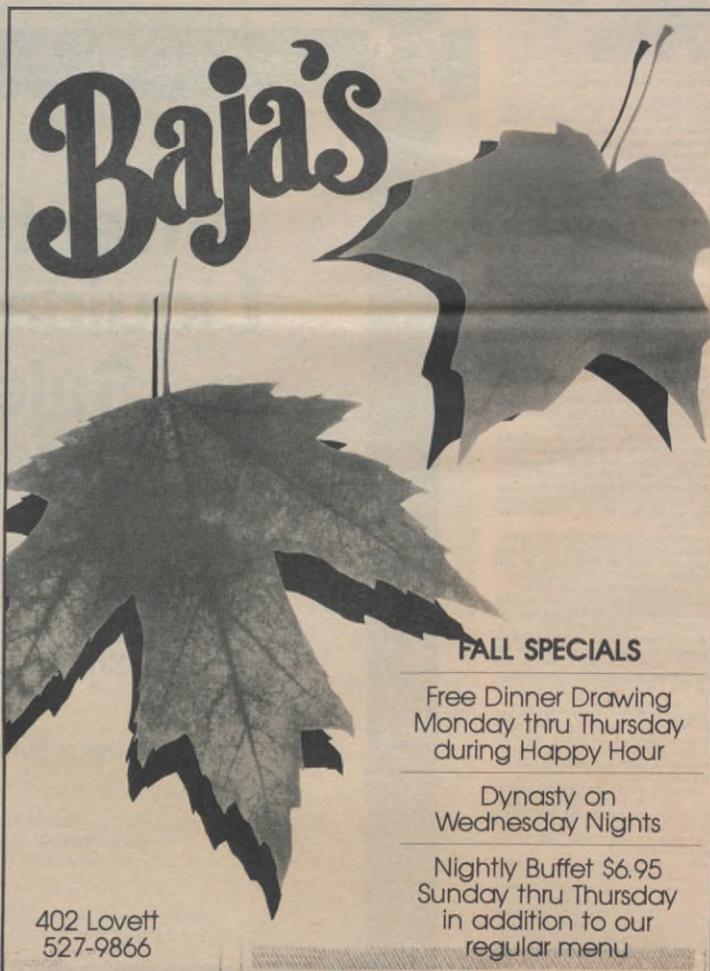
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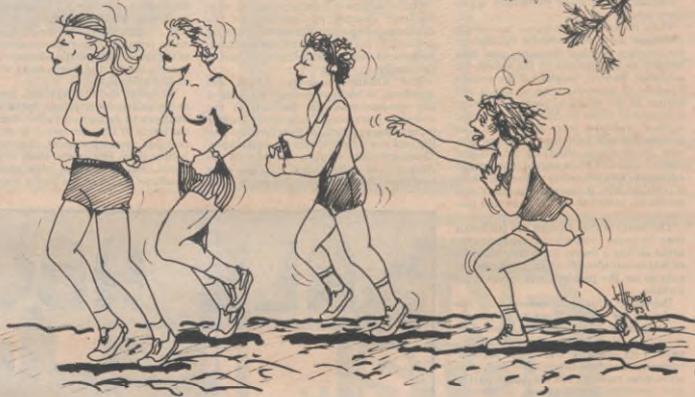
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Sweat Socks: One Woman's Story

By Sharon McDonald

When it comes to sports, I have always been cordial but distant. As a child, the full extent of my athletic repertoire was the repeated climbing of a single tree in which I would sit for hours daydreaming of an even less active childhood. I thought that once I grew up, I would be free of the daily pressures to run, jump, slide, hit and catch. Call me naive, but I looked forward to my adult years as a fruitful time for affairs of the intellect.

Back then, women were allowed, no encouraged, to let their muscles atrophy in peace. But right around the time I would have begun living out my happy destiny as a sedentary grown-up, I fell in with an energetic group of women who called themselves by a strange new name: feminists. At first I thought their philosophy meant more choices for everybody. I could be either a chemist or a karate champion. What I didn't know was that the karate



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champion didn't have to study chemistry, but the chemist would have to take up some arduous sport to stay in the feminist ballgame.

Only the language had changed since childhood. Yesterday's "Get your nose out of that book," has become today's "Get in touch with your body." This is a paradox of modern feminism that I find difficult to understand: nobody tells Rosie Casals to write a book, why do they tell me to play tennis?

It's important at this point to explain that I don't dislike sports just because I'm not good at them, although that certainly helps. But simple ineptitude is a mere embarrassment that's easily forgotten. What's not easily forgotten is a lifetime of sprains, strains, cuts, scrapes, bruises, lacerations, concussions and temporary embarrassments. I dislike sports because I hurt myself doing them, sometimes quite badly.

I can fall and chip a bone on any type of surface you've got, from grass to concrete. The only time I can catch a ball that's hurtling straight at my unique and fragile face is when it knocks my last two fingers backwards three inches farther than they were ever meant to go. I think it's about time for feminists to face the fact that some women were just not meant to totter four inches off the ground on blades, wheels, a four-long slab of wood or anything else.

Women whom I would otherwise consider caring friends have tried to get me out there into the sun. "Look at you! You call yourself a dyke? Look at that arm. Where's the muscle?" "It's in my fingers. I type 90 words a..." "You've got to start thinking about your health!"

"I am. I'm staying inside where it's safe."

"You don't know what you're missing."

"Yes I do. Pain."

It doesn't help that Louise is on the side of the athletes in this one balmy evening when she and I were in the first glow of new found love, she chanced to ask what sports I enjoyed. When I said none, that lovely period of idealized romance passed forever into history. Some people are so judgmental.

Louise's childhood had been a whirlwind journey from championship this to championship that. From a modest beginning at prize-winning marbles, she went on to conquer her neighborhood at baseball, ping pong, basketball, skating and so on. She once remarked to me what an easy transition it had been to go from GAA (Girl's Athletic Association) to GAA (Gay Activists Alliance) without even changing T-shirts.

As if our relationship wasn't tenuous enough, Louise decided that we needed to jog together every night. I reminded her that I considered achieving normal posture an athletic event. She could not be moved. I said I'd think about it.

True to my nature, I approached this subject first from an academic angle. I read all the books about jogging, and it was there that I learned about cramps, strains, faintness of breath and "overdoing it." I stopped reading. Next, I went

shopping. After pricing jogging shoes, I came home with the aforementioned faintness of breath. This was soon followed by faintness of heart.

