



pointblank tir

a lesbian/feminist publication houston, texas

Vol. III, No. 3

May 1977



—feminist celebrations and struggles—

ank Times:

of all it is my pleasure to congratulate you on a fine
 is one that has helped a lot of us when we needed it most.
 ly the subject of this letter is not pleasant, but it is
 enough to have motivated this "inactive feminist" into

: The Old Plantation (formerly the Bayou Landing)
 discriminates against gay women.

ACT: The Old Plantation is a violent place.

at me illustrate with an example. Friday, April 14th, a friend
 tin was in town. My friend Barbara and I offered to take her
 of the local bars. We went to Our Place, The Lampost, and
 and Lynn's and had a great time. Our friend expressed a de-
 go to the bar advertised in *This Week In Texas* as the "#1 bar"
 on-the Old Plantation.
 remember the dress code hassles from the Old Plantation before?
 read in PBT that the restrictions had been relaxed. Just to
 e, I wore corduroy pants instead of jeans and, with some mis-
 , off we went. There was a line at the door, and I watched as
 l men and a couple of well-dressed and made up ladies were
 ted for \$1 apiece. They got no hassles, no questions, no ID's
 shown. The doorman grimaced at the sight of me, demanded \$1 and
 I was refused admittance for a "damaged" Texas Operator's License.
 D was enough legal identification for the police, but not for the
 Plantation! Well, we could see the stacked deck so I went to get
 e car. When I pulled up front, I found out that my friend Patty
 had been physically thrown out by the doorman. She wasn't drunk or
 using profanity. There was really no reason for violence, but it
 occurred. It left a really bad taste in our mouths and ruined an
 erwise enjoyable evening.

My purpose in relating this to you is not to encourage some
 t of action by the Old Plantation to change their policies--they've
 eady played that lip service game and it is obvious that their
 titude won't change. The rumors that the Bayou and now the Old
 antation are run by organized crime have always been around. Well
 I don't know about organized--but there's plenty of crime going on
 there. This is a serious situation. My purpose is to spread the word.
 As for myself, here's what I'm going to do:

- 1.) Stay out of the Old Plantation.
- 2.) Advise every woman I know of the situation there.
- 3.) Reconsider my blind political alliances based solely on
 homosexuality.

Hopefully this will generate some discussion and help prevent
 unpleasant experiences. Thank you for your time and here's my
 or continued good luck with PBT.

-Kathy H.

Pointblat Times

EDITORIAL COMMENT

Pointblank Times has received more than one complaint of violence at the Old Plantation. At this printing we're attempting to document the story we've heard of the woman who was raped and another beaten at the Old Plantation.

Houston attorney Patricia O'Kane reports she is filing civil suit against the Old Plantation. O'Kane was refused admittance to the Old Plantation on April 30th because she didn't have a picture on her identification. When she asked the doorman to deliver a message to friends inside, she said, "He grabbed me by the jacket and started to shake me. My hand was in the door, and he smashed my hand in the door four or five times." O'Kane states that she prefers to file civil suit rather than criminal charges since "there are no hassles with police and I don't have to pay an attorney."

Unfortunately, the visibility of homosexuality breeds fear and violence in some people. We have been seeing examples of this in Houston recently. There have been acts of vandalism, alleged police harassment of lesbians, and a report of an unfriendly male who held a rifle on two women outside of a bar, Marion and Lynn's.

While public attention may prove favorable in the long run, today is nevertheless a time for caution. We urge all lesbians to ban the Old Plantation entirely. We also suggest that lesbians refrain from walking to and from their cars alone when frequenting any of the bars. Group activity is safest at all times, everywhere.

Dear PBT Friends,

With the recent campaign of Anita Bryant going to national levels, I feel we need to respond.

One suggestion would be for everyone who drinks Florida Orange Juice to send your empty containers to the Florida Orange Growers Association (I'm sure there must be some such organization) or to the Florida Orange Juice Corporations. Then enclose a note stating that it was purchased by "a gay."

Ms. Bryant's organization calls itself Save Our Children, Inc.-- she should be campaigning against the pesticide companies who poison the oranges she pushes! That would be saving our children.

-Debra C.

○ I want to subscribe to *Pointblank Times*. Enclosed is \$ _____ (at least \$5) for 1 year.

Pointblank Times
P. O. Box 14643
Houston, Texas 77021

○ I want to subscribe for a friend. Please send her a message as follows: _____

Name _____

○ I am a subscriber already, but I've moved. My new address is: _____

Address _____

Gloom Over Miami

A Simple Song of Backlash

When the Metropolitan Dade County Commission met last January 18th to consider an amendment to an already existing civil rights ordinance, they were greeted at 7:30 a.m. by fundamentalists who carried signs: GOD SAYS NO. WHO ARE YOU TO SAY DIFFERENT?

The amendment, which prohibits discrimination based on affectional or sexual preference, passed and was included in the civil rights ordinance. The vote was 5-3.

Coral Gables Commissioner Robert Brake, who had earlier distinguished himself in Florida politics by trying to ban the film *Woodstock* from local theaters, was magnanimous in expressing his own broad-minded view: "Homosexuals are perfectly free to go into their closets, in their bedroom, in their privacy, and take care of themselves there."

