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ND LESBIAN NEWS FOR NEW ORLEANS AND THE GULF SOUTH

Past
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IMPACT

VOLUME 19 ▼ NUMBER 16 ▼ AUGUST 5 — 18, 1994

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remembering chuck crosby

OUT IN THE COMMUNITY

A SUMMER SAFARI—THE FIRST IN A SERIES OF FUNDRAISING EVENTS to benefit the Lesbian and Gay Community Center—departs into the savannas and veldts of Rubyfruit Jungle (which already has appropriate Douanier Rousseau-esque wall paintings with a variety of snarling and chattering beasts) at **9 p.m. on Friday, August 19.**

Tickets—which include door prizes, DJ'ing by Mary Pappas, complimentary jungle drinks and delicacies, but no jungle rot we hope—are \$10 in advance from the Community Center's GHQ on North Rampart Street, Tom's Toy Box on Bourbon, and at Faubourg Marigny Bookstore on Frenchmen, and \$15 at the door. (And best of all, you don't have to shoot any white rhinos or mountain gorillas or elephants.) As if this embarrassment of riches weren't sufficient, there is a grand door prize of a sun-filled get-away compliments of Out and About Travel and Fairytale Vacations. The Community Center, barely two years old, provides a space for meetings, a lending library, a youth services program, various forums and discussion events, as well as acting as a place for both referrals to other agencies or persons and as a clearing-house for information. It is staffed entirely through the generous benevolence of volunteers.

DOUGLAS SIMONSON, A VIRTUOSO OF SUPER-REALIST RENDERINGS OF MALE NUDES, particularly Polynesian, Asian, Hispanic and black men, will be in New Orleans the week of **August 16 through 22** to show and (presumably) to sell his work. (Those not familiar with Simonson might look for a copy of an album of his work entitled *Islanders*, which came out several years ago.) Throughout August, Simonson's work will be on display in the windows of the New Orleans AIDS Task Force—which is also auctioning two of his prints to benefit its organization; at Queen's Head (above Good Friends at 740 Dauphine), on **Wednesday, August 17** from 5 until 9 p.m., he will have an evening showing, followed **two days later** by a showing at similar times at **Bruce Manor**, 1824 Esplanade Ave. Simonson is also available for private, "by appointment" showings of his work. For more information call 821-2121.

MAKING A JOYFUL NOISE UNTO THE LORD for a good cause, three different gospel choirs will appear in concert on **Saturday, August 20 at 7:30 p.m.** to benefit the New Orleans **People With AIDS Coalition**; the benefit is at Our Lady of Lourdes Church, 4423 LaSalle, and participating are singers from the Greater Evergreen Mass Choir (and the choir's smaller ensemble, Exodus), directed by Walter J. Tardy; the First Baptist Church Choir of Verret, directed by Terrance Howard; and the Olivet Missionary Baptist Church Choir, directed by Mayes Warren;



Roberto Rincon, who has often contributed work to these pages, is one of the New Orleans photographers selected for the show, "Underexposed II" at the Contemporary Arts Center; the exhibit concentrates on the work of local artists whose work has been, for whatever reason, insufficiently seen by the public. "Underexposed II" opens on Saturday, August 6, and closes—with a reception at its close—on Friday, September 2. The photograph at left is entitled "Chris with Helmet."

mistress of ceremonies is Lisa Frazier Page of Bethlehem Baptist Church in Bogalusa. Tickets are \$7.50 (\$4 for students and senior citizens)—cheap to get filled with the Spirit rather than spirits—either at the door or in advance from the PWA Coalition, 944-3663. Those attending are encouraged to bring packaged food items for the Food Bank.

Also, in the PWA Coalition's newsletter is the news that the City of New Orleans provides free dental services for HIV+ persons, federally funded by the Ryan White Title I dental program; this includes free exams, x-rays, cleanings, fillings, and extractions, with a minimum fee for crowns, bridges, partials, and dentures (the latter free to Medicaid patients). The clinic is located at 914 Union Street in the CBD, and is open 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays. For more information, call the clinic at 528-3761.

AND AT THE LESBIAN & GAY COMMUNITY CENTER, the twentieth anniversary of the death of **Clay Shaw** will be commemorated by a special program on **Sunday, August 14**. The program host will be local writer Roberts Batson.

At 4:00pm New Orleans filmmaker Stephen Tyler will be on hand to show his 1992 documentary "He Must Have Something", about Jim Garrison's case against Shaw. It features several good interviews with Shaw and present day interviews with some of his friends and others involved in the trial. There will be a brief discussion following the film.

Then at 6:00pm the recent Oliver Stone

movie *JFK* will be shown. Stone claimed his movie was made to tell the whole truth, but it has also been accused of being biased in favor of Garrison and against Shaw.

Shaw, who died on August 14, 1974, was a prominent member of the New Orleans gay community in the period following World War II. He was a pioneer in restoring the French Quarter and was the director of the International Trade Mart (now World Trade Center) from its beginning until his retirement. He was also the only man ever brought to trial for the assassination of John F. Kennedy.

This program is free and open to the public. Those who knew Shaw personally are especially invited to attend and share their memories. The Center is located at 816 N. Rampart Street, call 522-1103 for details.

PRIME TIMERS, A SOCIAL ACTIVITIES ORGANIZATION for mature gay and bisexual men, is starting a New Orleans chapter for those with—we couldn't say it any better—"an advanced mind, soul, spirit, and/or hairline"—with a meeting at the New Orleans MCC, St. Roch and Marais, on **Friday, September 9 from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m.** "Life Before 40 is Only Rehearsal" says the press release, and while we've heard that life begins at 40, we've also heard that life begins "at 8:30 or thereabouts." Planned activities include discussions, excursions, socials, house parties, cultural outings, even safer-sex-oriented events. There are annual dues and meeting costs but they are comparatively small. Information at 504/525-3299.

BRIEFLY: • Betty Hugh writes us that we should know, as we did not, about the **Womyn's Braille Press**, an organization formed in Minneapolis by six blind women, that makes available to subscribers worldwide some forty taped books and periodicals each week. Among the eight hundred already available there is a range from Rita Mae Brown to Florence King to May Sarton to Lillian Faderman's *Odd Girls* and *Twilight Lovers*. The service is presented to subscribers at a cost of approximately \$20 per annum, but this hardly covers it. Foundations, including the Ms. Foundation, which do not make disability a high priority, have been reluctant to cough up any bucks; so the Womyn's Braille Press needs money—or at least some cogent suggestions on how to get it—in order to continue, even with its completely volunteer staff. If you have any ideas, says Ms. Hugh, or would like to help WBP out, contact it at PO Box 8475, Minneapolis MN 55408 or by telephone at 612-872-4352.

• **THE FIFTH ANNUAL NO/AIDS WALK** is, as is traditional, beginning and ending at the bandstand in Audubon Park on **Sunday, September 25** at 10 a.m. According to the co-chairs Barry Schlaile and Helen Siegel, the monetary goal this year is \$400,000, and although September 25 might seem a fur piece off, it really isn't. Participants in the

**Cover photo
by Steven Forster**

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9pm, **Retro Vision** / Classic
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5pm **T-Dance** followed by
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Midnight Movie

MONDAYS AT THE PARADE

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\$1 Canned Beer

TUESDAYS AT THE PARADE

Amateur Star Search with
Cash & Door Prizes

WEDNESDAYS AT THE PUB

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followed by Request Hour

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2 for 1 Admission

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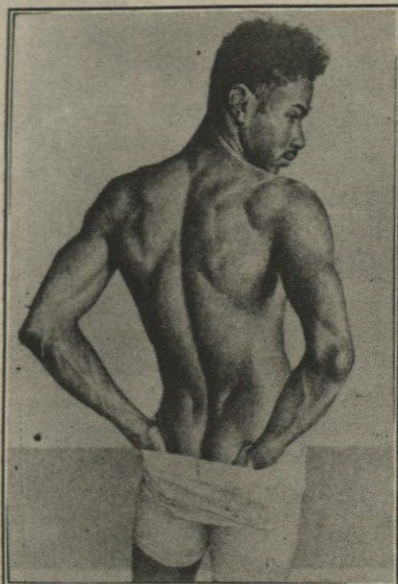
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This photo is one of several in an exhibit. Please see related mention in "Out" and the advertisement at right.

Walk obtain pledges for walking, and may walk as individuals or on teams of up to ten people; the amount raised makes participants eligible for awards and incentive prizes. (The year's prize for top fundraiser is airline fare and a week's accommodations for two in Greece, courtesy of Gartrell Travel.) Corporate sponsorship for the Walk is also undertaken by Pizza Hut, the Times-Picayune, Kentwood Water, Premier Bank, Coors Beer, the French Market Corporation, and Corporate Realty. Information on pledge sheets, volunteering, etc. at 948-WALK.

• We had long thought that June was Gay History Month; no more, apparently: October has been declared National Lesbian and Gay History Month. One of the reasons is the point of having such a month anyway—academic studies. Few schools or universities hold classes in June; almost all are in session in October. Johnnda Boyce of Columbus, Ohio, and head of a local council there to heighten awareness and assist in the development of grassroots activities, says, "October has important anniversaries for the lesbian and gay community as well. The first and second marches on Washington for Gay and Lesbian rights were in October, and National Coming Out Day is October 11." Among those endorsing this chronosophical move are individuals from Virginia Uribe to Martin Duberman, and organizations from the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation to the International Gay and Lesbian Archives. The National Coordinating Council has resource materials available to individuals and organizations interested in helping to celebrate Lesbian and Gay History Month; send a SASE with a 52¢ stamp to: LGHM, c/o Gerber/Hart Library & Archives, 3352 N. Paulina, Chicago IL 60657, or call 312-883-3003.

• **Out Loud**, "a weekend-long party—with redeeming social value," takes place **October 7 and 8** in New York and "will build on...Stonewall '25, and go one step further," in a sort of business expo (two hundred fifty vendors) combined with a variety of seminars, everything from drag beauty tips, marketing the lesbian and gay community, Hollywood homophobia, 'hetero heroes', searching for the gay gene, 'red hot monogamy,' a fashion extravaganza, and plenty more things than are dreamed of in our philosophy. Two more Out Loud's are planned for the spring of 1995 (Miami Beach in March and Boston in April). Information at 212-439-8038.Δ

We would be delighted to list your events and happenings...just drop us a note or press release.

Our address is
P.O. Box 52079
New Orleans, LA 70152.

IMPACT

is published in New Orleans, Louisiana and distributed free on alternating Fridays of each month in New Orleans, Baton Rouge, Houma, Lafayette, Monroe, and Shreveport, Louisiana, Biloxi, Mississippi; and selected outlets in Tuscaloosa, Birmingham, and Mobile, Alabama, Pensacola and Tampa, Florida, Austin, Dallas and Houston, Texas, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Los Angeles and San Francisco, California, Chicago, Illinois, Washington D.C., New York City, New York, and selected outlets in North and South Carolina, Minnesota, Maryland, and New Mexico.
(\$1⁰⁰ Outside Louisiana)

All announcements, photographs, press releases, requests for advertising information, or written submissions of any kind should be sent

to our mailing address:
PO Box 52079, New Orleans, LA 70152.