The more I thought about it, the stupider it seemed. Being an urban dweller, certain physical pursuits like karate or running do make sense to me. But jogging has no such intrinsic, pragmatic value. What self-respecting mugger responds to, "Back off, buddy. I'm a jogger?" Not does jogging provide you with an escape maneuver; it just doesn't work to jog away from an attacker. This is in sharp contrast to the more versatile sport of running, which can be utilized either to run from an attacker or to run to attack someone. Jogging, on the other hand, produces only two concrete results: stronger calf muscles and better wind, both of which are good for only one thing—more jogging.

I presented my findings to Louise, but you can't tell her anything. So, with our frail relationship hanging in the balance, I purchased the proper shoes, baggy shorts and sweat socks and revised my will. I was ready. Louise glanced up from the television, lit another cigarette and said, "Not tonight, hon, let's start tomorrow." The next night she was meeting a friend for dinner and suggested we wait one more day. The following day she came home from work exhausted. "How about tomorrow night, sweetie?" she groaned.

By now, all I can say is it's a wonder I've

retained my sweet disposition and tolerant, loving, giving, accepting attitude through all this. If in the name of feminism or health or God knows what else my lover and friends advocate chasing a ball around, or want to broduct others into doing the same, I'd be the last one to say it's not an excellent use of time.

I mean, if they want to move their conversation to the level of debating the absorption capacities of different brands of sweat socks, I'd never suggest it was a step down. Some people might say these women have become sweaty, ill-clad, panting bobs, but not me. Goodness, if I let a little thing like watching my friends become competitive over-achievers turn me into an unresponsive name-caller, well, what would that say about friendship?

As for Louise and I, we have made a peace of sorts by discovering a physical activity we can do together. Although it is more private than a jog around the local park, I will say that it has satisfied both our wants by providing exercise, sweat and exhaustion without requiring a trip to the emergency room. Until something better comes along, this will do just fine.

As for Louise and I, we have made a peace of sorts by discovering a physical activity we can do together. Although it is more private than a jog around the local park, I will say that it has satisfied both our wants by providing exercise, sweat and exhaustion without requiring a trip to the emergency room. Until something better comes along, this will do just fine.

Sharon McDonald, who lives in Los Angeles, is co-winner of the 1983 Certificate of Merit for Outstanding Work in Feature Writing from the Gay Press Association. Her column appears here and in other gay newspapers.

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Pop Culture and Gay Rights

By Dan Siminowski

For a long time, I have believed that the expression of views on "public" issues in media like film and music offers a special way for political activists to build support for their causes. If "culture" can be called "political," it is most powerfully so in three senses.

First, it can bring attention to existing problems in a way usually ignored in mainstream political discourse, and thus involve us emotionally in the search for solutions. Second, because of the artist's freedom of expression, he or she is not limited to the practical political agenda, solutions or views of the future. An artist defines problems more freely and has greater latitude to define alternate policies, institutions, lifestyles and moral codes. Last, and most important, the artistic address to an audience is more direct than a political one, it aims to the heart and emotions, rather than the head and reason.

The result is that though the politician may be more "correct" in analysis, the artist strikes a deeper cord, creating pain or fear or self-identification, urging us not only to see the problem, but to live it for awhile.

Hopefully, this submersion into the realm of the artist allows us to emerge more sensitive to the problem, more open to its discussion, and more likely to participate in its solution. Were Karl Marx to comment, he would surely agree that "consciousness raising" is a necessary part of any revolutionary program. I contend that it plays an important role in gay rights at the moment.

If we agree for a moment that culture can speak politically, and its expression can be used to promote a political movement, we are still left with a towering question. What is "gay culture?" The answer seems to elude all of us. Whether or not there is a unique gay aesthetic, the creation of a truly unique people or whether it is only the product of a ghettoized subcommunity, are issues too large to tackle in this column.

Happily, though, another standard offers itself for this discussion, one not based on who the artist is, but how effectively that person portrays gay life. This

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standard is the language adopted by the Alliance for Gay Artists in the Entertainment Industry, which recently presented its third annual media awards.

They are given to actors, writers and production staffs in film, TV and theatre for "the realistic portrayal of gay and lesbian characters and issues in the entertainment media." As did the earliest Oscars and Tonys, these awards celebrated honesty and accomplishment without nervous nominees or declarations of best anything. Instead, they celebrated the works that allowed audiences to experience three-dimensional gay and lesbian people, that invited non-gays to experience our richness and difficulties and that gave us the chance to see ourselves onstage as we are in our private lives.

Among the most emotionally received theatrical tributes were the late Jane Chamber's play, *Last Year at Bluefish Cove*, and the ensemble of actresses who played it, Pat Carroll's solo performance in *Gertrude Stein*, *Gertrude Stein*, *Gertrude Stein*, Vincent Price's powerful version of Oscar Wilde in the one-man *Divisions and Delights*, and Caryl Churchill's *Cloud Nine*, all productions of the Los Angeles Theatre.

For what I consider the best film yet made about the pains and rewards of coming out, John Sayles' *Liana* won, and received special recognition for the performances of Linda Griffiths and Jane Haran. In television, award went to *Dynasty* for the honest and routine way in which the gay character Steven Carrington

was portrayed, and to PBS for its production of *The Fifth of July*, with Richard Thomas and Jeff Daniels as the stable gay couple—and probably the most "normal" people in the play.

The awards evening was produced, written and directed by members of the Alliance and was easily more entertaining and crisply presented than the more familiar awards shows. I felt proud to be part of the family.

The Alliance numbers about 250 members, its main percentage made up of gay professionals. In addition to the awards, year-round activities include monitoring productions that focus on gay life and working to eliminate stereotypes. There are risks to open members of the Alliance, as chairperson Chris Uzler reminded the audience, the same risks

faced by every person who chooses to reject the closet.

Speaking for himself and the Alliance, Uzler affirmed that he would not be intimidated: "I am not discouraged...no, far from it, for I see a new generation of gays and lesbians emerging in our history.... People who are willing to take risks, refusing to pay the emotional price of the closet, individuals who say 'I can be myself, openly and freely, and I will work in this town again!'"