Brake, who voted against the civil rights of gays, organized a petition drive to bring the Commission vote to a county-wide referendum. The law required 10,000 signatures to reconsider any Commission vote by referendum.

In early March, Save Our Children, Inc. turned in their petitions. They had collected 64,304 signatures.

In middle March, the Commission voted to hold a referendum on June 7th, at a cost of \$400,000. Their only alternative was immediate repeal and at least 3 of the pro civil rights Commissioners refused to repeal.

Save Our Children, Inc. was formed in January by Robert Brake, singer Anita Bryant, and Rabbi Phineas Weberman. With Bryant acting as the mouthpiece, and a big one at that, the organization put forth what *New Times* magazine calls "the Vampire theory of homosexuality," a sort of Rosemary's baby approach to gays which is based upon the idea that homosexuals must actively and sexually "recruit" children in order to survive.

Anita, who evidently cut several biology classes in school, expounds the theory best: "I know that homosexuals, biologically, cannot reproduce children; therefore they must recruit our children."

Bryant and Brake ran a full-page ad in the *Miami Herald* which called for repeal of "the dangerous homosexual recruitment ordinance" and announced that homosexuality, throughout history, has been countered "with disdain, abhorrence, disgust--even death."

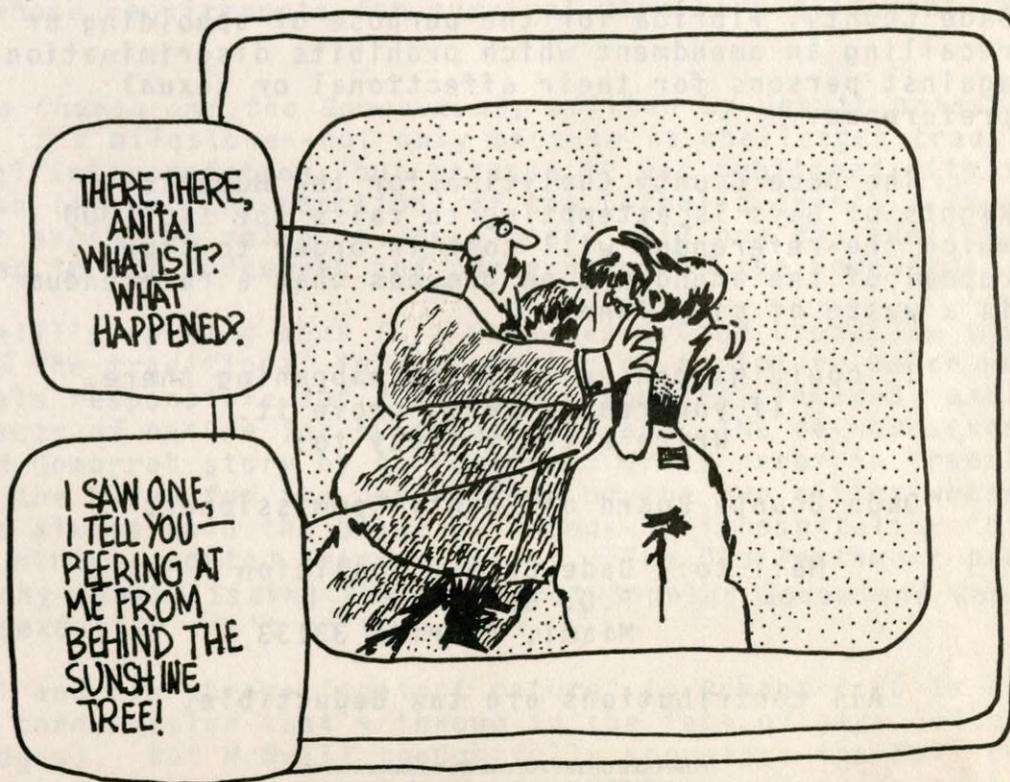
Gays across the nation wrote angry letters to the New York producer of Bryant's new daytime TV sewing show for the Singer Company. The producer cancelled the show. First Federal Savings & Loan of Miami cancelled a scheduled ad production date with Bryant. A nationwide orange juice boycott, protesting the American orange juice darling's activities, went into effect. "I'm frightened. They're destroying my career," Bryant said. She protested that gays were denying her the right to work.

Meanwhile, local gay women and men have come out of the closets in droves. One gay activist who had spoken on a radio talk show received so many threatening and abusive calls from heterosexual Christians that he killed himself. Another's car was firebombed. Heterosexuals also claim that they have received threatening phone calls from homosexuals.

The Dade County Coalition for the Humanistic Rights of Gays is trying to raise \$400,000 to pay for the referendum so that opponents cannot hold gays responsible for what Save Our Children now calls "a waste of city funds." The *Miami Herald*, which originally supported the pro-gay amendment, later ran an editorial titled "Gay Rights Is Not a \$400,000 Issue." So, because of public and media pressure, the Coalition feels forced to raise the \$400,000 or else allow the amendment to be repealed. Commission support for the referendum is fading but the Coalition has volunteered to conduct a nationwide effort to raise the funds. As the Coalition writes, "This marks the first time in American history that a minority group has been forced to fund an election to save its own basic civil rights."