The office address is 511 Marigny Street;
Office hours are 9 until 5 (CST) Mondays-Fridays.
Telephone: (504) 944-6722; 1-800-484-8513 X1812
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Jon Newlin, Editor;
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Circulation: Rev. Kenneth Kafoed
Accounting: Sharon Robinson
Design Consultants: Wenger Ink, Inc.

Sample copies or back issues are \$2 postpaid.
Subscriptions are \$50 per year, postpaid
(overseas or air mail rates upon request)

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LOCAL NEWS

SODOMY RULING: UNCONSTITUTIONAL

On Friday, July 29, Judge Calvin Johnson ruled from the bench in Criminal Court in the matter of State of Louisiana v. Baxley, the sodomy law challenge being pursued by attorney John Rawls. Among the things contained in Judge Johnson's ruling: (see June 24 Impact) were that the entire statute was clearly unconstitutional, denied and invaded the right to privacy, and that he could not imagine any legal mind seeing it any other way—the problem being, he added, having not the acuity of perception to see it as unconstitutional but the strength of will to simply throw it out. As to same-sex prostitution, Johnson said a woman could solicit a man on the steps of the court building at Tulane and Broad, the fact that same sex prostitution was a five-year felony was clearly cruel, excessive, and unusual punishment, and a moral value judgment, clearly discriminatory against the unique gay subculture. Also, the statute is clearly a bill of attainder.

The State of Louisiana which has some sixty days (plus extensions) to file a direct appeal with the Supreme Court, which it has already done. Two days prior to Judge Johnson's ruling, Mr. Rawls applied to the Supreme Court in the matter of State of Louisiana v. Cristina Morello, the crime-against-nature case written about by Times-Picayune columnist James Gill in his customary fake-urbane manner several weeks ago. In applying to the Court, Rawls told us, he had compared sexual activity to urination: That the state could not make it illegal for men to sit and for women to stand, that how one peed was no concern, only where.

In the class action suit, in which Mr. Rawls told us he expects a summary judgment from Judge Bernette Johnson within three months, the attorney told us he had been busily collecting moving affidavits from all of the plaintiffs regarding the chilling effects of the Louisiana crime-against-nature statute on their lives. Δ

SANTA VISITS BUZZY'S BOYS

At a special "Christmas in July" fundraiser at Big Daddy's the last weekend in July, Eight hundred

dollars was raised to benefit Buzzy's Boys. Santa's (that is, Buzzy's) helpers will use the proceeds to deliver gifts to Project Lazarus, Belle Reve and C600 in Charity Hospital.

WALTZER TO RUN FOR STATE SUPREME COURT

Judge Miriam Waltzer announced at the end of July that she will be running for a seat on the Louisiana State Supreme Court. Waltzer, a long time supporter of the gay and lesbian community, was recently the recipient of the HRCF Torch award for meritorious service to the community.



July 21, The Lesbian and Gay Community Center held a reception honoring the athletes who participated in Gay Games IV.

COMMUNITY CENTER ELECTIONS HELD

The Lesbian and Gay Community Center held elections on Monday, August 1 to replace those members of the Board whose terms had expired. Immediately following the general meeting, during the scheduled Board meeting, elections were held for the executive committee.

The new members of the Board are Clark Broel, Gregory Curtis, Sharon Parker and Jim Wiltberger. Re-elected members are Stewart Butler, Susan Clade and Toni Pizzanie. Darlene Flattman was also re-elected, after having taken an early leave during her tenure last year.

The Executive Committee members are as follows: Co-Chairs are Clark Broel and re-elected Renee Parks; the Recording Secretary is Brad Robbert; the Corresponding Secretary is Toni Pizzanie, and; the new Treasurer is Cory Chatelain.

For more information on what's happening at the LGCCNO, please read Out In The Community and FYLA.

NATIONAL NEWS

AIDS EDUCATION POLICY WINS NCLS ENDORSEMENT

NEW ORLEANS (AP) An AIDS education policy based on "responsible sex practices," abstinence from premarital sex and "monogamy after marriage" received the endorsement Thursday of a national coalition of state legislators.

The resolution, adopted by voice vote, was among dozens approved at the closing session of the National Conference of State Legislatures' 20th annual meeting.

The resolutions form the framework of the group's policy statement on which its congressional lobbying effort is based.

The AIDS resolution also:

- Puts the group on record favoring protection of the confidentiality of records including those dealing with HIV testing.

- Opposes federal legislation that would force states to initiate sex-partner notification of people suspected of having AIDS, known as "contact tracing and names-reporting programs."

- Opposes a proposed federal mandate that requires states to establish civil or criminal penalties for "the knowing transmission of HIV infection."

"This is a state matter," said Rep. Michael Fox, R-Hamilton, Ohio. "We don't want the federal government meddling in it."

The legislators conference also:

- Urged Congress to lift the ban on the sale of Alaska Slope-produced oil. Alaska House Speaker Ramona Barnes, R-Anchorage, said existing federal policy discriminates against her state while allowing the sale of oil from other areas.

- Asked Congress to provide the states with "the greatest authority possible to restrict imported wastes."

Before closing the annual meeting, the conference elected its first female president, Rep. Karen McCarthy, D-Kansas City, Mo. She will serve through December. She will be succeeded by another woman, Ohio House Majority Whip Jane Campbell, D-Cleveland.

Louisiana Senate President Samuel Nunez, D-Chalmette, was re-elected to the conference's executive committee. Nunez has been president of the conference in the past. House Clerk Alfred "Butch" Speer was elected vice chairman of the legislative staff executive board.

LESBIAN MOTHER'S CUSTODY BATTLE GOES TO STATE SUPREME COURT

BENTONVILLE, Ark. (AP) A lesbian who lost custody of her children plans to appeal to the state Supreme Court, her lawyer said.

A judge last week refused to reverse a decision that transferred custody of the children from Jean Larson of Rogers to the children's father, Michael Larson of Hiwassee.

Victoria Cochran of Rogers, the mother's attorney, said the ruling by Benton County Chancery Judge Oliver Adams ends attempts on the local level to regain custody of Ms. Larson's 13-year-old son and 11-year-old daughter. She said a Supreme Court appeal will move forward.

Ms. Cochran said the children want to live with their mother.

The chancery judge did remove restrictions on visitation by Ms. Larson. Adams removed a restriction that required supervision by the father's mother and sister or by workers from the state Department of Human Services. He also allowed overnight visitation, but specified that the children can't be around the mother's lesbian friends or exposed to a lesbian lifestyle.

Bob Scott of Rogers, an attorney for Larson, said his client has no problem with the new visitation arrangements but will continue to fight a change in custody.

Larson has until Aug. 15 to respond to the appeal petition. The high court is expected to consider the appeal after returning from vacation in the fall.

The couple divorced in 1988 after nine years of marriage. At the time, Ms. Larson was awarded custody of the children.

In May 1993, she applied for a license to marry Sherri Callender. The Benton County clerk denied the application, and Larson decided to seek custody of the children. Chancery Judge Terry Crabtree awarded custody to the father in October.

OLYMPIC VOLLEYBALL MOVED FROM COBB COUNTY

ATLANTA (AP) Gay activists celebrated and some business leaders mourned that Olympic volleyball will not be played in suburban Cobb County.

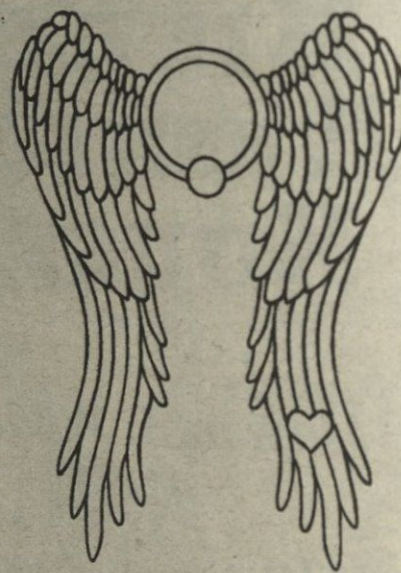
Amid the heat of a continuing protest over an anti-gay resolution passed last August by the Cobb County Commission, the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games said Friday that preliminary rounds of volleyball will be held at the University of Georgia Coliseum in Athens, 62 miles east of Atlanta. Gay activists had threatened protests during the Games if volleyball stayed in Cobb.

"Forever and always Cobb County and the Cobb Galleria Centre will be recognized as the community that had a chance to participate in the Olympics and threw it away," said Tad Leithead, chairman of Cobb County's Chamber of Commerce. "It's a travesty. It makes you want to cry."

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The commission guaranteed the change when it voted last month not to repeal the resolution, said Dick Yarbrough, a senior Olympics executive who had worked vainly for a compromise between gay-rights activists and Cobb commissioners.

"It's a victory for everyone who believes in human rights, not just gay men and lesbians," said Jon-Ivan Weaver, the organizer of Olympics Out of Cobb, a coalition of activists.

"I think they've done the right thing, which surprises me," diver Greg Louganis, a gold medal-winner who is openly gay, said from his California home. "The one thing this whole thing has done, it's brought discrimination into the light of the press."

Cobb County Commissioner Gordon Wysong, the sponsor of the anti-gay resolution, said he expected ACOG's decision and supports it.

"My view is they ought to do whatever's best for the Olympics," he said. "They got put in a compromising position, and certainly they've got to look after their interests." Wysong said the decision doesn't hurt Cobb County, "I don't see it as an issue."

The decision was welcomed in Athens. "Hosting Olympic volleyball will be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, which the University of Georgia welcomes," said the school's president, Charles B. Knapp.

PROFESSOR SAYS BILL WOULD GIVE GAYS SPECIAL PRIVILEGES

WASHINGTON (AP) A law professor told senators Friday that extending job-discrimination protection to homosexuals would give special privileges to an "elite group" that is affluent and influential.

Joseph Broadus, a law professor at George Mason University, said it would "result in special privileges for an elite group that has unjustly played the victim card to advance."

Those comments drew the anger of Sen. Paul Wellstone, D-Minn.

His voice rising, he told Broadus, "As a Jew, I have a real problem with what you say. That is precisely the kind of argument that has been made ... in behalf of the worst kind of discrimination against Jewish people."

Several business executives, a union official and another law professor spoke in support of the legislation at the Senate Labor Committee hearing.

Also testifying were Cheryl Summerville, a former employee of Cracker Barrel from Bremen, Ga., who was fired for being a lesbian, and Ernest Dillon, a postal service employee from Detroit who was beaten unconscious and severely injured by a co-worker for being gay.

Legislation introduced last month by Sens. Edward M. Kennedy, D-Mass., and John H. Chafee, R-R.I., would prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual

orientation in hiring, firing, promotion and pay. It defines sexual orientation as real or perceived homosexual, bisexual or heterosexual orientation.

The legislation has been endorsed by several civil rights leaders, including Coretta Scott King, religious organizations, the AFL-CIO, business leaders and former Sen. Barry Goldwater. Federal law currently prohibits job discrimination based on race, gender, religion, national origin, age or disability.