Whatever their background, sentiment or sexuality, most artists speak to their audience in metaphors rather than political tracts. If they are forced to create stereotyped characters, most audiences will believe them and extend them to the real world. How short a time it is since any gay character found in the media was ridicu-

lous and disturbed! But if gay characters were once one-dimensional and false, that is less true each year.

The characters honored by the AGA were complex, honest and wholly within their dramatic context. Some were extraordinary gay icons, like Stein and Wilde, but most were ordinary people, like you and me. Their sexuality was merely an aspect of their makeup, not a constant source of struggle and conflict. When Americans can begin to see us in the media in all our richness and variety, we begin to close in on our political goals.

Dr. Siminowski is a political scientist and has been active in the gay rights movement for about a decade. He may be written at 1221 Redondo Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90019. ©1983 Stonewall Features Syndicate.

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Good Taste, and Why Not?

By Allen Young

"Good taste" is supposedly a matter of special concern to gay men. When a gay man lacks good taste, whether in his clothes, his home decor, his conversation or his behavior, he is said to be "tasteless," a word that in today's gay banter has become a campy exclamation. (For some reason, all of this seems less relevant to gay women, which is why I refer only to gay men here.)

A friend of mine who writes for *Fag Rag*, one tasteless enough to burn a *Bible* at a Gay Pride rally, has on several occasions expressed his mockery and disdain for this gay male preoccupation. He sees it, I believe, as a kind of faggot snootiness, an attempt by gay men to use esthetic values to find respectability in upper-middle-class heterosexual society. My friend's *Bible*-burning must be forgiven if only because it spurred much interesting discussion about religion's role in gay oppression. As for his condemnation of faggot

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preoccupation with taste, I have been until recently quite sympathetic with his point of view. I am beginning to distinguish, however, between good taste that is simply an honest appreciation of beauty, and a fashion-oriented concept of taste sometimes known as "piss-elegance."

Piss-elegance is something I findirkome. *The Queen's Vernacular* (now published by Paragon Books as *Gay Talk*) defines a piss-elegant queen as "one equating wealth and style with real achievement; one who lives in sham elegance." (A second definition of the term says it is a "jealous reference to a rich homosexual.") Since coming out into the gay world, I have met a few gay men who could be described as "piss-elegant," and a few others who manifest a self-conscious preoccupation with taste, based on airs, manners and fashion. Such men are not likely to become my close friends.

But I have also met some fine artists—men (and women, too) with a well-developed esthetic sense and a commitment to creativity. The gay friends and acquaintances have meant a lot to me. They have opened doors for me to realms previously unknown, and they have taught me something about good taste. I use that term in the most positive way.

Twelve years ago, my main idea of something attractive to put up on a wall was a brightly colored poster showing fags and gags, supposedly to express solidarity with the people of a beleaguered



Third World nation. In general, the idea of having attractive surroundings was then of little concern to me. That was before I was part of the gay community. If I were to list the things I have learned from my involvement in gay life, I would have to place at the top this newfound concern for beauty in my immediate surroundings. And why not? Our lives are enriched by beautiful things, both manmade and natural.

This is one of my disagreements with the radical left, which focuses so much on negativity. There is often no room for beauty in their world; they see most art as "politically incorrect," for according to them, we must always be aware of suffering and injustice. Frankly, I don't want to look at fags and gags anymore, neither in real life nor in posters on my wall. I feel sorry for the oppressed artists who are victimized by political commissars, whether they are movement ideologues or Communist party bureaucrats. For such commissars, art is "bourgeois" unless it "serves the interest of the working class," whatever that is.

Some might claim that it is middle-class privilege that allows me this concern for beauty. But poverty and squalor are not synonymous. When I lived among the Zinacantan Indians in southern Mexico, they manifested a strong desire for beauty and excellence in their colorful clothing. The Indian man I lived with, who was weaving a new straw hat for an upcoming festival, made it quite clear to me that he had "good taste" and also that he felt a certain disdain for men in the village who did not take the time and effort to make their hats beautiful.

All of this is really by way of introduc-

tion, as I want to share with readers of this column my appreciation for the work and friendship of an artist I know, Gerard Brandis, whose wood engravings are among the decorative items in my home. Ger, a Canadian who lives and works in Ontario, is one of several artists I have met in the gay community. I was introduced to his work through *RFD*, the country gay journal, which published some of his engravings of rural architecture and plants. Shortly after, a feature article on him in *Body Politic* made me aware that his temperament and lifestyle were much similar to mine. Eventually we met, and we now have become friends. We are now collaborating on two books, one on Cape Cod, another a collection of quotations, both to be published through Brandstead Press.

Brandstead Press is Ger's own creation and was established 11 years ago to produce limited editions of wood engravings and linocuts. It now has facilities to perform every stage of production of handmade books, from papermaking to binding. Ger's primary work has been botanical illustrations, but in recent years, he has sought to bring his gayness to his work and the result has been two volumes of illustrated gay poetry. But, as Ger wrote me in a letter I excerpted for publication in *Launderville*, overt gayness in art is not essential: "What is more important is to realize that the presence in my life of interpersonal relationships nourish my entire being and spill over into my creative processes, just as my creative vitality makes me more capable of contributing to another man's life." Ger's work has won him significant recognition; it is included in many public

galleries and university and library collections, as well as in numerous private collections. His dedication to his craft is inspiring: imagine working a book from start to finish, including weaving the cloth for the cover, making the paper, engraving the illustrations, handsetting type and operating the printing press! Yet, for all his success, Ger does all he can to keep from being "sucked into the suburban, commercialized and consumerized—too much a part of the trendy gay scene, too much a businessman." He writes, "My life and lifestyle appear too often relevant, and yet there is no real alternative on this planet." These are my feelings for when I leave the typewriter today. I will go into the garden to plant carrots and eggplant, spend some time in putting around the house to make it more pleasing to me, and a little later, go to the bus station to pick up an old friend whom I haven't seen in years.

These pleasures—the manmade beauty in my home, the natural beauty of the plants in the garden, both the functional beauty of vegetables and the "pure" beauty of flowers, and the love of friends in the gay community whom I have come to cherish so much—help make life rich and worthwhile.

I refuse to rob myself of these pleasures just because I know that there is pain and suffering elsewhere in the world. My appreciation for beauty does not undermine a desire and hope for a better world; in fact, the two are inextricable.