The gay women and men in Miami are not totally without support. Such illustrious groups as the National Council of Churches, the American Psychiatric Association, the National Organization for Women, and the American Federation of Teachers have all issued press releases in support of civil rights for gay people. Reverend William Sheek, Director of Family Ministries and Human Sexuality for the National Council of Churches, wrote a three-page letter to Dade County Commissioners in which he points out that "it is simply not true that the Bible has a single and clear position on Homosexuality or that Homosexuality is a 'sin against nature'."

Dr. Robert Gibson, President of the American Psychiatric Association, wired the Commissioners to remind them that the APA maintains a strong stand in favor of gay rights legislation.



-Miami News

-Florida Gay Liberation News

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Larry King of Radio WIOD/Miami believes the gay rights amendment will be defeated by a 60-40% vote in the referendum. The Dade County Coalition is enlisting national support for the referendum.

Sgt. Leonard Matlovich, former NFL star Dave Kopay, and Midge Costanza, Assistant to President Carter, have all spoken in Miami for the cause of gay rights. Results in Florida could possibly have an effect on national gay rights legislation, including HR 2998 which is now in the U.S. House of Representatives.

All gay women and men in Miami seem to agree on one point. Bryant and her organization have helped many people to focus on the real discrimination which homosexuals actually face. Thanks to Bryant and other homophobes, Miami gays are outraged and are more organized and ready to fight than they've ever been before. Help them.

-Linda J. Lovell

HELP YOURSELF

On June 7th, a public referendum will be held in Dade County, Florida for the purpose of upholding or recalling an amendment which prohibits discrimination against persons for their affectional or sexual preference.

The Dade County Coalition for the Humanistic Rights of Gays is attempting to raise the \$400,000 which the referendum will cost in order to stop repeal of the amendment on grounds that a referendum is a waste of city funds.

It could happen here. It is happening there.
If you really care, prove it.
Write a check today to:

Dade County Board of County Commissioners

Mail to: Dade County Coalition
P.O. Box 414
Miami, Florida 33133

All contributions are tax deductible.

COMPOSED OF THE FOLLOWING ORGANIZATIONS:
ALLIANCE FOR INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS • LAMBDA 76
LESBIAN TASK FORCE-NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR WOMEN • DADE COUNTY
DIGNITY OF MIAMI (GAY CATHOLICS) • GAY COMMUNITY SERVICES OF S. FLA.
EVANGELICALS CONCERNED, MIAMI CHAPTER • FLORIDA COALITION OF GAY ORGANIZATIONS
LUTHERANS CONCERNED, MIAMI CHAPTER • KEITH DAVIS, METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH OF MIAMI
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Book Review

Homosexuals & Sin: Much Ado About Nothing

The Church and the Homosexual, John J. McNeill, S.J., Published by Andrews and McMeel, Inc. 6700 Squibb Rd, Shawnee Mission, Kansas 66202. \$10.00.

Homosexuality has come out of the closet and we are now feeling the backlash. Promoting lesbianism was one of the first charges flung at Nikki Van Hightower; legalizing homosexual marriages is one of the big bullets being fired from anti-ERA guns; and Anita Bryant (with the media eye full upon her) has put her orange juice in cold storage while she battles gays from her self-erected pulpit. The logic of human rights is in danger of becoming lost in an emotion-charged furor over sin and depravity.

In spite of the progress we've made, homosexuals are still standing on the time-worn battlefield of Sodom and Gomorrah, fighting religious misconceptions and Biblical misinterpretation. And we're all being governed by laws inspired by a people who lived 2,000 years ago and whose requirements for survival were very different from our own.

The Church and the Homosexual, written by Jesuit priest John J. McNeill, is a milestone--not only because it challenges traditional scriptural interpretation, but because it was published with the permission (if not the sanction) of the Catholic church. It offers hope that organized religion, as a body, will one day admit it has been wrong in its judgement and persecution of the homosexual.

McNeill's opening shot is a well-researched broadside that splinters the traditional interpretation of scripture which made homosexuals responsible for floods, earthquakes, famines, and other violent acts of nature for hundreds of years. He de-homosexes the Sodom and Gomorrah story by correcting a gross error in translation and puts the blame for the destruction of the two cities where the Bible has always said the blame belonged--on inhospitality to strangers and other assorted transgressions. The Old Testament prophets weren't shy about listing the sins that toppled Sodom and Gomorrah, but homosexuality isn't on that list.

Paul and his phrase "against nature" in Romans 1:26 is another Biblical condemnation that's thrown in the face of gays (often by our court judges). But McNeill thoughtfully appraises the full context of Paul's teachings and concludes that Paul is referring to heterosexuals who go against their basic nature by indulging in homosexual activities. Logically, it follows that the only time homosexuality is an "abomination" is when the homosexual acts are being committed

by a naturally-inclined heterosexual. And the only time a naturally-inclined homosexual can be accused of acting "against nature" is if she or he is indulging in heterosexual activities.

There are scriptures that do clearly condemn homosexuality-- but only male homosexuality. In Biblical times, male homosexuality was closely connected to pagan fertility rites and therefore associated with idolatry in Jewish minds. It was also believed that the male was solely responsible for the creation of life, so his semen must not be wasted in non-procreative sexual activities. The low regard for women also contributed to the attitude toward male homosexuality. The male who lowered himself to play the role of the woman to another male was held in utter contempt.