"This bill is not about granting special rights, it is about righting senseless wrongs," said Kennedy, the labor committee's chairman. "What it requires is simple justice for gay men and lesbians who deserve to be judged in the workplace — like all other Americans — by their ability to do the work."

But Broadus, who is black, cited studies he said showed that gay people have incomes far above the average level. "It is the profile of an elite," he said. "An elite whose insider status has permitted it to abuse the political process in search, not of equal opportunity, but of special privilege and public endorsement. ... Gays are already disproportionately represented in the higher reaches of our society."

Robert Knight, director of cultural studies for the conservative Family Research Council, agreed with Broadus that homosexuals are very affluent and politically powerful. "As a pro-family organization, we see the (legislation) as less about tolerance than about the federal government forcing acceptance of homosexuality on tens of millions of unwilling Americans," Knight said.

GAY RIGHTS ISSUE SPARKS EMOTIONS DURING GUBERNATORIAL DEBATE

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) Lon Thrasher's friend was dragged from his car and beaten because he is homosexual. Another friend was fired by his law firm because of his sexual orientation. Thrasher wants to know what the candidates for governor would do to prevent it from happening to him or anyone else.

The answer from most at a debate Thursday night: current laws should be enough and homosexuals don't deserve "special rights."

"I don't understand how it's special to be sure you can keep your job," Thrasher said to Republicans David Copeland and Don Sundquist.

Only state Sen. Steve Cohen, a Memphis Democrat, said he supports legislation giving homosexuals equal rights.

Thrasher was one of 50 Middle Tennesseans asking questions of six Democratic gubernatorial candidates and both Republicans during the debate televised live in Nashville, Memphis, Chattanooga and Jackson. Other questions dealt with health care, the environment,

MORE NEWS

domestic violence, gun control, lottery, schools and the death penalty.

Claude Carter, a state employee worried that he could lose his job because he is homosexual, said there was one candidate he wouldn't want to see as governor: Cochran.

"That's a scary thought," said Carter.

Cochran had said homosexuals should keep their sexual preferences to themselves and shouldn't have additional rights. "He probably would have said the same thing about civil rights," Carter said after the debate.

BEASLEY, RAVENEL DRAW FRANK, STUDDS INTO DEBATE

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP) Two men vying for the South Carolina Republican gubernatorial nomination got into a dispute Friday that involved U.S. Reps. Barney Frank and Gerry Studds, two openly gay congressmen from Massachusetts.

David Beasley, a former state representative, and U.S. Rep. Arthur Ravenel, R-S.C., traded jabs before a debate about whether their ties were bought by Frank and Studds.

Beasley asked Ravenel if his tie came from Frank, one of his House colleagues. Ravenel said no, he got it from Studds.

"He (Studds) was asking me the other day who that young boy was that I was running against, he sure is cute," Ravenel quipped. Studds was once censured for having sex with a 17-year-old male page. Ravenel is 67; Beasley is 37.

Ravenel called Beasley's remark, which touched off the exchange, "nasty" and "anti-gay." But Ravenel also said that he should not have made the remark about Studds.

Both men are trying to replace Gov. Carroll Campbell Jr., a Republican, who is retiring.

AD CAMPAIGN AIMED AT YOUNG GAY AND BISEXUAL MEN

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) A recent study predicting that up to a third of young gay and bisexual men in San Francisco will be HIV positive by age 30 has prompted an unconventional AIDS education campaign.

The program by Q Action is being funded by a \$600,000 grant from the San Francisco Department of Public Health AIDS Office. It focuses on direct action and getting young men involved in educating themselves and each other.

"A lot of the messages which have

been targeted at young men have been oblique. We need to be very open to get the word out," Q Action manager Johnny Symons said Thursday.

Recently the group staged a safe-sex slide show on a wall in the city's largely gay Castro District. They've also printed up thousands of safe sex stickers with extremely explicit — and educational — messages, which volunteers plaster anywhere young gay and bisexual men might find themselves.

Q Action has already gotten a Tower Records store on Market Street to stuff a safe sex postcard in bags along with customers' purchases. The trendy music store also shows a safe sex video aimed at young gay and bisexual men on its in-store TV monitors.

Symons said young men have the highest rate of infection among all gay men at this point, according to the Young Men's Health Study conducted by University of California at San Francisco this year. The study predicted that up to 33 percent of young gay and bisexual men will be HIV positive by the age of 30.

FORMER MINISTER ALLEGED HOMOSEXUAL

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) A former Methodist minister who initiated the successful legal challenge to the state video lottery resigned two years ago when church officials received allegations he had been involved in homosexual misconduct.

But Dick Ward of Aberdeen, who served 31 years in the ministry, said Wednesday that he is not gay.

"I have this tag of being a homosexual, and it isn't true. But I don't know what I can do about it," Ward said in a telephone interview from his home. "I know it's being whispered around."

United Methodist Church District Superintendent Boyd Blumer said that the allegation of homosexual misconduct came from the mother of a Rapid City man.

Ward said he was addicted to prescription drugs at the time because of a sleep disorder and back pain. "At the time, I was taking a drug called Halcion for sleep problems, and I was really kind of out of it. I took large doses. My wife says I took five a day sometimes."

"Blumer got some letters to this 26- or 28-year-old man I had written in Rapid City," Ward said. "In those letters, I revealed to him that I'd had some homosexual experiences. I don't remember writing them, but it's my handwriting."

Ward said he has never had any homosexual encounters and repeated that he is not a homosexual.

(More news continued on next page)



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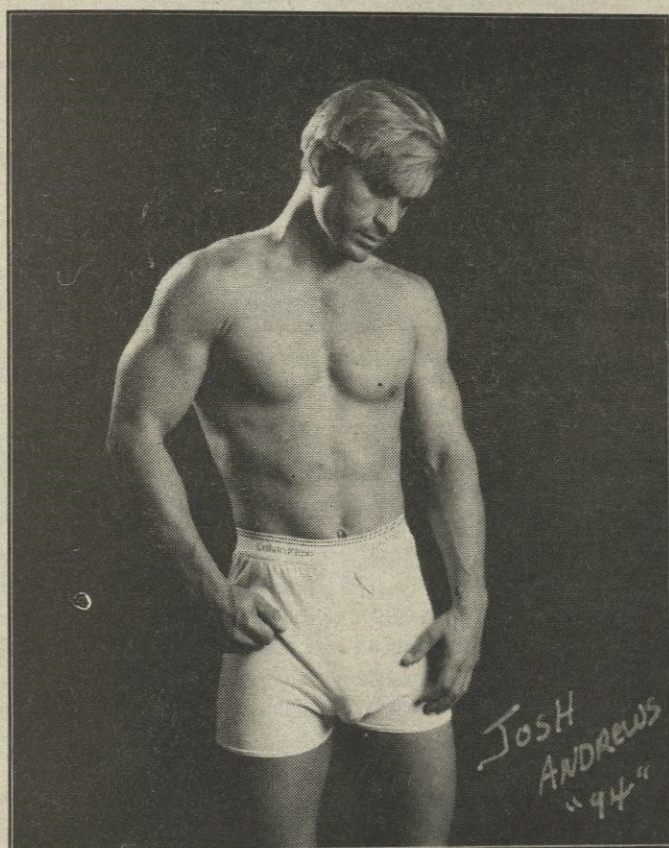
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EPISCOPAL SEXUALITY STATEMENT FINDS GOD IN HOMOSEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS

NEW YORK (AP) The nation's Episcopal bishops are discouraging the ordination of homosexuals even as they declare that God is present in same-sex relationships.

In the final draft of a pastoral letter obtained Tuesday by The Associated Press, spiritual leaders of the 2.5 million-member denomination recommended that future ordinations follow church teachings, suggesting a moratorium on the ordination of gays.

The church has said it is not appropriate to ordain practicing homosexuals. But in recent years several bishops have ordained homosexuals anyway, either publicly or quietly.

At the same time, the proposed sexuality statement urges church members to welcome homosexuals. It declares that the love, caring, commitment and spirituality found in heterosexual relationships can be found in gay relationships as well.

"As it can be for heterosexual persons, the experience of steadfast love can be for homosexual persons an experience of God," says the bishops' statement.

While the draft document does not go as far as the church's gay-rights advocates would like, it may broaden the perspective of many church members, said Bishop Frederick Borsch of Los Angeles.

"For some people on the conservative side, it is going to open up some doors and possibilities that they don't want opened," he said.

The Rev. Todd Wetzel, executive director of the conservative group Episcopalians United, said the document's nonjudgmental approach to the differences between church law and practice implicitly allows both the ordination of homosexuals and the blessing of same-sex unions.

"The word sin has been replaced by the term discontinuities," he said.

The document is a final draft of "Continuing the Dialogue: A Pastoral Teaching of the House of Bishops to the Church as it Considers Issues of Human Sexuality."

ADVISORY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS NEW USE FOR AIDS DRUG

WASHINGTON (AP) The AIDS drug AZT should be approved for use by HIV-infected pregnant women to prevent spread of the disease to their babies, a panel advising the Food and Drug Administration recommends.

Burroughs Wellcome Co., maker of the drug marketed under the name Retrovir, says its studies found use of the medication by pregnant women after the 14th week of gestation can reduce HIV transmission to the unborn infants by two-thirds.

The panel voted 8-0 Thursday to recommend that the FDA approve this use of AZT. The FDA is not required to follow the recommendation of advisory committees but generally does so.

Under the protocol considered by the committee, women who are infected with the AIDS virus would receive capsules of Retrovir during pregnancy and intravenous injections of the drug during labor. After delivery, the newborns would be dosed with Retrovir syrup.

According to studies by Burroughs Wellcome, about 24 percent of the babies born to HIV-positive women who did not take the drug would develop the disease, while the infection rate was only 8 percent to babies born to mothers given the drug.

CONDOMS IN THE BUSHES PROMOTES SAFE SEX

BOSTON (AP) The tall reeds in the public park known as the Fens have for years been a meeting place for men looking for sex with other men.

But lately, men cruising the Fens have been finding something other than companionship. Stashed among the reeds, lying on rocks and hanging by clothes pins from tree branches are "safe sex kits," or plastic bags filled with condoms.

Boston is one of several cities in the United States, Canada and Europe where outreach workers in gay communities are monitoring well-known public sex spots to make sure men protect themselves against the AIDS virus.

The Boston program is run by the AIDS Action Committee, and for the past year, two employees have made regular visits to various bathrooms, parks, beaches, movie theatres, and parking lots. In addition to distributing condoms, lubricant and AIDS literature, they try to talk with men about safe sex.

Program director Tim Hack said funding comes from part of a \$250,000 grant from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. The money goes toward AIDS prevention in high-risk populations.

Men who cruise public places, Hack said, are often married, bisexual or do not consider themselves to be gay. Reluctant to admit to themselves that they are having gay sex, some of these men do not carry condoms, which makes them at risk for catching the AIDS virus.

Public sex outreach workers do not interrupt men having sex, even if they are not having safe sex. Instead, Hack said, they approach men who are alone, hand them a condom and tell them to "play safe."

"We try not to be aggressive. Our outreach workers have learned to just allow things to occur," said Hack. "But many times a client will approach the worker. And after a while, they recognize them. They say, 'There's so-and-so, the condom guy'."