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Lesbos' Sappho Remains History's Romantic Enigma

By Patrick Franklin

Plato regarded her so highly that he called her "the tenth muse," a name that bestowed the status of a demigoddess on her. Catullus quoted her poetry in his own. The ancients carefully kept copies of her nine books of poems.

But who was Sappho? The life of the woman whose very name is used as identification for the love between women, and whose birth on the island of Lesbos gives a name to the women who practice that love, is now lost. But "lost" is too kind a word. The memory of Sappho brings with it a legacy of talent and genius that was too startling a burden to be borne by generations of men for whom the love of woman for woman was vile, and who demanded that the place of women must be subservient.

But she lived. More important, she wrote, and in such a way that the minds of her contemporaries were stunned by the perfection of her writing. Small-minded men could burn her books and try to erase her memory, but not completely. To do so would have required that they censor or destroy many of the works of the great male thinkers who admired and quoted her.

She was born in the late 7th century B.C. When, exactly, is lost in time along with the date of her death. We know the name of her father, Scamandronymus, who died when she was only six, and we know that she must have been a relatively wealthy man because of the position in society that Sappho enjoyed. She had three brothers, who, from the poetry that remains, must have been spendthrifts.

Very little else of unquestioned truth remains from independent sources. What few hints can be assumed come from the interior evidence of her poetry. She was a friendly correspondent with the poet Alcaeus, and the two of them were considered leaders of the Aeolian school of poetry.

More important by today's standards is that she apparently presided over a feminine literary set at Mitylene, writing short poems to the charms of some of those women. It is on the basis of those small fragments that her highly regarded reputation rests. They show an unquestioned command of feeling expressed in perfect, disciplined form.

It was this, her ability to combine emotional depth with classical purity, that made her not only the greatest woman poet of Greece, but one of the great poets of all time. Solon, hearing one of her verses recited, declared that he could not die until he had learned it.

Passing references indicate that she was married and had borne a son. Still, those references never show the depth of feeling, the sincerity and the grace with which she described her feelings for her women friends. That bothered even the ancients, and they believed a legend that Sappho had thrown herself from the Leucadian Rock in frustration at having failed in love with a young man, Phaoan. Though the story was disproved by Roman times, it was continued by later writers who could not understand a woman who was complete without male companionship.

She, in turn, frustrated other writers by refusing to consider the passing scene. She ignored the eternal strife and struggle of the Greeks and their interminable civil wars. Her poetry concerned eternal values, those of love and the relationship of common people with the infinite. Perhaps the only complete poem that survives is a hymn to Aphrodite, the goddess of love.

Her entire output of nine books of poetry was small, even for those times. In her own words, they were "roses, but roses all." There were no thorns or faded blossoms in those books, and they survived at least until the destruction of the Library in Alexandria, completed by the Arabs in 640 A.D.

The fathers of the church had little use for her poetry, and all copies of Sappho's verse were summarily burned when discovered. They offered no support to the views of those men, unlike the writing of other "pagans," and posed a real threat to the idea of male supremacy that the early church was so devoted to. Sappho seemed to be a dead issue.

Even today, when we are left with only tantalizing fragments of what must have been an exciting body of work, the old prej-

udices appear. Robert Graves, writing the *The White Goddess*, a volume extolling the role of women in poetry and art, tells of his discussion with a professor about the poetry of Sappho. "Tell me, sir," he asked, "do you think Sappho was a great poet?"

The Oxford don looked up and down the street to see if anyone was listening. "Yes, Graves," he whispered, "that's the trouble. She was very, very good."

Humanity can be proud that one woman in its early history stands as a monument

to the ability of all who face prejudice. At the same time, we must mourn for the vicious destruction of her art.

Willa Cather said it best: "If of all the lost riches we could have one master restored to us, one of all the philosophers and poets, the choice of the world would be for the lost nine books of Sappho."

Franklin, of Carmel, Calif., is the director of StoneWall Features. ©1983 StoneWall Features Syndicate.



Texas Renegades Presenting Adragna's Carnal Fantasies

By Billie Duncan

Competent artists depict things, good artist depict thoughts, and great artists depict passion.

Perhaps Robert J. Adragna is not a great artist, but his work evokes a sense of, well, lust from the viewer.

Cowboys, horses, guns, leather, outer-space—these are elements in the works that are now on display at Texas Renegades, 1318 Westheimer. But the overpowering element in Adragna's meticulously crafted paintings is his own awareness of the attraction of the sensual male animal.

"I'm fascinated by the way a person wears a pair of pants or a belt," said Adragna. "the way something is shaped to them that best displays their personality."

Least someone should get the wrong impression, a word of clarification: these paintings are not pornographic, they are merely carnal.

Adragna's style is a form of theatrical super-realism. His paintings were created, for the most part, as illustrations for books. It seems that a lot of the books took place in the Old West—an area for which Adragna (a native New Yorker) has a great fondness.

"One thing I was disappointed in when I came to Houston was that hardly anyone was wearing cowboy hats."

Adragna is very attractive to costuming, and, though he uses real people as models, he clothes them in his mind the way he would like to see them. "You know what's the fun thing about painting—people like this, you get to dress people up in your fantasies. And in a way, they don't know it."

He confessed that he has been known to dress for bed, himself. "I have an absolute

fetish for blue jeans," he said with a slow smile, and admitted that he thinks jeans have a place in lovemaking "if they're a turn-on for the other person."

He paused for a moment, his brown eye searching for the right thought. "The trouble with porno films is that they get undressed too fast."

If he were to direct a porno film, he said that he would have "all the different types. The Village People were perfect for me. But they didn't carry it far enough."

As far as plot was concerned, he said, "I would like it if you didn't get to the orgasm until you had explored all the other possibilities. The orgasm would come at the very end of the movie."

But his favorite films are western and science fiction, and he said that his art is very influenced by the films he sees. He is pleased with how well his film sense has worked in with his illustrating jobs, but he feels that he would like to have more freedom of expression in his painting than he is allowed working as an illustrator. "I would like to go bolder into the fantasy."

Eighteen of the 22 pictures in his Houston show were originally done as illustrations. Of the other four, two are of Adragna's lover of five years, David.

One of them is titled "Number Ten" and is on the list of paintings in the number 10 spot. Adragna explained that he had had no title for the painting, but when he was making out the list, it fell to the number 10 spot. "I thought, 'How appropriate!'"

The only painting that does not have at least one male figure in it is called "American Dream" and is an acrylic of the grill of a vintage Cadillac.