Much of the basis for the discrimination against homosexuality rests upon the creation story in Genesis, where man and woman are commanded to replenish the earth. This emphasizes the reproductive role of sex and encourages heterosexual activity as the normal, natural mode of sexual expression. However, we should keep in mind that the Bible actually opens with the exodus. The creation story is a flashback, written by a people for whom reproduction was absolutely vital for survival.

Nature has endowed humans with a dual sexual nature, providing flexibility in adjusting to changing times and circumstances. If the creation story was a flashback from our time and place in history--a time of dwindling natural resources and over-population--we might write it a little differently. And the homosexual side of human nature might be encouraged more since it allows love without reproduction.

McNeill says the Bible refutes those who equate homosexuality with sin and who claim there is no place for the homosexual in the kingdom of God. The scripture he refers to is a prophecy in Isaiah 56:2-8 which says that when the Messiah comes the eunuch will be given a special place in the Lord's house and an immortal value. McNeill states that this prophecy applies to the homosexual because the term "eunuch" in the New Testament is used not only in its literal sense--i.e., those who have been physically castrated--but also in a symbolic sense for all those who for various reasons do not marry and bear children. In Matthew 19:12 Jesus gives the closet description of a homosexual that we have in the Bible when he says: "There are eunuchs who have been so from birth..."

In the second portion of his book, McNeill dwells on the positive contributions the gay community can make to society and the church. The last part of the book deals with the church's pastoral ministry to and for the gay community. Here he points out that "the church has a serious moral responsibility out of both justice and charity to work for the reform of laws concerning homosexuals and do everything within its power to educate the faithful to the need of such reform."

Until the churches, en masse, break their silence and support the human rights of homosexuals, we must continue to prod, berate, and

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educate with our presses, with our letters, with our personal contacts, with our economic power, and with our votes--until the strength of our numbers is felt. The door has been opened by books such as this one and by the reform which is being initiated by individual clergy who are encouraging a re-evaluation of church doctrine against homosexuality. But there is much work yet to be done. Fear and ignorance can only be erased by knowledge and understanding.

-Phyllis

Sexual Preference Added as IWY Issue

The new National Commission on the Observance of International Women's Year has added the phrase "sexual or affectional preference" to the list of IWY issues recommended for workshops in a series of State conferences, to be held before July, 1977. The resolution was adopted at the urging of two commission members: Jean O'Leary, co-executive director of the National Gay Task Force and Ruth Abram, co-executive director of the Women's Action Alliance and a board member of the National Gay Task Force.

Although it was previously possible for states to include lesbian workshops in their upcoming conferences., there had been some reluctance to do so because sexual preference had not been formally identified by the National Commission as an issue of concern to women.

NGTF urges people to contact their State coordinators immediately to plan workshops on sexual preference, and to pass the following resolutions so that uniform resolutions emerge from

as many state conferences as possible, supporting:

- (1.) Passage of laws prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sexual or affectional preference in employment, housing, etc.
- (2.) Repeal of laws governing private sexual behavior between consenting adults.

The resolutions passed at the state level will be considered at the National Conference in Houston this fall, and a final report on IWY issues will be submitted to the president and congress in March, 1978.

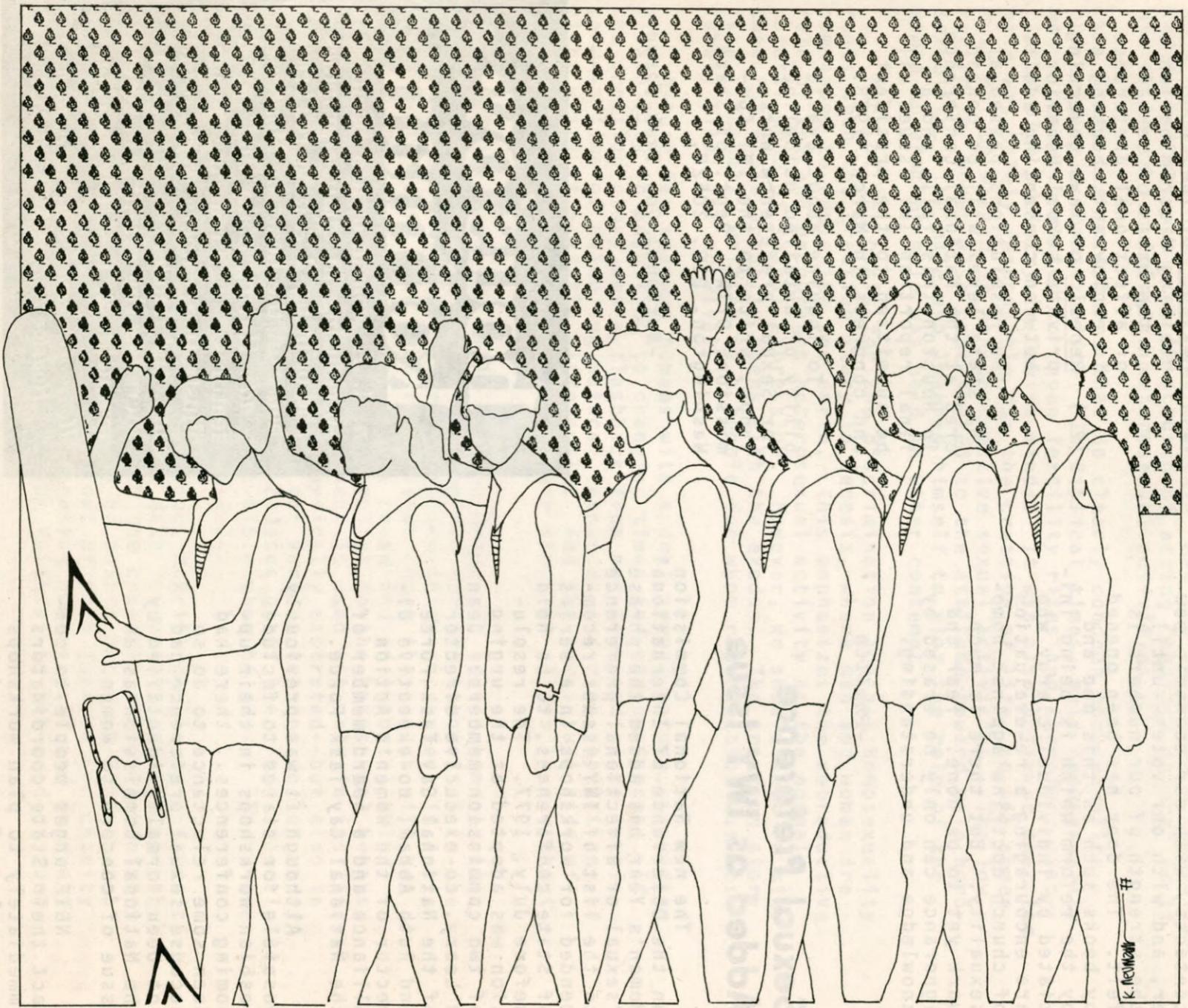
To inquire about availability of detailed guidelines for Sexual preference workshops, write to the IWY Commission, D/IWY, Dept. of State, Washington, D.C. 20520.