Boston's AIDS Action Committee modeled its program after similar ones in Santa Cruz, Calif., New Haven, Conn., Minneapolis, Toronto, and Sweden. Δ

CLAIMING OUR PAST

BY ROBERTS BATSON

(The previous two issues of "Claiming Our Past" covered the sorry episode of Jim Garrison's persecution of Clay Shaw: Garrison's arrest of Shaw, the charge of conspiracy to assassinate President John Kennedy, the ridiculous trial that proved Garrison had no case against Shaw. Also presented was Garrison's statement that he had expected Shaw to commit suicide rather than stand trial and be exposed as a homosexual.)

Shaw survived the ordeal but it left him broke. His health deteriorated quickly, and, by the time a federal court finally ordered Garrison to stop hounding him, he was dying.

Garrison, later publicly accused of molesting a 13-year-old boy in the New Orleans Athletic Club, went on to serve for a decade as a judge. The molestation incident, plus rumors that he had died from AIDS, have continued to fuel widespread speculation that this husband and father of five had lived the classic sub rosa life of the repressed homosexual while attacking gays publicly.

To a world that has come to know J. Edgar Hoover and Roy Cohn, this doesn't seem so far fetched.)

Not long after Clay Shaw died, some of his friends erected a plaque to honor him on Governor Nicholls Street. Shaw had renovated a number of French Quarter buildings, and the plaque notes the location of all of them. It also showed the location of the International Trade Mart (now the World Trade Center) at the foot of Canal Street, since Shaw had been responsible for getting it built and for commissioning the eminent architect Edward Durrell Stone to design it.

The plaque says: "IN TRIBUTE TO CLAY SHAW, 1913-1974, PIONEER IN THE RENOVATION OF THE VIEUX CARRE. This 1834 building, the Spanish stables, is one of nine restorations by Clay Shaw.

In addition, he conceived and completed the International Trade Mart and directed the renovation of the French Market. Clay

Shaw was a patron of the humanities and lived his life with the utmost grace; an invaluable citizen, he was respected, admired, and loved by many."

With Clay Shaw dead, his friends could only hope that this sad chapter had finally closed, and, with time, the image of Shaw as an accused assassination conspirator would fade and history would instead remember him as he was known to many: dignified gentleman, civic booster, decorated war hero, produced playwright, Quarter preservationist, creator of countless beautiful and worthwhile things. A builder, not a destroyer.

But destruction is a powerful force and evil is not so easily vanquished. It was not Shaw's fate to have his memory rest respectfully in peace. For out in the world lurked film director Oliver Stone, like Garrison, obsessed with disproving the Warren Commission's account of the Kennedy assassination. Since Stone had access to \$40 million, he had the considerable resources necessary to film his obsession in glorious Technicolor and to foist it on an uninformed public.

It is not the purpose of this column to debate the merits of the Warren Commission nor the validity of its conclusions, but, instead, to focus on how the insidious misrepresentations of JFK are an affront to all people who value justice and human dignity, and, specifically, how a film, seen by millions of people around the world, can, like a lethal virus, insinuate itself into the most destructive strains of ignorance and deep-

To paraphrase Lloyd Bentsen's famous squelch of Dan Quayle when Danny had tried to compare himself to John Kennedy, a chorus of knowing voices could echo, "We knew Jim Garrison; we watched Jim Garrison; we feared Jim Garrison, and believe us, Garrison was no Kevin Costner." For the world to accept Garrison only as Stone redesigned him in the film is to absolve a dangerous, destructive man.

seated prejudice. Every homosexual should be alarmed at how Stone, like Garrison, was able to use his considerable

power to attack, to hurt, to destroy.

In his film, Stone did not allow reality nor accuracy to get in his way. Apparently because he had no one better,

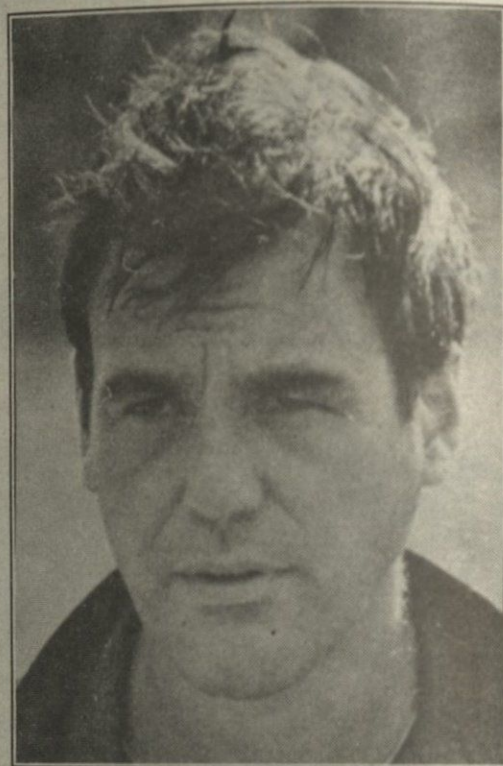
he molded his film around Garrison. But this was not the Garrison that informed observers called a madman, a fool, a cold-blooded opportunist willing to destroy others to further his personal political objectives. This was a Garrison of fiction, a gentle, considerate, well-intentioned, crusading, Mr.-Smith-Goes-to-Washington bona fide hero.

Why Garrison, an interviewer asked. Brace yourself for Stone's reply: "Because in Jim I found a worthy protagonist, a vehicle to include all the research that was done in the case. I respect Jim."

That chilling rationale stops us cold with the inherent dilemma it presents: Did Stone really, truly, believe Garrison was a hero, or did he knowingly, with malice and carefully considered forethought, decide to ignore the evil that Garrison perpetuated simply because he was the best "vehicle" to propel his dubious thesis? Both options are alarming: If the dilemma is accurately posed, then this man, who has at his command such power to influence through the medium of film, is disturbingly impaired: either his intellectual judgment is deficient or his ethical judgment is corrupt.

Just to be sure this mythical Garrison would really be far from authentic, Stone cast superstar Kevin Costner, an immensely likable actor, to portray the role. To paraphrase Lloyd Bentsen's famous squelch of Dan Quayle when Danny had tried to compare himself to John Kennedy, a chorus of knowing voices could echo, "We knew Jim Garrison; we watched Jim Garrison; we feared Jim Garrison, and believe us,

Garrison was no Kevin Costner." For the world to accept Garrison only as Stone redesigned him in the film is to absolve a dangerous, destructive man.



Oliver Stone, taken on location during the shooting of another one of his imaginative films.

Essayist Lance Morrow described Stone's film as a "suspect, mongrel art form" and perceptively observed, "The first superficial effect of JFK is to raise angry little welts in the conscience. Wouldn't it be absurd if a generation of younger Americans, with no memory of 1963, were to form their ideas about John Kennedy's assassination from Oliver Stone's report of it?" Let's re-state this thought more specifically and emphatically: Wouldn't it be tragic if a generation of younger lesbians and gay men were

to form their ideas about Jim Garrison and Clay Shaw from Oliver Stone's lies?

"Lies" is not too strong a label. Listen to the words of Zachary Sklar, editor of Garrison's book *On the Trail of the Assassins*: "Nobody is claiming that the movie is the truth." And what authority does Sklar have regarding the content (and intent) of JFK? He was Stone's co-writer of the film script.

Film has an extraordinary power to influence great masses of people. Time Magazine, reporting on JFK when it was released in 1991, said, "Movies are a persuasive medium because they exist only in the present tense, not the conditional. Each picture is happening before our eyes; each Stone film fantasy is, for the moment it is on the screen, the moviegoer's reality.

"But because films are fictions — because even a naive viewer knows Kevin Costner is an actor playing a moviemaker's interpretation of a man named Jim Garrison — the events they portray need not be factual, or even probable; they must only be plausible... The movie recognizes that history is not only what we are told to believe; often it is gossip that becomes gospel."

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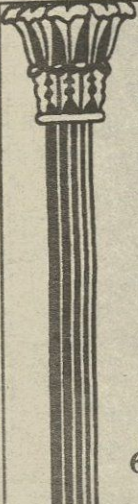


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And Stone himself admits as much. JFK, he told an interviewer, "is a bit subversive in its approach. But a film can often be subversive to the subconscious... Obviously, this film is going to be denied. All the errors are going to be attacked... Yet, it will survive."

Summing this up, Morrow concludes his JFK essay, "When Artists Distort History," with this astute and sobering caution, "A culture is what it remembers, and what it knows."

But if JFK should be discredited because it takes a homophobic monster like Garrison and re-makes him into a crusading hero, it should also be assaulted for its vicious misrepresentation of Clay Shaw. The film consistently and pointedly portrays Shaw's "lifestyle" (I choose that word purposefully) as seedy and sinister. Jon Newlin, in his January 10, 1992 Impact review, said, "New Orleans is a drab and claustrophobic place in JFK (the scenes of homosexual low-life being almost Poe-like... things weren't quite that grim in the late 60s)... [Gay New Orleans was not portrayed] as it really is — instead Costner/Garrison calls it 'the heart of the United States' intelligence service.'" Newlin, with his characteristically droll sense of irony, concludes, "Gee, one never realized the country's cardiovascular problems were so grave."

Stone's convoluted logic goes like this: Shaw is homosexual, homosexuals are scumbags, scumbags are assassins; Shaw, therefore, is an assassin. Advocate critic David Ehrenstein succinctly explains how this pernicious device is employed: "You don't have to explain anything more about a villain's motivation if he is perceived as gay. The audience has been inculcated to accept the notion of gayness as a sickness. It's a lazy kind of short-hand for evil." Ehrenstein concludes, "We're (gays and lesbians) the last group where filmmakers feel oblivious to any damage they're causing." Newlin's phrase: "JFK is epic muck rather than epic muckraking."

Perhaps the most gratuitous — and disturbing — example of Stone's sleaziness is the inclusion of a scene featuring Tommy Lee Jones as Clay Shaw and Kevin Bacon as a totally fictional character — a hustler — that Oliver Stone made up. Time Magazine described it as a scene in which gays "cavort in sadomasochistic fun and games." The New York Daily News writer Jim Farber was equally colorful, calling it "orgy-loving conspirators plotting to kill the president." David Baron in a February 1, 1992 Times-Picayune feature, wrote, "Jones (as the god Mercury) was bedecked in body paint and little else, while Bacon (as Marie Antoinette) had donned a powdered wig. Both men were playing alleged conspirators in the

Kennedy assassination — conspirators who, as members of New Orleans '60s gay demimonde, attended parties at which drag was de rigueur." In the following line, Baron describes the scene as "Stone's candid depiction of gay revelry..."