"A Mercedes Benz is not as sexy as an old Cadillac."

There are no paintings of women in the show. He thought of one that he decided



Artist Robert Adragna

not to bring. "I didn't bring the painting because it's (the show) in a gay bar. And she's dressed in leather, of all things!"

He said he would like to try his hand at painting fantasy images of women, but "most publishers are too conservative, unless it's Playboy or something like that."

Adragna's illustrations are generally commissioned by such people as Ace Books, Dell Publishing, Jove Publications, Berkeley Publishing and the American Post Card Company (for whom he has done two cowboys).

Several of his pictures recently

appeared in *The Advocate*, which is where Creative Source, 702 Avondale, and Gordana Kristofic of Texas Renegades noticed him.

Gordana decided she wanted to bring him to Houston. "I wanted to show how someone from New York saw cowboys," she said.

Robert J. Adragna's cowboys (and other men) will be on display at Renegades through Sunday, and the charming artist will be on hand tonight, tomorrow and Sunday from noon to 5 p.m. to discuss his work and, hopefully, sell some paintings.

It would be nice to keep some of his fantasy cowboys in Texas where they belong!

Winter's the Time of Discontent

Feeling down? Gaining weight? Sleeping more lately? You're not crazy, you're hibernating, reports *Omni*.

Researchers at the National Institute of Mental Health have discovered that some of us get bummed out as the days start shortening and don't come out of our blue funks until springtime.

"I should have been a bear," complains one sufferer. "Bears are allowed to hibernate; humans aren't."

The researchers say they've obtained successful results simply by plunking their patients down under lamps to prolong daylight artificially. For a longer-term cure, they suggest imitating the birds by flying south for the winter.

But don't go too far south. Down under, they get depressed, too, from June to November.

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Night Music's Waltzing Fairytale for Adults

By Joe L. Watts

Theatre Under the Stars has opened its '83-84 season at the Music Hall with a 10th anniversary production of *A Little Night Music*, and has brought in Juliet Prowse, Larry Kert and Henry Fonda to head the cast of this Stephen Sondheim musical billed as a waltzing fairytale for adults.

Winner of six 1973 Tony Awards, *Night Music* is a musical adaptation of Ingmar Bergman's Swedish classic, *Smiles of a Summer Night*. The story is elegantly set in Sweden at the turn of the century when Madame Armfeldt (Gingold) brings together for a midsummer weekend in the country a handful of discontented lovers—her daughter, actress Desiree Armfeldt (Prowse); Desiree's former lover, lawyer Fredrik Egerman (Kert); Fredrik's young wife Anne, still virginal after 11 months of marriage; Fredrik's son Henrik, a divinity student in love with Anne; Desiree's current lover, Court Carl-Magnus; and his unhappy wife, the Countess Charlotte—plus assorted servants and other guests. Amid silver birches and with "smiles of a summer night," the lovers juggle their ill-matched relationships until finally they fall into proper order.

Night Music is a very stylized, innovative musical, and Sondheim's lyrics and music are quite sophisticated. A mood-setting vocal quintet perform before and during many scenes, helping to explain and develop the plot. The talents of the actors, *Night Music's* style is considered light operatic, rather than traditional Broadway musical.

The quintet, in this production, all seemed to have well-trained lovely voices, but were too hard to understand at times.

Hermione Gingold (an international treasure of the English speaking theatre) seemed a bit low key in her performance as Madame Armfeldt. She was required to perform the entire production from a wheel chair. However, reported to be an amazing 86 years young, she still had a twinkle in her eyes and seemed a crowd-pleaser.

Larry Kert (the original Tony in *West Side Story*) was secure and fine in his performance as Desiree's former lover—he and Juliet had some nice moments of inner play.

Juliet Prowse (possessing a pair of voracious legs) was very capable as Desiree, and her rendition of Sondheim's classic "Send in the Clowns" had the right emotion, if not the right voice.

Early in the play, Madame Armfeldt tells her granddaughter Fredrika "that the night smiles three times." TUTS is fortunate in this production to present three wonderful surprise "smiles."

A bright and professional smile comes from Henrik (Stephen Lehow) who laments that all of his advances to his wife are turned away with "Later, Henrik." Lehow deserves respect for his technically fine performance and brings laughter with his character's romantic frustration.

The second smile is a wry grin for Countess Charlotte (Barbar Lang) whose narcissistic, philandering husband has driven her to resent her sex and anyone who is happy. Lang sings beautifully of her woes in the touching "Every Day a Little Death" and is the best actress in the cast.

Later in Act II comes the "musically beautiful" smile from Petra (Laurie Daniela) the maid who has dreams of grandeur but a grasp of reality that she blends powerfully in the "The Winner Takes It All." *A Little Night Music* will play through November 13.

□ Stages' 'Getting Out' a Poverhouse

By Joe L. Watts

As it's second offering in the Women's Playwright Series honoring the Susan Smith Blackburn Prize, Stages is presenting Marsha Norman's *Getting Out*. Directed by Stephen D'Amico, this production of a young woman's release



Juliet Prowse

from prison and her struggle to cope with "the outside" has a very powerful cord and is a totally accomplished display of strong, tight direction and honorable first class acting—theatre at its finest!

Stages had the honor of Norman's presence at their opening night performance. Norman is the winner of the 1982 Blackburn Prize and the 1983 Pulitzer Prize for her current Broadway success, *night, Mother*. Surely she must have been moved and proud to have seen her extremely well-written *Getting Out* given this almost flawless rendering by Stages.

At the opening of the play, Arlene (in her late 20s) has just been released from prison after serving an eight-year term for murdering a taxi driver, along with a few incidentals such as robbery and prostitution. She went in a hellion and came out a meek mouse afraid of her own shadow. In this case, that shadow is her former self (pre-prison) played by a younger actress. Scenes from her past when she was a wild animal ready to tear the world apart occur intermittently along with the present happenings of her life (a clever and quite theatrical device used by playwright Norman).

Enter a bag full of selfish members from her past who are not ready or capable of giving her the support she needs to deal with her new freedom: the prison guard, who has retired and has driven her to Kentucky hoping to gain sexual favors; her former pimp "boyfriend" who wants to set her up for business again; and her mother, a hard and bitter woman who offers nothing but negative talk of how difficult her life is going to be, finding a job, making any good new friends, etc.