-National Gay Task Force

hous' ov. kol' man

n. 1. A woman-owned business specializing in quality graphics and printing. 2. A large red brick house in the heart of Montrose. - *adj.* Having many and varied features. - *v.* Producing design, illustration, camera work, printing and bindery. - *adv.* 1. To increase the client's business manifold. 2. To satisfy the client.

House of Coleman • 901 West Alabama •
Houston 77006 • (713) 523-2521



MAY • JUNE

☆ sunday ☆ monday ☆ tuesday ☆ wednesday ☆ thursday ☆ friday ☆ saturday ☆

15 10am Women's Group First Unitarian Church 5210 Fannin	16	17 HCWPC Workshop "Super Market Politics" 7-10pm - Mercantile Bank Auditorium 4010 S. Braeswood FAMILY CONNECTION VS. BULL BEARERS 7:30pm	18	19	20 Nikki's Radio Show KTRH-AM (740) 3-4pm	21
22 10am Women's Group WOMEN & KIDS PICNIC at Memorial Park 1:00 - Look for the orange kite	23	24 7:30 Lambda Club First Unitarian Church 5210 Fannin	25 DUCKS VS SWINGERS 8pm	26 FAMILY CONNECTION VS. PATRIOTS 7pm	27 3-4pm Nikki's Radio Show	28 Fill in the fun!!
29 10am Women's Group	30 FAMILY CONNECTION VS. ISLANDETTES 8:30pm	31 7:30 Lambda Club	JUNE THE RENT 1 Hurricane season starts DUCKS VS. TIGERS 8:45pm		2 3-4pm Nikki's Radio Show	4
5	6 ELECTIONS IN DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA see story page 6!!!	7 7:30 Lambda Club	8 DUCKS VS. STRIKE FORCE 9:30pm	9	10 3-4pm Nikki's Radio Show	11
12	13 7:30 Lambda Club	14 8-10 Women's Radio SHOW KPFT 90.1 FM	15	16	17 3-4pm Nikki's Radio Show	18

Houston Happenings

MUSIC
local & imported

Houston's first women's dance was upbeat in every sense of the word. It's difficult to say whether the women generated their own excitement or simply responded to the rhythmic vibrations bouncing off the walls. Anyway, it was shaking, stomping, moving time for about 250 women in the nightclub-like atmosphere of the transformed Unitarian Church auditorium on April 2nd.

Leading off the electrical event was Houston's talented Lucinda, singing and strumming in her own inimitable style. Then Be Be K'Roche, the all-woman band from California, rocked onto the stage with their brand of sizzling, foot-stomping music. The remaining hours simply evaporated.

Our first women's dance was a smashing success. We'd like to follow it up with more. However, imported talents like Be Be K'Roche are only available if they're touring the area. We need to promote the talent in our own backyard so that musical events can be scheduled more often.

Lucinda is a prime example of Houston talent. She delayed a money-paying gig to come to the women's dance and open the evening of music. She shortened the long hours for the women at the recent all-night vigil for Nikki Van Hightower, arriving around midnight with guitar in hand. She was the opening act for the Meg Christian concert last May, and has made herself available for many other lesbian

and feminist functions. She's eager to share her time and talent whenever asked.

Houston has other women performers too. Perhaps our next musical event should be a showcase for local talent. *Pointblank Times* would like to hear from the women performers in the Houston area who would like to share their music with other women.