Although Baron's article, an interesting consideration of Hollywood's depiction of lesbian and gay characters, has much to commend it, this opening "attention-grabber" demonstrates how easy it is to buy into Stone's smear. Astonishingly, Baron states that he buys what Stone is selling. Look what he calls it: "Stone's candid depiction of gay revelry." Candid means truthful. Baron could have chosen another adjective — surely he knows lots of them — "vivid depiction," perhaps, or even "fanciful depiction." And observe how he chocks these sentences full of loaded phrases that further Stone's own intention in creating a

But if JFK should be discredited because it takes a homophobic monster like Garrison and re-makes him into a crusading hero, it should also be assaulted for its vicious misrepresentation of Clay Shaw. The film consistently and pointedly portrays Shaw's "lifestyle" (I choose that word purposefully) as seedy and sinister.

negative response to the subject: "New Orleans '60s gay demimonde," "drag was de rigueur."

Why, a disquieted reader asks, did Baron assume Stone's description was candid, truthful? How could he assume it to be truthful that Shaw would likely appear practically nude, his body covered with silver body paint? Why would he assume that this is a "candid depiction" of gay life in 60's New Orleans? If Baron has evidence that this scene is an accurate depiction of Shaw's "lifestyle" then he should come forward and present whatever facts he has. Despite extensive efforts, this writer has never found anyone to confirm this episode as truthful.

But if his unfortunate choice of words is merely ill-considered, then it is his obligation to recognize how damaging such casual misapplication of language can be. Further, it is the responsibility of lesbian and gay writers to call attention to
(continued on next page)

CLAIMING, CONT'D

these matters whenever they occur. It is in that spirit of learning that we do so now.

Before leaving Baron's story we must at least consider that damning phrase "gay demimonde." When Stone was criticized for this fictitious scene, he huffed, "We believe a lot of the connections where this conspiracy took place between (them) existed in the homosexual underworld."

Never mind that Stone's "conspiracy" and "connections" are all unproved figments dancing in the lowest depths of his paranoia. Look instead at the effect of the unchallenged assertion that a "gay underworld" exists. In Farber's article he says: "David Ehrenstein blasts the idea of such a unified 'underworld' as prejudicial. 'There's an assumption that all gay people lead the same kind of life... David Ferrie was, in fact, a sleazy chicken hawk... Clay Shaw lived on the other side of town, had a nice lover and lived a quiet, benign existence. Suddenly, because they're both gay, they're supposed to be connected to one another.'"

Farber also cites gay filmmaker Robert Hilferty as similarly critical of Stone's methods. "Two of the film's main figures, Clay Shaw and David Ferrie were, in reality, homosexual. But Hilferty strongly questions the relevance of luridly imagining their sexcapades to bolster the movie's conspiracy theory. 'Oliver Stone is careful to keep Jack Ruby's Jewishness out of the film because to include it would be anti-Semitic. The homosexual stereotypes are just as gratuitous.'"

One final remark must be made concerning Tommy Lee Jones' portrayal of Shaw. Jones is a fine actor and this is an imaginative piece of acting. It's just wrong. As Jon Newlin said, "Jones takes the easy way out playing a gay character and plays Shaw as a jaded exquisite (which he wasn't)... He nells it to the max, acting as though the whole thing is just too frightfully sordid, m'dear." Of course, this is the portrayal Stone needed to prove his point (homosexuals are scumbags, scumbags are assassins, etc.). If Shaw, a conservative businessman, had been portrayed with the commanding dignity for which he was known, it would have

destroyed the fantasy story Stone was determined to tell.

As Garrison must be held accountable for his unconscionable attempt to destroy Clay Shaw in life, so should Stone, for his equally reprehensible degradation of Shaw's memory. Clay was able to successfully defend himself in Garrison's court of law, but, in death, was not able to

As Garrison must be held accountable for his unconscionable attempt to destroy Clay Shaw in life, so should Stone, for his equally reprehensible degradation of Shaw's memory.

defend his character in Stone's kangaroo court of mass public opinion. Garrison's weapon was political power; Stone's was the power of media. Both used their powers without regard for the moral standards that basic decency demands. And both should be damned for their deeds. Δ

This is Part 6 of Claiming Our Past, a series of essays on lesbian and gay New Orleans history. It will continue for the next several months. While not an exhaustive accounting, the series will attempt to chronicle significant events and the social, cultural, and political development that produced them. This is a first effort to print a chronological overview of this subject, and the author has depended on the limited printed materials available, as well as the very generous interviews granted by eye witnesses to the times. He thanks all those who have contributed to the effort. He also gladly invites additions or corrections from readers. Please send information to: Roberts Batson, Impact, PO Box 52079, New Orleans, LA 70152. Anyone willing to tape an oral history of events before 1975, please drop him a note. Δ

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REMEMBERING CHUCK CROSBY



STORY & PICTURES
BY STEVEN FORSTER

[Editor's Note: The late artist Chuck Crosby, who died July 15 of this year of complications from HIV, is the subject of a retrospective exhibition opening in September at the Arthur Roger Gallery. Steven Forster conducted three interviews—with John Costanza, Chuck's partner; Jeffrey Melton, who was Chuck's dealer for many years and presented his work to the local public; and Miriam Rose of the Arthur Roger Gallery, a friend of Chuck's.]

You know, they say angels paint the sky every day. They use the sky as their canvas and the clouds as their brushes. Then, there's the Sun, the stars, rainbows, and I guess anything else that

they can get their hands on.

When an artist dies, we lose, for it is in art that we expand. We see things as we have never seen them before and when we lose an artist, we will never quite see them that way again. There are many people whose lives were changed because of Chuck. I interviewed a few of them in the hope of painting in words, a picture of what an artist really is. For those of you who knew Chuck, I hope that you laugh and cry along with me.

JOHN COSTANZA

SF: When did Chuck start painting?

JC: He'd been painting his whole life.

In the retrospective show [at Art Attacks in October 1993] he had a painting that he had done when he was six years old.

SF: When did he find out that he had HIV?

JC: He found out about five years ago.

That's when he started collecting robots. He thought at first it was too late for him to do anything in life, but then he said no, that was the wrong attitude to take and he started collecting robots and he started to push his career more and decided not to give up, and hope that he could be an inspiration to everybody who was HIV+ that it's never too late to fulfill your dreams. He had always liked robots. He also had a history of collecting things. He collected rabbits' feet since he was a little kid. And dice. He had always wanted to collect robots, and never did, then he just decided that he wasn't going to stop living.

I was his lover. Met him six years ago, and we just celebrated our six-year anniversary on May 21.

SF: That's a long time in gay years. [laughter.]

JC: Yeah. I had seen him for years and years and would always wave to him and

smile, he liked that. He later said a lot of people would say hello one day and not know you another. Chuck has clinic hepatitis, he wasn't a drinker. So he didn't hang out in bars very much. He had so many circles of friends: His art circle, the gay circle, and his high school friends. A lot of people.

He was from New Orleans, born in Baptist Hospital and lived in Lakeview until his father died when he was ten. Then his mother moved them to Chalmette and he went to Chalmette High School...He didn't really graduate from Chalmette. He was kicked out a month before graduation for wearing one of his T-shirts that he had hand-painted.

SF: Did he tell you what was on the shirt?

JC: Just that it was hand-painted.

SF: And they had never seen anything like that in Chalmette before?!

JC: No. And he made his living for the next ten years selling hand-painted T-shirts.

SF: Where did he find his stuff?

JC: Just endless imagination. He said if you have to think about painting, you shouldn't paint. He just pulled things out of the top of his head. He liked to paint on objects, he liked to try different things. He always wanted to be a chair designer, you know—a furniture maker. He drew a lot of that in his art. He always had a chair in his art that represented him.

SF: Brian Borrello [a sculptor and a good friend of Crosby's] mentioned to me that Chuck lived off and on in San Francisco.

JC: Yes, he lived there off and on, and in San Diego. He worked in the Club Baths. He thought he might have contracted HIV since 1981. He had gone to a clinic in San Diego and they said that there was this new disease, and that three people had died and that Chuck had three of the four symptoms. He actually thought he got it while he was living in Hawaii. He was dating somebody out there. You know, he was always proud of his connection with the baths. He remained friends with the people that he used to work with and he always cherished that as being a good memory, even though many of them are dying themselves.

SF: Was he comfortable being gay?

JC: Oh yes, very much. He was very open. But he didn't flaunt it.

SF: Who were his artistic inspirations?

JC: We went to see a Frida Kahlo exhibition in Houston. He really liked that, and well, Max Ernst...He just loved them all, really.

SF: Did he speed up or slow down when he found out that he was ill?

JC: He would speed up and then slow down for awhile. He realized that the number of paintings wasn't as important as the quality. That's why he wasn't...maybe that's why he didn't consider himself a true Folk Artist. He didn't just pump them out. He really took his time with them. He didn't really like openings. He didn't like crowds of people and he always dressed funky for them. But at the same time, he could be the life of the party.

SF: Was Chuck home when he died?

JC: Yes. He wanted to be at home. He never went to the hospital, never had IV's in him. He just started with liquid morphine the day before he died. He didn't suffer at all. He was so lucky. I think he planned it. He died right at sunset, the nurse came and told him he had twelve to twenty-four hours. I called people, and everybody came over. Father Bob from Tau House was the last person Chuck talked to.

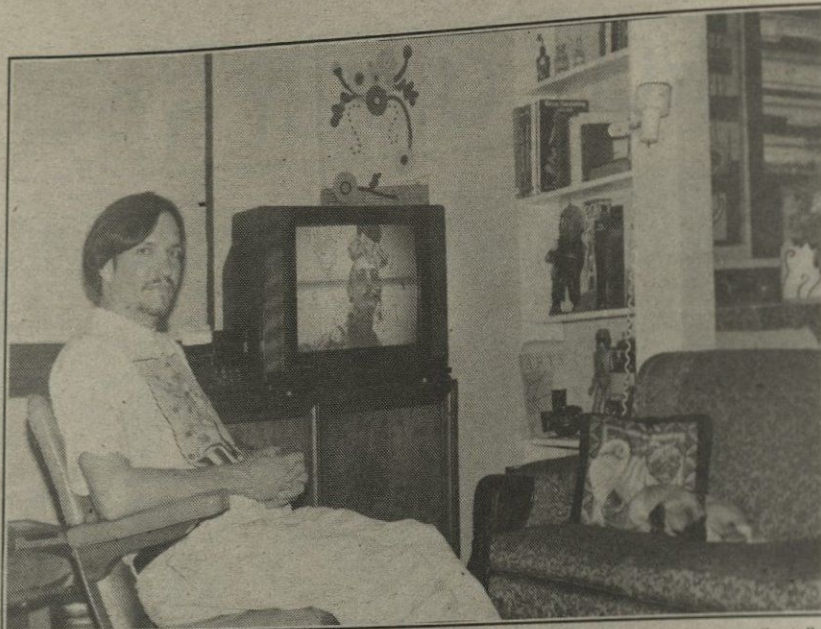
SF: Anything you want to add?

JC: Just that I love him very much and will miss him.

JEFFREY MELTON

SF: What was your relationship with Chuck?

JM: Chuck and I go way back, before I ever opened a gallery. Chuck and I met and we initially were boyfriends, he was my first male companion in New Orleans when



John Costanza at home with a Chuck Crosby performance mural from the Contemporary Arts Center on the telly and pug Noodles on the sofa.

I moved here fifteen years ago. So our relationship was multi-faceted, it goes way back. I was pretty much attracted to him as an artist and as well as a totally bizarre character. Having come from Mississippi, I hadn't encountered anyone quite like him before.