Then along comes Ruby, Arlene's upstairs neighbor in the run-down building she has just moved into. Ruby (an ex-con, herself) is a cook at a hash house, or as she calls herself, "the queen of grease." She offers Arlene the simple honest truth: you won't make as much cooking and cleaning as you will on your back, but whatever you make, you get to keep all of it.

Arlen isn't sure she can accept this philosophy and is completely destitute, considering the options with which she is faced. Dare she hope that her life could someday be a good one?

Norman's text is taut and tough, but contains touches of humor in looking at life in the raw. Her delineation of the characters is excellent.

Director Ted Swindley deserves much praise for a sharp, compelling production and for bringing together an impeccable ensemble of actors. And Stages' cast is an electric power plant. The energy, intensity and electricity was wonderful to watch.

Robin Bradley as Arlene underplays her role with an inner beauty that is very touching and pitifully believable. Tracy Douglas as the 16-year younger Arlene) generates an explosive perfor-

mance that is often hypnotic—a young actress sure to make a name for herself.

Charlie Trotter is right on the mark as Bennie the retired prison guard smitten with Arlene.

Jean Proctor presents a well-crafted characterization as Arlene's bitter and callous mother.

Dorothy Edwards as Ruby (Arlene's ray of sunshine) is wonderfully warm with good comic timing and delivery.

Daniel J. Christaens as Carl the pimp is the perfect slimy snake, trying to lead Arlene back into a life of crime.

Like the values in Norman's drama, the message here is simple and true: you should get out and see *Getting Out*; it will be time well served.

Stages' production will run through Nov. 19.

□ Women's Chorus Slated for Houston

Preview: The Cecilia Singers. Clara Lewis, Conductor; Jack Coldiron, Baritone; Eva Rosa Harpist; Barbara, "We Sing to Him," "Evening Hymn," "Barter," "Melodies Passengers," "Theodore Chandler," "Ginette's Dream" and "Popcorn's Brava," "A Ceremony of Carols," "Rejoice in the Lamb."

By Peter Derksen

Habitues of symphony and opera often look down upon "amateur" musical groups, particularly the church, but not possibly as good as their professional counterparts. The fact is that not all highly talented and trained musicians are able or willing to lead the concert life, with its extreme demands of time and energy. Groups which perform music for the sheer love of it offer a quality of inspiration sometimes absent among the mercenary, lesser-known works by the great composers, as in this program.

The Cecilia Singers are a group of 25 women united by their love of serious music and committed to make it more available to their community. Founded in 1977 by Clara Lewis and Joanne Cox, their purpose is to present choral literature of the highest artistic quality, either previously written or composed for them. They are one of the only treble choruses active in this country.

Until the last century, it was relatively uncommon for women to perform music in public, particularly the church, so most choral music was intended to be sung by men and/or boys. Some composers, such as Nicolai Porpora and Michael Haydn (younger brother of Joseph Haydn), bucked the trend and wrote extensively for treble voice. The Cecilia Singers have, as far as they have been able to determine, offered the U.S. premieres of three of Michael Haydn's four major works for treble choir and orchestra, and they are planning to perform the remaining one next year.

In general, though, few composers wrote much for treble choirs or understood the musical intricacies of the treble voice. Two more recent prominent exceptions are Brahms and Benjamin Britten. Later this season, the Singers will perform Britten's *Mass in B* in a concert with the West-Valley Choir and the Forth Worth Chamber Orchestra.

Guest artists are an integral part of Cecilia concerts, not only to round out programs, but also to give the singers the opportunity to work with different specialists and better their craft. Past guests have included the Southwest String Quartet (Houston Symphony Orchestra principal), the Forth Worth Chamber Orchestra, the Texas Little Symphony, Charles Nelson (an operatic basso from Dallas), and such varied accompaniments as a harp ensemble, brass quintet and mime troupe.

The coming concert features lyric baritone Jack Coldiron, head of vocal music at Southwest Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth. He is performing as noted for his performances of the *Faure Requiem* under the direction of Robert Shaw. Aside

Montrose Live

from the solo works in the first half of the program, he will sing *Rejoice in the Lamb*. Although *Rejoice* was not originally written for treble chorus, this transcription was authorized by Britten.

This concert, then, will focus on 20th century composers, though not on 20th century music, as most people think of it—ruthless cacophony. Lovers of vocal music will not want to miss what promises to be an exciting and enthralling concert.

The concert will be presented at the John Wesley United Methodist Church on Nov. 19 at 8 p.m. For ticket information and directions, call Clara Lewis at 444-3545.

□ Houston Symphony's Valley of Dry Bones

Neville Marriner, conductor; Robert Tear, tenor; November 5th Program: Mozart, *Symphony No. 35*; Britten, *Serenade for Tenor, Horn and Strings*; Webern, *Im Sommerwind*; R. Strauss, *Suite from Der Rosenkavalier*

By Peter Derksen

Four vividly emotional works performed with accuracy, a trace of feeling indeed have been slightly surprised even in long-time Marriner fans. He is on the way to becoming (in reputation) the Toscanini of his generation, flooding the market with superb-sounding recordings of the classics. In particular, he has brought many fine 18th-century works back into the active repertoire.

Marriner, making his Houston debut, opened the concert with one of his stock items: Mozart's *Hafner* Symphony. The orchestra was impressive in this conductor's standards: 12-13-8-4-4 strings (he has been to 16-8-4-2-1), 15th minute differences, the symphony sounded exactly like it did when he conducted it in Boston five years ago, and as he recorded it on Philips (see review in *Montrose Live*). A tribute to the Houston Symphony Orchestra's level of playing technique, Marriner's Mozart is crisp, exact and rather predictable.

Robert Tear, one of the world's leading operatic tenors, also made his first Houston appearance Saturday night in Benjamin Britten's *Serenade*. He sang very well, with almost perfect diction, audibly even over full orchestra. Thomas Bescon was a model accompanist and soloist on horn, and contributed most of the vitality of the performance. He played the modal *Prologue* and *Epilogue* on natural (valveless) horn, the pure sound of which, combined with strings, was paradise. Mr. Marriner led the ensemble through the series of songs in a generally restrained and intensely lovely setting, set to a poem by Blake.