-Phyllis



Lucinda

photo: Sherry Collier

Pointblank Times

ART SHOW

The feminist art show, held March 12 and 13, was a learning experience--both for the staff of *Pointblank Times*, who sponsored the show, and for the two-women who own and operate the Sunshine Gallery of Art, where the show was held. It was a first-time venture for most of us, so misunderstandings cropped up, mistakes were made, and the right hand didn't always know what the left hand was doing. But after all the wrinkles were ironed out, a good time was had by all.

Twenty-five women artists displayed their art and crafts. All of the walls of the two-story art gallery were lined with "woman's work", and the overflow spilled out into the sunlit parking lot.

The creative talent exhibited ranged from landscapes in oil to hand-made dolls, to stained glass, with a variety of artistic expression in between. All we can say is--you should have been there.

And in spite of the bumper-to-bumper traffic on the Gulf Freeway, many of you were there. Lesbians were the big buyers at the show, and the big sellers as well.

The feminist art show reaffirmed what we knew already--that Houston abounds in woman talent; not only artists and craftswomen, but musicians, athletes, and future city council members as well.

-Phyllis



WOMEN'S ADVOCATE RADIO SHOW

The city of Houston's Women's Advocate, Dr. Nikki R. Van Hightower, is hosting a weekly radio call-in program on KTRH-AM (740). The show airs from 3 to 4 p.m. on Friday's. Hal Kemp, station manager of KTRH, said Hightower will be free to conduct the show in her own way, with the station handling phoned-in comments on the subjects she presents.

-Houston Post

PICNIC AT MEMORIAL PARK

Women and kids: Come on out and enjoy a picnic at Memorial Park on May 22nd. Look for the orange pyramid kite and that's where the fun will be. Bring your own food and refreshments and there will be plenty of games.

WOMEN-MADE FILMS

Gemini Productions presents women-made films on Friday May 13, 1977. The films will be shown at the First Unitarian Church, 5210 Fannin, at 7:15 p.m. A donation of \$2.50 is asked to cover expenses and to be recycled into further feminist cultural events.



SIRENS AT NEW TIME AND DAY

SIRENS, a program for Women by Women is now aired at 8:00-10:00 p.m. on Wednesday nights. Those wanting to get a program together to be aired can attend the Wednesday night meetings from 7:00- 8:00 p.m., at KPFT Radio 90.1 FM, 419 Lovett Blvd. For more information call 526-4000.

WOMBSAN LAND

Wombsan Land is a land-trust for the exclusive and non-exploitative use by wombsan of all ages. The landtrust is forming now in Texas and is open to all wombsan who adhere to our purpose as stated above. We have been meeting monthly since last December to envision an ideal nourishing space (possibly 100 to 150 acres) and plan trips in search of that acreage. Once land is acquired, everywomban will be entitled to an equal amount of sojourn on the land, including permanent sojourn for those who desire it. We welcome any other wombsan who wish to pledge their knowledge/ energies/ money to the trust. For more information send a self-addressed envelope to P.O. Box 6063, Austin, Texas 78762.

SOFTBALL SEASON IS HERE!

FAST PITCH

(All games to be played at Brock Field, 9800 Green River & Oates.)

May 10	8:30	Family Connection vs. Brewers
May 18	7:30	Family Connection vs. Ball Bearers
May 26	7:00	Family Connection vs. Patriots
May 31	8:30	Family Connection vs. Islandettes

SLOW PITCH

(All games to be played on Wednesday nights at Briar Meadows Field, 7700 Richmond Avenue & Freshmeadows.)

May 11	8:45	Ducks vs. HFDYWTG
May 18	8:00	Ducks vs. Oddo's
May 25	8:00	Ducks vs. Swingers
June 1	8:45	Ducks vs. Tigers
June 8	9:30	Ducks vs. Strike F.

WOMEN ARTISTS SHOW

Hailed as "the first significant international exhibition" of four centuries of art works by women artists, the show organized by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art called "Women Artists, 1550-1950" will open at the University of Texas April 12.

Some 150 works spanning 400 years are traveling around the U.S. with the show, gathered from all over Europe and this country. The exhibition - which establishes that women have participated significantly in the development of Western art - will remain at UT through June 12.

-Houston Post

Pointblank Times

HOW WE ALMOST LOST OUR ONLY ADVOCATE

On March 9th, seven citizens addressed City Council on the subject of the Women's Advocate, criticizing her attendance at an International Women's Day Rally the previous Saturday. They attacked her endorsement of the ERA and accused her of actively "promoting lesbianism and abortions." Catherine Lemm described Van Hightower as "associating with causes that are ungodly and finding her support in promoting demands by sex perverts who are breaking the law."

That same afternoon, Councilman Louis Macey proposed a motion requesting the City Legal Department to prepare an ordinance to lower the salary of the Women's Advocate to one dollar a year.

The Council passed Macey's motion 6-1, with Mayor Hofheinz dissenting and Frank Mann and Johnny Goyen absent. Since they are not authorized to hire and fire personnel, Council was attempting to use its budgeting powers to put an end to Van Hightower's employment.

The biggest controversy Houston City government has seen in years ensued over the next three weeks. Van Hightower supporters and detractors took every opportunity to exhort City Council to either relinquish or maintain their stand on the issue.