I moved here in 1979 and we met shortly after that. At a party thrown by Jerry Revell for Thanksgiving and I was staying with Luis Hansa until I got on my feet here in the city. Luis and I had graduated from high school together and he moved here before I did. We were all invited to a party, and that's where I first met Chuck, I think, Chuck and Blanche and Nog and Jerome Laborde and that whole Lower Quarter entourage. So that was my introduction to that social circle. It was pretty wild. I had only been here for three days. Oh, it was Danny Wilson and Gary Clay, Douglas Bourgeois was there. You know, this was

before Douglas had really made it big in the art world. So, that's kind of where we all met.

SF: How long were you and Chuck in a relationship?

JM: It was short-lived as that kind of relationship goes. It was probably just a couple of months. It just grew into something else, we remained friends. It was kind of a curiosity thing that we got together both emotionally and physically. It grew quickly beyond that into just a real good friendship. Then when I opened my own business, we were showing Chuck's work. For a time, Chuck even worked for us in a sales capacity. We've done two shows: The only one-man-shows in New Orleans given for Chuck Crosby were in my shops. Formally, we were called Gallery 508 on St. Philip and that was where we gave the first *Burning Igloo* show, and I think that was probably back in 1982. Then the last show



was in October 1993. He's been in group shows at other galleries but the only one-man shows were with me.

SF: Is there anything from that last show that you especially remember?

JM: Chuck had complete rein. We emptied the gallery and basically gave it to Chuck for a month. It was his to do with whatever he wanted. So he was in complete control which is, you know, usually unheard of. For most artists, their work is turned over to the gallery director and they hang the show and direct everything. Chuck was in complete control as far as he personally placed every single piece that was in that show which numbered a couple hundred items. Not only controlled where pieces were placed but also the lighting, the music, the entire ambience and feeling were set by Chuck. Everyone was invited to Chuck's world for the time that they were in this gallery. Ninety percent of that show was not for sale. It was from other people's private collections or Chuck's collection.

[The retrospective] was something I wanted to do and something Chuck wanted to do because of our relationship and the circumstances surrounding his health and so forth. The show had two hundred pieces, but it was a small portion of his career—he'd been painting thirty-seven years. It was a fine representation of every period he'd been through from childhood through Hawaii and California and how those environments influenced his work and him. Certainly, works representing almost every relationship he had, both with his family and with his lovers and friends, because Chuck recorded his life through his art. Not always in painting or sculpture, but he also wrote books and kept journals, he was just an incredibly prolific person. He was always doing something that had its roots in art.

But the show was for Chuck—it was something that Blake, my partner and I wanted to do for him. We knew how much it meant to him, and we knew that it would quite possibly be the last show he was ever involved in. And it turns out that that was the case. It was a year in the planning.

SF: So the gallery representation was a friendship and not necessarily on paper?

JM: It was both. We sold a lot of Chuck's work. I would venture to say that the most money ever captured for one piece by Chuck was through this gallery. So there was both the friendship and the professional relationship involved, which in the end caused great problems and really caused a dysfunction with his and my relationship. We ended on a very sour note. Part of it was the disease and how it affected Chuck. Part of it was my relations with people influential in his life at the time. And just personal differences between him and my partner, and unfortunately all of those circumstances had a profound effect on our relationship to the point that I hadn't spoken to Chuck since he picked up the last painting from the show.

We said our goodbyes to each other when the show closed. I just felt like I said goodbye to the person I knew and loved

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THE PUBLIC EYE

State of the Art: Some date the beginning of our revolution to the Second World War, when men and women from small towns found out that there were more out there like them, and not just more, but millions more. In his best selling novel of World War 2, South Pacific, James Michener relates the story of two naval officers caught doing it in the buses. (No doubt they also resembled Ricky Nelson and Brandon de Wilde in World War 2 films.)

Some others date the movement back to Dr. Magnus Hirshfield, who ran a freakshow comprised of a few transvestites and the occasional hermaphrodite in Berlin. His impact on his times was minimal, and other than being arrested by the local gendarmes for running a disorderly house, he accomplished nothing.

We stick with the more current notion that the movement began with the Stonewall Rebellion, in June of 1969. But not for the Stonewall Rebellion alone, but for its timing.

Coincidentally, on the West Coast, the first all-gay conference was held in Berkeley in that same June. A majority of the delegates were from the West Coast, but it was hyped to the press as a national event, in the same way that San Francisco calls its rodeo The Grand National, which is neither grand nor national, but just a bunch of drunk cowpokes from the valley. Nonetheless, the conference was hailed as a great success by the participants despite the report in the Berkeley Barb which began, "My dear, it was just too, too tacky. Everyone fought from minute one."

However fractious it may have been, the point was made by the Berkeley contingent that the concurrently running Battle of People's Park had been started by a group of disenfranchised squatters, and if this group of poor Okies could grab so much attention, gays could do better. This knowledge, tied in with excellent showing in the Stonewall Rebellion (Cops 0, Faggots 1) got our movement going.

But the first group from WWII (c.f. documentary film, Before Stonewall) know we were there, but most of them went back home, got married and bred more of us. The rest went to the nearest big city, and some of them just stayed in the coastal cities where they were do-mobilized: NY, SF, LA and some NO. Most of these hung out in little enclaves where they were ignored or gradually worked into the fabric of the community. But this group did little more than have smart little parties, stay drunk and pick up a crazy hustler a couple of times a year.

Only one attempt at organizing was undertaken in the years between World War II and 1969, that of Frank Dameny, with his

Mattachine Society, whose first meeting was attended by only a handful of participants. Things never got better for the Mattachine Society.

This era also gave us the term "closet case," which derived from an incident at Harvard during the McCarthy Era. McCarthy alleged in public statements that not only was the State Department overrun by communists, but that Harvard was overrun by queers.

On one such bed check, campus police found a room with two guys in the room and three more hidden in a closet. The leading muckraking journal of the day, Confidential, described the incident in detail, labeling those hidden as "closet cases", a term which has now crossed over into the national idiom.

(McCarthy was expressing in an indirect manner what is a prime tenet of Middle American Myth: if one is intelligent, he must be queer.) The beleaguered Harvard administration felt compelled to hold random bedchecks. (At the time Harvard had a rigidly controlled curfew and lights-out policy for undergraduates.) On one such bed check, campus police found a room with two guys in the room and three more hidden in a closet. The leading muckraking journal of the day, Confidential, described the incident in detail, labeling those hidden as "closet cases", a term which has now crossed over into the national idiom.

By the late fifties, many of the most influential figures on the literary scene in the US were gay: Tennessee Williams, Truman Capote, Allen Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac. But no one wrote about homosexuals... that is, other than Dr. Kinsey, whose 1948 study indicated that 37% of American men had had some kind of homosexual experience. Critics went nuts, charging that he had used improper samples in his surveys. Actually he was found to be very accurate in a pioneering science. Clare Booth Luce, the Playwright-Congresswoman from Connecticut, who was also married to Time founder Henry Luce, tried to have the Kinsey Report banned

nationally by Congress. We can understand her anger at realizing that not everyone would fall under the spell she used so well to marry up to money and fame.

Kerouac hinted around a little, and was patently in love with his best friend, the notorious sociopath Neal Cassady. Kerouac got married several times but had no children, and according to his male partners, this was inevitable, since he was so drunk that he couldn't get it up most of the time.

Gore Vidal wrote a novel that involved homosexual experience, *The City and The Pillar*, and this put his career on hold until the late sixties. John Horne Burns wrote an excellent novel, *The Galleria*, but he drank himself to death soon after.

Since Stonewall a lot of gay novels have been written, but the same tone is pervasive right up until the present time. We are all doomed faggots, destined to die unhappily, if not by our own hand. In some, Monette comes to mind immediately, the gays triumph, but they triumph through meanness, and the quality of their lives is not improved, because they have only gotten more material things. They have only learned that insincerity sometimes pays.

But the first group from WWII know we were there, but most of them went back home, got married and bred more of us.

Felice Picano and others write of desperate people who value nothing but an Armani jacket and a blonde boyfriend, and who will stop at nothing to get them.

All the current novels and plays are about AIDS. This is laudable in terms of the need for awareness, but it really isn't literature.

But there is a new group among us now, the so called X-Generation, and while their taste in clothes leaves something to be desired, they are honorable and loyal to their friends. When they have achieved enough experience in the world to write about it, let us hope they will write about life and love and not about death and deterioration.

A bientot,
Marcel

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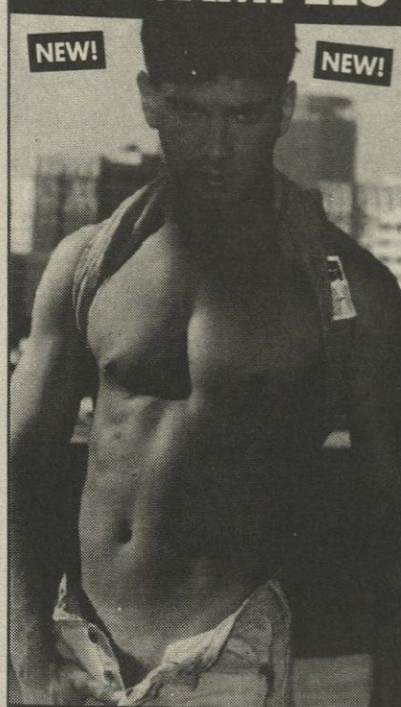
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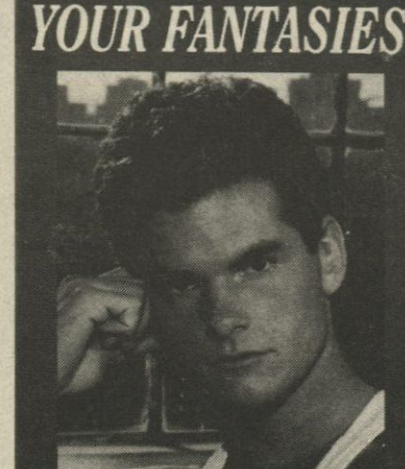
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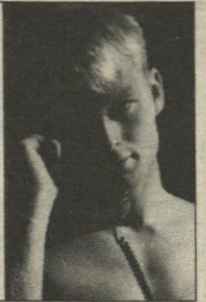
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Community Resources

Because of space limitations, we can publish only the essential addresses and telephone numbers.