Anton Weverna's *Im Sommerwind* ("In the Summer Wind") is a youthful work with slight pretensions to late 19th-century romantic symphonic poem, it is overshadowed by contemporary works by Richard Strauss, Sibelius and Schoenberg, among others. Nonetheless, it is a later opera lover, to evoke images of the high Alps in high summer. Marriner's conduction was, as might be expected, precise and restrained, allowing the music to stand on its own, unembellished.

Richard Strauss, ever alert to the commercial potential of his music, extracted an orchestral suite from his popular opera *Der Rosenkavalier*. The suite has become a popular concert staple, appealing both to the original, and to Strauss lovers who detest opera. The music captures the brilliant gaiety of the opera, with its lover's intrigues, comic episodes and elegant balls. Though technically excellent, the performance was too cold and detached for my taste. (This would have pleased Strauss, an unemotional man whose first opera lovers on the podium was legendary.)

Considering music as having four basic types of qualities: physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual, it is apparent

that Neville Martin, as a conductor, is master of the first two, approaches the third with the greatest reluctance and the fourth by unconscious accident. By modern standards of musical composition and

performance, this sort of thing is quite acceptable.

Admittedly, a concert with virtually all the notes played correctly is a rare thing. But is it music? Can these bones live?

Starting Next Week in the Voice

FREE PERSONALS

(up to 15 words)

See form page 23

Houston's New Gay Theater with an Male 'Private Lives'

By Robert Hyde

In Houston's gay community ready for a theatrical repertory company that does nothing but gay plays?

Hopefully so, according to two men in the community who are launching their first production next week with an all-male version of Noel Coward's *Private Lives*, that sophisticated comedy that reunited Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton on Broadway earlier this year.

And if this play is successful (and opening night is already promised to be standing room only), the community will be acquainted with other favorites, such as *P.S., You're Cat Is Dead*, and *Gertrude Stein, Gertrude Stein*, as well as introduced to lesser-known but new positive works by American gay playwrights.

"I have a high social consciousness about gays," said John David Etheridge, the director of *Private Lives* and co-founder of the newly incorporated Diversity Theater, the non-profit theatrical group which will bring the plays to Houston. "Some people go into politics or become very active in other areas of the community, and this is my way of doing something for us."

Etheridge has been involved in theater for most of his life. After graduating from Northwestern University in Natchitoches, he studied as an apprentice at the Alley Theater, supervised a local repertory company in New Orleans for over two years, and has directed over 40 plays in his life, including the recent *Skirmishes* at Stages.

The idea of forming a local gay repertory company occurred to Etheridge when he saw the community reaction to last year's production at Stages of *Bent* when several performances had to be added due to sold-out performances. He was moved when he saw an individual in tears during the play which analyzes the love between gays in a Nazi concentration camp.

"I then realized that most members of the community had never seen plays about themselves," Etheridge said.

"Gay people spend most of their lives without role models. Most of their first 18 years are invalid," he said. "Maybe some day a psychiatrist will come along and tell a six-year-old kid that it's all right to be gay, but that's a long way off."

And it's with this spirit of forming a comfortable identity that the new gay theater group is being launched. Etheridge feels deeply about his conscious raising effort for the community, and believes that gay people need to see plays about themselves. And to date, that identity has been stereotyped, for the most part, by motion pictures and television; only this year have two major gay plays (*Torch Song Trilogy*, *La Cage aux Folles*) made inroads on Broadway and been highly patronized by nongay audiences. (*Bent* was thought by many to be too depressing; *Boys in the Band*, too negative.)

"There's got to be an audience in Houston for very positive, sensitive gay plays," says co-founder Joe Watts, a long-time acting member of Houston's theatrical com-

munity whose most recent performance was in *Boys in the Band*, which may be revived by Face at the Tower.

Watts made reference to Montrose Activity Theater's production of *Women Behind Bars*, made popular by drag queen Divine, that brought Houston's gay audiences to the theater, but he feels that plays should not have to be sensational to attract the attention of the community. Even the popular *Bent*, Watts said, had its sensational element with its nude scenes and its on-stage climax between two men.

"But it's time now to do new, positive gay scripts," Watts said. "We shouldn't have to do something sensational or outrageous to get people into the theater."

Etheridge goes on to point out that this new repertory company will invite many gay actors to perform, an opportunity that has eluded them simply because they have been gay or effeminate.

"And some directors have had to bypass them because of this," Etheridge said. "It's a reality. It's not totally pleasant. I'm sure, it's happened to me. And there are so many talented gay actors."

If *Private Lives* is a success, then, Etheridge's goals will come closer to reality in providing this opportunity to local gay thespians.

But why *Private Lives*, rather than some more recognized gay play?

"I thought of going with something less established," Etheridge said, "but I didn't know if anyone would have heard of it. Really, this play is just an easy first step for us."

Watts agreed with Etheridge and feels that by making this an all male production, a lot of people will come to the play just to see if it will work.

"I think it's innovative to approach a classic that's been revised on Broadway," Watts said. "We've changed some of the pronouns," he added, regarding the all male cast, "but so far, only our drag queen (who's playing one of the roles and uses camp constantly off stage) is confused by all this."

The play's comedy revolves around two married couples (in this case, gay) honeymooning on the French Riviera when two members of the newlyweds who were once lovers spy each other from adjoining balconies and realize that they are still in love. They slip away to a private residence where their new nudes descend on them in an emotional and hilarious tug of war.

One of Houston's oldest gay bars, the Pink Elephant at 1218 Leeland, is donating its new stage area, The Other Side, to this new theater company for its inaugural performances which will be held on Tuesday evenings, beginning November 22, at 8 p.m. Tickets will be \$3 to make the evening more accessible to the community.

"A lot of people in the community don't support things as much as they should," Watts said, hoping that this will be the exception.

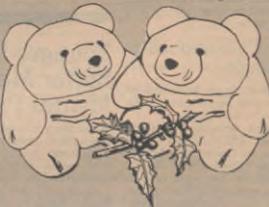
"And this is something we both want," Etheridge added. "Hopefully all of us can work together to establish it."

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Sports

Tennis Club Elects Officers

□ Montrose Tennis Club Elects '84 Officers

By Rich Corder

The Montrose Tennis Club looks to be in good hands for the coming year after Tuesday night's election of its '84 officers.

Yours truly was elected to a third term as president, new member Christi Callie became MTC's first woman officer as vice president, Rich Ryan was reelected secretary, and newcomer Mark Dingman was elected treasurer.