When the dollar-a-year move was found to be illegal, Councilman Frank Mancuso moved to abolish the position of Women's Advocate altogether. On March 30th, minutes after Council passed the abolishment ordinance 6-3, Mayor Hofheinz, who had supported Van Hightower throughout the uproar, announced that he had hired her as a special assistant on his staff, with the same duties and salary as before.

The chain of events surrounding the Women's Advocate controversy made a lot of people sit up and take notice. Women and men from a broad spectrum of social, political, and economic backgrounds came together on this issue. For many, it was a first lesson in city government -- who's in it and how it works.

First of all, we learned that Wednesday morning is the time to go down to City Hall and address City Council personally. We learned that we have only to call the City Secretary the day before to reserve a few moments to speak on any subject; we also found out very quickly that the Council members tend to talk on the phone, stare at the wall and leave the room during these "pop-off" sessions.

We identified some of the anti-feminist backlash in our community. It was interesting to note that several individuals who protested loudly that no member of N.O.W. should be permitted to hold the office of Women's Advocate were themselves members of such extreme rightwing organizations as the American Party and the John Birch Society.

By the same token, we were able to identify community support

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By the same token, we were able to identify community support for women's rights -- it was extremely heartening to find ourselves united with such diverse groups as the American Civil Liberties Union, Church Women United, the Coalition of Labor Union Women, the League of Women Voters, the Montrose Democrats and the Young Women's Christian Association, to name a few.

Most impressive of all was the surge of plain old grass roots support. With the House of Coleman presses running day and night putting out press releases, fact sheets and bumper stickers and a steady stream of individuals coming out of the woodwork to join Advocates for the Women's Advocate, to offer their nickels, dimes, ideas and time, we began to perceive that we could put together an effective political force.

We learned that Houston has a strong mayor who was willing to take a stand for us. And those of us who had never kept track of who was on City Council learned the faces and the attitudes which accompanied those names on the ballot.

Johnny Goyen supported the office of Women's Advocate, making it clear, however, that his decision was based more on a spirit of cooperation with the mayor than on feminist principles or enthusiasm for Nikki Van Hightower. Judson Robinson also supported the office, making somewhat predictable statements on his sympathy for the oppression which both women and Blacks are suffering.

Mann, Mancuso, McKaskle and Macey were solidly united in their opposition of both Van Hightower and the mayor. Westmoreland and Ford swung with them. As a group, these six men revealed themselves as singularly unaware of Nikki Van Hightower's job or her performance.

Council members apparently reacted hostilely to minor activities of Van Hightower's which the media had picked up on, such as her memo to department heads requesting that they not brag to female employees about being "male chauvinist pigs," and either didn't know or didn't care about her track record in seeking and finding solutions for women's problems related to employment, credit, marriage, divorce, domestic violence and child care.

Several Council members denied the need for a Women's Advocate. It became clear that their interpretation of the Advocate's role was very different from Hofheinz's and Van Hightower's. Most of them were willing to concede at best a token position to be occupied by someone who filled out civil service forms about the most obvious forms of sex discrimination and otherwise kept her mouth shut. The mayor, meanwhile, had encouraged Dr. Van Hightower to act as a liaison with women's groups in the community, to publicize women's issues and in general to seek to raise the consciousness in city government regarding women's rights.

Battle lines were drawn during this controversy. Women chanted "We'll remember in November!" at the all-night vigil held at City

Why 'Super-Patriots' Can't Accept 'Libbers' & Other *Minorities*

"America, Love It or Leave It." "Stop the ERA." "Nix Nikki."
"Abortion is Murder." "Save Our Children: Keep Homos Out of the
Classroom." "Porno is Pollution." "If Guns are Outlawed, Only Out-
laws Will Have Guns."

The same individuals who are most likely to have red, white, and blue bumper stickers proclaiming their love of America plastered on their cars are also the most likely to be against the ERA, the Women's Advocate, freedom of sexual preference, and pornography. These persons envision themselves as "super-patriots" (not to be confused with "super-democrats") yet they hold very intolerant attitudes toward the rights of various minority groups to exercise freedom of speech and to hold minority opinions.

These blatant inconsistencies have long been observed by psychologists and sociologists. It is hardly "news" that only a small portion of the American population is committed to the principles of democracy (as opposed to merely the symbols). Sad, but true, is the fact that while many people are vocally supportive of "democracy," they are unable to translate such slogans into democratic patterns of behavior. Thus, we have Geneve Kirk Brooks' who try to convince us of their "super-patriotism" while simultaneously attacking other persons' (Americans, no less!) desires to gain rights whether in employment opportunities, sexual preferences, child-bearing activities, or reading materials.

Such inconsistencies have generally been found to be more characteristic of persons with low levels of education, usually from working-class backgrounds. These persons are particularly intolerant of other persons' viewpoints on civil-liberty type issues.

Psychological studies indicate that such individuals often feel estranged, bewildered, and overwhelmed by a complex world; thus they seek simple explanations of what is happening in that world. These behavior patterns are not deliberate but are the results of these persons' early home environments--generally characterized by punishment, lack of love, tension, and aggression. Their early childhoods were likely in very authoritarian environments where there was little room for, or tolerance of, diversity of opinion. In addition, since these persons usually leave school early, their adult working years are spent in close contact with other persons of similarly restricted cultural, educational, and family backgrounds.