Political & Activist Organizations

- LAGPAC (Louisiana Gay Political Action Caucus)
PO Box 53075, New Orleans LA 70153
- LEGAL (Louisiana Electorate of Gays and Lesbians)
PO Box 70344, New Orleans LA 70172; 949-9124
- P-FLAG (Parents & Friends of Lesbians & Gays)
meetings on second Thursday at St. Charles Avenue Presbyterian Church; 581-2749 or 895-3936
- Alliance of Pride; POB 72055, New Orleans LA 70172
- The Forum For Equality; PO Box 850096, New Orleans LA 70185-0096
- Stonewall '94 Committee
meetings on 2nd & 4th Tuesday monthly at the Community Center; 947-1568
- Lesbian Avengers of New Orleans
meetings on Wednesdays at Community Center; PO 791375, New Orleans LA 70179-1375, Voice Mail: 365-3069
- Log Cabin Republicans, Louisiana Log Cabin, 504/593-1083, meeting info & voice mail

Community Centers

- The Lesbian & Gay Community Center of New Orleans
816 North Rampart Street, 522-1103
- GL Friendly Community Center, 308 Caillavet Street, Biloxi MS 39530; 601/435-2398

Archives

- The Amistad Research Center,
Tulane University, 6823 St. Charles Avenue, 865-5535; a repository for material on civil rights, race relations, ethnic minorities, the gay rights movement, and queer issues

Religious Organizations

- Vieux Carre Metropolitan Community Church
1128 St. Roch Avenue, 945-5390; services Sundays 11 a.m.
• Dignity New Orleans; 2048 Camp Street, 522-6059
- Dignity Baton Rouge
PO Box 4181, Baton Rouge 70821; (504) 343-5172
- Integrity, 3rd Tuesday monthly at Trinity Episcopal Church, 1329 Jackson; 944-5346
- Jewish Gay & Lesbian Alliance; Amos Lassen, 525-8286
- Grace Fellowship in Christ Jesus; 3151 Dauphine Street; 944-9836 or 949-2325
- 1st Unitarian Church of New Orleans Gay & Lesbian Task Force
5212 S. Claiborne Ave., services Sunday at 10:30 a.m. 865-7005 (men) or 822-3278 (women)
- St. Ambrose Ecumenical Catholic Church, 500 Dufossat Street, 895-4742. Masses Saturday at 4:30 PM & Sunday at 10:30 AM
- Associated Catholic Charities; 1000 Howard Ave. Ste 1200, NOLA 70113.

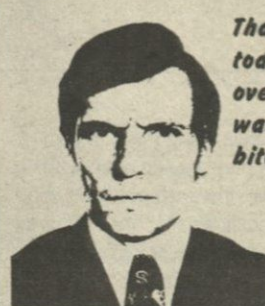
Health/AIDS Organizations

- NO/AIDS Task Force, 945-4000 (administrative); 944-2437/944-AIDS (hotline); 1-800-992-4379 (statewide hotline); 944-2492 (TTD for hearing impaired).
- ACT UP/New Orleans
meetings Wednesdays at 7 p.m. at 1407 Decatur; 944-4546 or 522-5105
- Buzzy's Boys & Girls/The William J. Fanning Foundation, 943-8929
- PWA Coalition, 945-4000
- United Services for AIDS, 522-5239
- RAIN (Regional AIDS Interfaith Network), 523-3755
- AIDSLaw, 944-5035
- Darrell Hamby Memorial Food Bank, 944-3663
- The Lambda Center, 2106 Decatur, 947-0548 (AA & Al-Anon)
- Charity Hospital/C-100 Clinic, 568-5304
- Veterans Administration Medical Center, 589-5920
- Project Lazarus, 949-3609
- Belle Reve, 945-9455
- North Lake AIDS Network (NoLAN), PO 2397, Slidell 70459; (504) 641-6750
- Food For Friends, 944-6028

Social or Special Interest

- Men of Color, POBox 57694, NO 70157-7694; 482-5341
- Womyn of Color, 488-5708; 891-0673
- The Divorce Center, support for gay spouses (3rd Tuesday monthly), 488-9924
- New Orleans Women's Music Collective, 522-1318
- New Orleans Gay Men's Chorus, 245-8884
- Frontrunners Running Club, George, 947-1081
- UNO Gay/Lesbian Alliance, UNO Student Affairs, NOLA, 70148, 286-6349
- National Leather Association/New Orleans, PO Box 50133, NO 70150
- Knights d'Orleans, POBox 50812, NO 70150
- Lords of Leather, PO Box 72105, NO 70172
- Gay Bowling League, Mid-City Lanes, 482-3133
- Volleyball New Orleans, 833-3747; 945-4364; 482-3133
- Tri Delta Chi, cross-dressers, TS, TG support group, 943-6612
- Zeitgeist Theatre Experiments, "alternative cinema," 524-0064

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PLANETARY IMPACT

HURRICANE WARNINGS: PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

BY LAWRENCE OF NEW ORLEANS

The season to be jelly. Not Christmas in July, but that time of the year when I, for one, am annually reduced to a quivering mass of yellow gelatin, shaking in my summer sandals at the prospect of another Audrey, Betsy or Camille.

Breezing through the ABCs this time around, there has already been Alberto, first storm of the year. While he missed us, Georgia was not as lucky, hit by damaging blasts and extensive floods. The planets Uranus and Neptune, which are together in the sky right now, bring wind and water.

The name of Alberto means "wise," a reminder that we'd be smart not to be overconfident about the next time. The second tropical depression, Beryl, could already be forming. Her name translates into the word "precious" — a promise perhaps that a strong aspect to generous Jupiter in early August may prove valuable for safety and protection. By a long shot, there could be material gain, too.

Neptune and Uranus are not due to kick up a storm (some of it likely to be emotional) until the end of this month. However, it is an ill wind that doesn't blow at least something good your way, so you will be able to think of improvements, too. There is also a powerful force for good then.

Since the third hurricane will be named Chris, or Christ-Bearer, it might be a good idea to keep your rosary and crucifix handy, just to be on the safe side!

Other blowhards that may be coming your way are: Debbie, for bee, (stay busy and productive on the 6th), Ernest—be sincere on the 22nd, Florence or blooming, (love blossoms on the 29th), Gordon, a cornered hill, (don't let yourself be cornered by destructive feelings on the 18th), Helene (light), the Full Moon on the 21st, in Aquarius, means a sociable, fun-filled week end. Finally, there is Isaac, (laughter). Keep smiling, because mid-September is the time to watch out for. Even if it's only raging fury in your personal life.

LEO: We may never see Hurricane Joyce, which means joyful, but hope your birthday is joyful anyway. An area where you may be experiencing turmoil, (confusion and agitation) is around your job or health!

VIRGO: Keith, the name for one of this year's hurricanes, means a place. This

month, there will be a warm place in your heart for a loyal friend you can really talk to. Game-playing love or sex may be a hot spot.

LIBRA: Hurricane Leslie, our 12th, is a Celtic word for a gray fortress. You'd better protect yourself in August from potential problems on the home front. You will be strongest in the trenches at work. Duty will pay!

SCORPIO: Michael means God-Like, the namesake of one hurricane. You, too, have great power now, but avoid righteous indignation or hidden resentment. You are an avenging angel is ever there was one. Words can get you in trouble.

SAGITTARIUS: Hurricane Nadine means hope, a trait of Jupiter, your ruling planet. Your faith is high right now. If you don't take foolish chances with money, you can push for greater financial security this month.

CAPRICORN: You are in the eye of the hurricane these days. One is named Oscar, or divine spear. Be prepared, no matter how calm things may appear this month. Your main weapon of defense is that you usually expect the worst.

AQUARIUS: If the season persists, there will be a tropical storm, Pattie (for noble or well-born). That's you. You start out strong and can sustain it. Unless you change your mind! Success this month if you don't come on too strong.

PISCES: This year's hurricanes are not likely to go as far down the list as Rafael (healed by God) but let it remind you, while your health looks strong this month, it is still low generally. Love and travel are great.

ARIES: Tropical storm Sandy, helper of people) is unlikely to strike, but you will be given a big boost at work if you keep your mind on the job. Your private life, while highly promising, may become a distraction.

TAURUS: The name, Tony is on this year's hurricane list. It means priceless. Likewise, you will probably be keeping company with someone who's worth a million! A trip together could be nice, but it may be hard to get away.

GEMINI: The tropical depression named Valerie (vigorous and strong) will never form, as it would come too late. However, there is time this month to gather strength in the career and money area. Love may hit you too hard.

CANCER: The last hurricane of the season is named William, synonymous with determined defender. Mars fortifies you this month, gives you personal clout, and self-confidence. Make allowances for those at home.Δ

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GBM, loving, caring, compassionate, aggressive, 5'10"m 205 lbs., with 54" chest and 20" arms, seeks that special male who is willing to combine efforts to build something lasting and precious with me. Write me: Henry Lee Hayden, #111244, KY State Penitentiary, PO Box 128, Eddyville KY 42038-0128. (8/5)

Intelligent, romantic WM, 30, 6'1", 200 lbs., blond hair kinda long over blue eyes. Doing hard time now but soon to be set free (9/94); very non-violent. looking for that special "someone" who can make me feel good and I can do the same for them. Race makes no difference to me. I'll send a photo with first letter. No hang ups with bottom or top. Glen David Collins, #97625, KY State Prison 6-B-5, POB 128, Eddyville KY 42038-0128. (8/5)

Lonely Mathematician: 1x1=1
Handsome x Ambitious=Unique (Me).
1-1=0 Me-Freedom=Incarceration
(Loneliness). 1+1=2 You +
Me=Friendship (Maybe More).
Equation: It may seem elementary,
however genuine friendship and true
happiness are impossible unless you
a) write me. b) befriend me. c) share
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Stephen Tetro #079831, PO Box 747,
Starke FL 32091-0747. Answer: d). (8/5)

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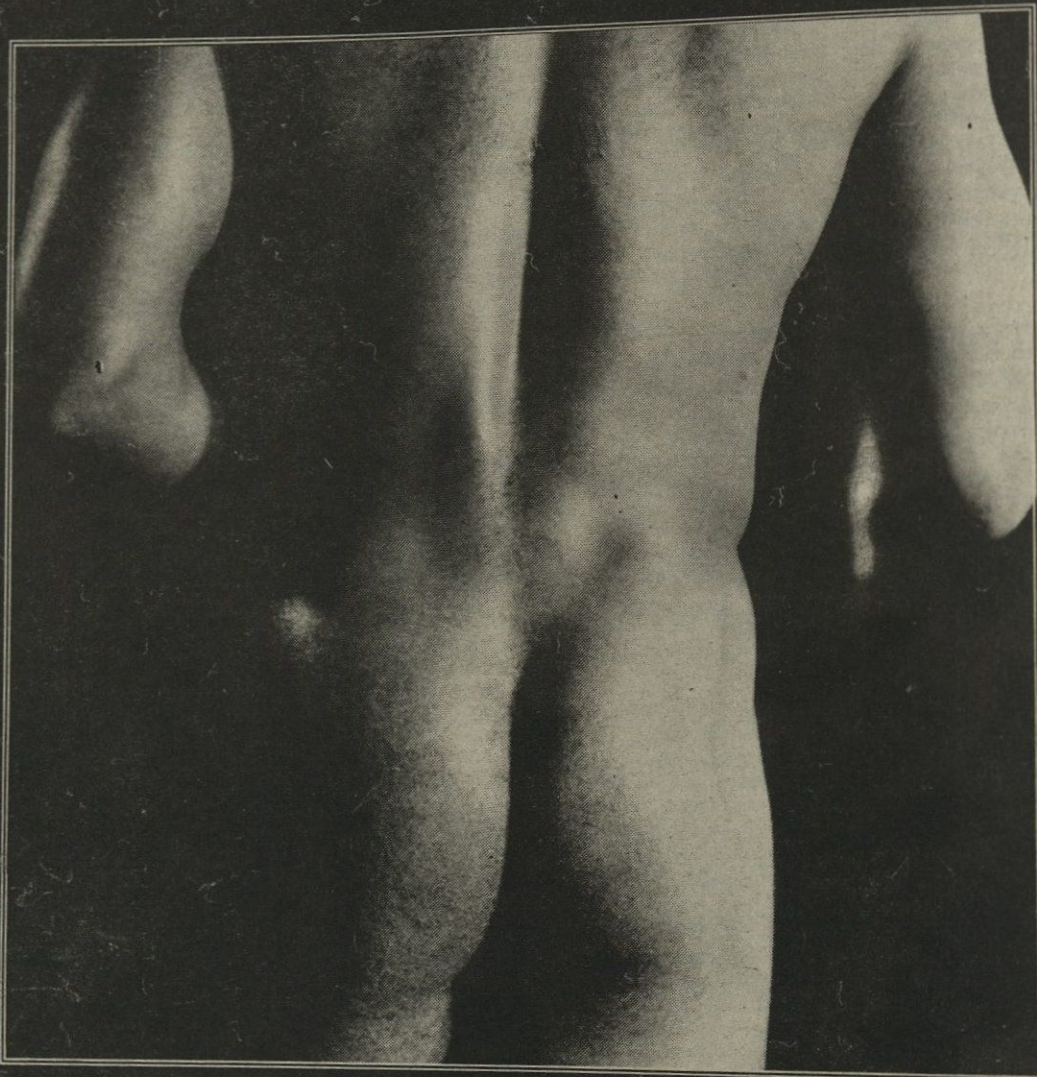