Richard Preegant will assume duties of Challenge Ladder director, Randall Dickerson will focus on new member activities, and Mario Durham will make himself available to assist Mark with the money. Congratulations to these officers and committee chairpersons!

□ Tennis Championship Begins Sunday

Play begins Sunday in the HOUTEX '83 championships with the following seedings.

Class A Singles' defending champion Tony Clorian of Corpus Christi (recent Class A champ at Dallas Oak Lawn's Texas-OU Classic) is seeded No. 1. The No. 2 seed is Houston's No. 1 player Rich Ryan, hoping to avenge last year's championship match. Five other Houston players will figure into the results.

Class B Singles will feature No. 1 seed John Teamer (of San Francisco) favored to meet No. 2 seed David Davenport (also of San Francisco). Six Houstonians, one player from Corpus Christi and one from Kalamazoo, Michigan, round out Class B.

Class C has a dozen entrants, with myself as No. 1 seed hoping to defend my 1982 championship, but No. 2 seed Robert

Arriaga and No. 3 seed Mark Dingman have something to say about that. Nine other Houston players complete the class.

Open Doubles will feature myself and John Ryan seeded No. 1 over pros Tim Calhoun and Jan Mauldin. The No. 3 seeded team is Jim Kitch and Jon Colbert (the No. 1 team in the MTC). There are 11 other teams, making this the most interesting doubles competition we've seen here in Houston.

With MTC's plans to host a national doubles tournament in the spring of 1984, this is a good sign.

There is no admission for spectators. Play begins Saturday at 9 a.m., and semis and finals begin Sunday at 10:30. Come watch the fun!

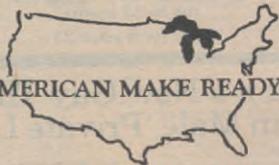
Younger People Suffer More Mental Problems

Researchers are scratching their heads over a major new study that indicates people between ages 25-45 suffer from many more mental problems than older folks, reports the *New York Times*.

Experts at the National Institute of Mental Health say the reason may be that older people have a hard time remembering psychological traumas from their earlier years.

The three-year study of 11,000 people contained another surprise. Doctors had thought depression was our number one problem. It turns out alcohol abuse is tops, followed by drug dependence.

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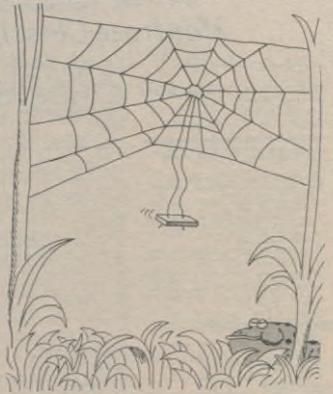
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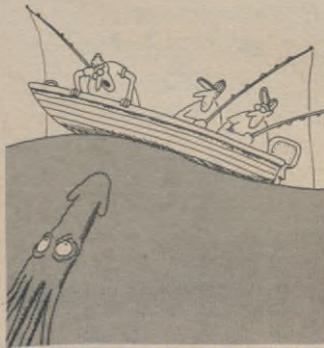
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 Montrose Chuggers, affiliate of IAH Inc; meet Fri eve, Baring Church Activities Bldg, 3405 Mulberry
 Montrose Civic Club; see Neartown Association
 Montrose Circle—104 Westheimer—528-5571; open meetings & 6:15pm women's art project program 1-5pm Sun; Zap Cap Radio Tue, Top benefit in November; Numbers, 300 Westheimer
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Fortunes

By Tycho
For Friday evening, November 11, 1983, through Friday evening, November 18, 1983.

ARIES—All of that incredible sexual energy that started out the month has become inspirational. Your desires may not be lessened, but your mind is working overtime on creative projects. You've been blocking them up! 'til now! Create your own life!

TAURUS—Making things right with your "significant other" may not be as easy as you thought. It looks like this is a process that's going to take some time and outside help—a trusted friend or therapist may be in order. Watch the search to the larger and long-run picture.

GEMINI—The impact of AIDS has given most of us a new outlook on fast and frantic sex, so, when it comes, as it's bound to for you this week, consider the possibilities. Maybe you can have your cake and eat it, too. Act, but act intelligently.

CANCER—"Men at home" is the theme this week. Whether it's father, brother, lover, boss or whatever, there will definitely be a man around the house who wasn't there before. He will affect you deeply, completely and require something of you that could change your life.

LEO—Stop and go. Yes and no. Life offers a series of interesting contrasts this week. The serious side of things is serious, indeed, requiring lots of concentration. The lighter side is so light and amusing that you're tempted to laugh it all away.

VIRGO—In your sign this week: Mars (leaves next Friday morning, Nov. 18). The search is on. Who's digging deep and far and wide for answers. Don't take the first one that comes along. Illusion is easy to grab hold of, and that's the danger this week. Let it pass by until a very firm reality sets in.

LIBRA—In your sign this week: Mars (enters next Friday morning, Nov. 18). Love comes knocking at your door. This may be someone that you thought was completely out of the picture or someone you never imagined as a lover. The dance of romance may begin quite suddenly—as if you saw a familiar face for the very first time.

SCORPIO—In your sign this week: Pluto, the Sun and Saturn. You're hoping that no plans are being made for a surprise birthday party; while you generally like that kind of attention, you're just not in a celebrating mood right now. You'd prefer a very quiet evening with a few people you're closest to—so tell them so!

SAGITTARIUS—In your sign this week: Jupiter, Uranus and Neptune. Can love and business go hand in hand without some disastrous results? You'd like to think so. Someone you're involved with in a working relationship could become something far more. Things could become quite complicated.

CAPRICORN—The blaze is now a conflagration. Passion is a 24-hour affair. Body and mind are in a state of rapture. That's the possibility; let it happen. To do so requires showing all the sides of your personality and being completely open.

AQUARIUS—Last week's obsession is tempered. You have so many friends around that there's simply not time to indulge your private intrigues. All these welcome people surrounding you gives your life a holiday feeling. Celebrate!

PISCES—So business affairs seem to be putting a damper on your travel plans; if the business matters look genuinely solid and profitable, you may still want to feature travel for a while. If they're simply pie in the sky, get all those free maps and travel books.

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(free or 30¢/word)	
(30¢/word)	
(30¢/word)	
(30¢/word)	

bold headline at \$2	Name
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