In order for these persons to more order this "complex" world, they tend to explain everything in terms of a "scapegoat".

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For many years, this scapegoat was communism. Recent happenings tend to suggest that the new scapegoat is society's "moral deterioration." The ERA, Gay Rights, Abortion, and materials they subjectively see as "pornography" are all evidence to them that America is in the midst of a "moral decay."

Just as their explanations for societal events are simplistic, so are their notions of how to combat the evils. Law and Order, increased police powers, and capital punishment are their methods of controlling the decay.

For persons holding such viewpoints, democracy is merely a symbol, not a guideline for their behavior. "Super-Patriots" rally around the flag, not the Constitution.

-S

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Hall by Van Hightower supporters on March 28th, the night before Council's final vote. It remains to be seen whether we'll keep up the momentum needed to get women (and intelligent, responsive men) elected to City Council this time around. The next few months will tell whether we continue to transcend social, political and religious differences and work together or split our vote into factions and lose to the incumbents.

-Karen L. Barrett

UNNATURALLY

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Out of the Closet Into the White House

Fourteen gay representatives met in the Roosevelt Room with presidential aide Margaret Costanza, who listened to their requests for an end to federal discrimination against homosexuals. As a result of the meeting, the following federal agencies will soon meet with gay representatives: U.S. Bureau of Prisons (ban on gay publications and MCC ministers); HUD (adding sexual preference clause to their policies); HEW (funding for gay community services); the Defense Department (security clearances); the U.S. Civil Rights Commission (the issue of jurisdiction); and the U.S. Civil Service Commission (discrimination in hiring). A meeting will also be held to discuss the national Gay Rights Bill.

Gay representatives meeting at the White House included NGTF Co-directors Jean O'Leary and Bruce Voeller; Representative Elaine Noble; and Pokey Anderson, vice-chair of Houston's Gay Political Caucus. The representatives will return to the White House in September for a follow-up meeting.

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dance sing
weave and sculpt
out of our souls
our desire is to embrace
passionately every image
every color & shape
that dances in the fires
of our heart
its voice is my hands flowing
the melody moves downstream
songs of love and pain
ecstasy and transmutation
we attempt to translate
our personal being into
greater life into
the realm of myth
the goddess
to move
in the power of
her dream
it is thru our hands
that we are born
that she returns.

~prairie

We publish *Pointblank Times* as often as possible. Under optimum conditions that would be monthly. We exist to be a communications vehicle for lesbians and feminists, especially in Houston and in Texas.

Send us your stuff, including letters, features, reviews, poetry, graphics, photographs, and listings for the calendar. Please tell us how you want your name to appear, and whether you want your material returned to you.

Staff: Claire Noonan, Liz Brimm,
Phyllis Yarnold, Kiki,
Pokey Anderson, Prairie,
Kristen, Sherry Collier

Mailing Address:
Pointblank Times
P.O. Box 14643
Houston, Texas 77021

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What Can Feminists Celebrate?

Mayday, or Beltane, as it is called in Gaelic, begins on the sunset of April 30th and lasts approximately four days. This is a celebration whose roots lie in ancient pre-Christian religions that held at the core of their beliefs a reverence for the life force that is shared and expressed by all creation. The turning wheel of the seasons, the continually changing relationships between sun, moon and stars were an essential part of this cosmology. They provided opportunities for our foremothers and fathers to renew their connections to the cycles of heaven and earth.

These May festivals are of particular interest to us. At one point in herstory, the feminine principle was not given an inferior role in the process of creation. Emphasis was given to all aspects of fertility and growth, material and psychic. The rituals reflected this tune of nourishment, healing, pleasure, and the joyful expression of sexuality. "Inner" growth found its outward counterpart in the process of budding and flowering in the vegetant world. As the green sprouts of spring pushed upward, the heart also opened outward. Dreams and visions which were dormant seeds in winter, began to quicken, expand and communicate with the light of consciousness. This time of year was said to be sacred to many goddesses, Notably Brigid, the fairy queen of the Celts, and to the poet Sappho.

In the traditions of Celtic Witchcraft, Beltane is one of the four great yearly Sabbats. The feature of the May festivals with which most of us are probably familiar with is the maypole. This colorful ceremony signified the gifts of the moon goddess who was said to bestow increase to crops and insure blessings to the participants. As the dancers would circle around the great fires and the maypoles decorated with garlands of fruits, flowers and ribbons, they were expressing in their own way their understanding of the connections that existed between their personal lives and the powers of continuity and creation.

It is curious that, in this time of increasing alienation from nature, the pagan movement is again resurfacing in the world in the form of renewed interest in witchcraft, healing, earth celebrations, and creative ritual. It is yet another sign of our need to return to our source, to be centered and at harmony with ourselves and our environment. We have neglected our power to create and participate in rituals that can link us to greater cosmic processes. There is a need to develop relevant forms that can collectively and individually reflect our darkness and pain, our joy and thankfulness as we travel onward. Our intuition may again surface in the invention of new kinds of gift-sharing, ceremonial feasts, and seasonal celebrations. Our ancestors knew, and shared this wisdom in the power of their circles, and in the rites that told of the ceaseless ebb and flow of cycles...the going out and the inevitable return...the spinning of the infinite circumference of which we are all centers.

-*Prairie Jackson*