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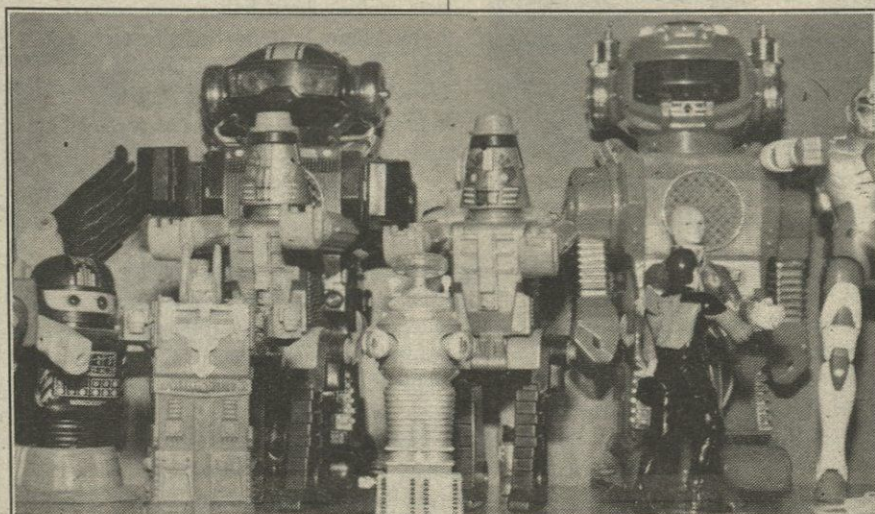
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then. As you probably know, it's pretty typical of people dying of AIDS to really start tightening their social circles. They start putting away other people, shutting up certain aspects of their life, to make things as simple and condensed as possible. And I think that was part of what was happening. Because of the relationship that went way back between us, I think that was an easy way for him to say goodbye. And there were no hard feelings. I don't have a problem with that, like I said, I think that's as it should have been.

SF: Do you remember any particularly funny times with Chuck?

think that I'll ever encounter anyone like him again. He was one in a million. That sounds cliché but it's certainly true when it comes to Chuck. And I do think he's one of the least appreciated artists this city has ever produced. I think a lot of that was because Chuck had a hard time dealing with people. I had a lot of good times and down times with him. He came to me when he got beat up by a lover. I went through those things, too. His peak moments in his art career were with me so it was hard for us just to have a professional relationship. And I'm glad that this is being documented, that there will be some sort of verbal history.



JM: Oh God, there are so many. He used to do this performance piece, he was involved with this band that performed at Jimmy's uptown, when he and I were hanging around together and sleeping together, and he was this character known as Som Lang. It was this really outrageous character that would just get up on stage and basically just scream and just be totally nuts and off the wall. He wore these outrageous outfits that we used to go shopping for together. And one of them was this sort of Dalmatian one-piece print, sort of puppy-dog suit that he would wear. One night he dyed his hair blue and had this black and white Dalmatian print outfit on, and went and did this performance piece at Jimmy's. It was about 3 or 4 a.m. and it was raining and we were leaving the club and heading back to the Quarter. And here's Chuck with this blue hair and this puppy-dog outfit standing on St. Charles Avenue waiting for the streetcar...and the dye is starting to run out of his hair and down his face so he's streaked in blue. Both of us heading, glassy-eyed, for the French Quarter. So it was quite a scene. And the people on the streetcar were like....What??!!

SF: What year was this? 1980?

JM: Yeah, probably 1980-81. He used to do this song that was a takeoff on the song "Brickhouse" and it was called "Brickpagoda" and he had rewritten the words to fit this Oriental theme and it was totally weird 'cause he wore salad bowls on his head and started wailing like Yoko Ono. It was quite strange.

I've never encountered anyone like Chuck. He was an intense person. I don't

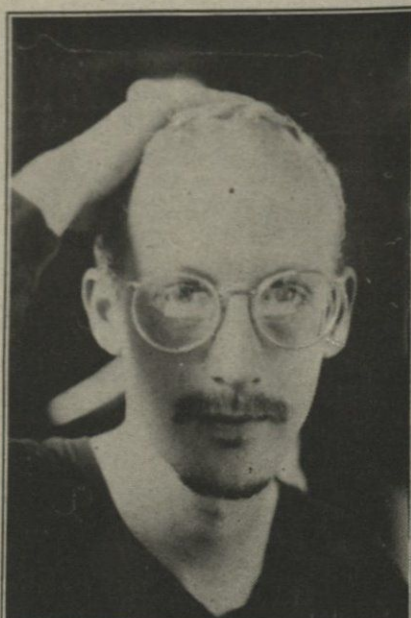
But you can look at his work and see that some strange person did these. Some totally off-the-wall, totally non-earth connected person had a hand in this work. His work tells his story.

MIRIAM ROSE

SF: What was your relationship with Chuck?

MR: I met Chuck back in 1990 when I was director of the Hall-Barnett Gallery here which featured emerging artists' work. It's interesting because my relationship goes full circle with Chuck because he would be having a show at Arthur Roger Gallery, where I am associate director. We're doing a solo exhibition featuring his last body of work, sixteen to eighteen paintings that have never been seen. The newer work, the work that will be at Arthur's, I consider it more narrative. And if you knew Chuck, you know that he was a great story-teller. These paintings become sort of an extension of that talent or quality that he had as a person. I would go to his house, always in the middle of the night, because he and I were night owls, and he would be in the middle of painting a painting but it wouldn't be finished, and he would sit down and verbalize the entire painting for me and then I would get to watch it come to life. It was really wonderful because he trusted me with it. I think that was a neat way for me to participate. I think it was pretty special.

He did this wonderful painting, "Birthday Party for Jesse Helms." One of the great things about Chuck was that he didn't paint to sell, he painted to paint. This



Chuck Crosby./Photograph courtesy Arthur Roger Gallery

painting is just about the most uncensored imagery you can imagine. It's like a dildo toss through a transsexual—it's absolutely hilarious. It's so twisted and bizarre and so pointedly obscene. Which he was—he was fierce and proud and strong and had such tremendous dignity in the lifestyle. He did these wonderful, wonderful paintings that were twisted, sort of kinky, sexual individuals doing unusual things, they were just hilarious and wonderful. He got a call from a client who asked him to do a vase for him. And he did. It was very homoerotic. Chuck absolutely adored it and so did most of his friends. Well, the guy comes to pick it up and takes it on home, no problem. Pays him for it, got a great deal on it. It was a beautifully done piece. The guy calls him back two weeks later and says, "Oh, ummm, I can't live with this piece, it's just too erotic. You're going to have to...could you paint out this one section?" And I mean, that was it, that was it for Chuck. He took the vase back; I think he just painted it black and sent it back to the guy and said, don't ever call me again. The vase was so beautiful, it was something I wish I would have bought.

SF: I didn't know that he did homoerotic art.

MR: His sketch books are really beautiful...the dildo toss was a repeated image. Men urinating, but it was almost like a fertility thing. I'd have to go back and look at the context, but urinating in gardens, it became fertility, like the flowers would bloom. So it's a very positive thing. Those aren't the kind of things he did to show publicly. Or to make a living on.

SF: And he knew about the show at Arthur's?

MR: He did and he was really excited about it. It's something that we had offered him about eight months ago. And he had held back, actually I think he sold very little work this year so that he would have a body of work available for sale in September. He did not paint much in the last month.

SF: Tell me about the crematory

box...[for a picture of which, please see the cover.]

MR: Well, he knew he was going to die. One of the beautiful things was that he wanted to live long enough to paint his own crematory box. He bought the box and had written on the inside what he intended to do to the outside. The four corners of the box represented the seasons, he wanted his different icons included on the box, he sketched it out and wrote on the inside, but didn't complete it. It was beautiful to witness the coming forward of his creative friends, who worked almost as if they had been inspired by him within the first forty-eight hours after he died. Almost as if he were working through them—they painted the box: Brian Borrello, Kathy Sizeler, and Darryl Schexnayder painted the box. The words around the bottom are Angela King's. I think that's the way he wanted it to be.

SF: What's the deal with Saturdays and Elsa Klensch?

MR: Chuck's home was a salon, he would entertain the masses. He had musicians and writers and artists and gallery people and fashion and glamour and performers. I would hear stories about other people and I would hear, oh, I've heard so much about you.

Now, Elsa Klensch is a fashion show [on CNN on Saturday mornings]. Chuck loved fashion. He was the only man I've ever known who wore the exact same shoe size as me. We shared clothes. He would borrowed clothes from me. One of my first memories of him was trading shoes and they fit—it was like this Cinderella thing. The shoe fit and it was like we were soul sisters or something. He had different shifts of friends: The morning shift, the evening shift, and the late shift. I was the late shift. The morning shift would come and watch Elsa and then we would come in, the late shift, and watch taped reruns. [Laughter] He was great! You see it in his paintings: If you look at the women in his paintings, you can see the jewelry and the clothes. He was great at painting transparency. He could paint transparent gowns, like lingerie and lace beautifully. It was just a detail in his work, but he mastered the detail.

It's important to me to acknowledge how privileged I feel to be having his show. It's important for me and for the gallery to be hosting this exhibition of his work. He had gained a lot of respect as an artist. This was just meant to be. I'm sorry he won't be there to share it with us, but he will be there spiritually. Δ

Steven Forster has been a contributor to Impact for nine-point-five years. His work has been exhibited at the Mario Villa Galleries, both here and in Chicago, and is in the permanent collection of the Historic New Orleans Collection.

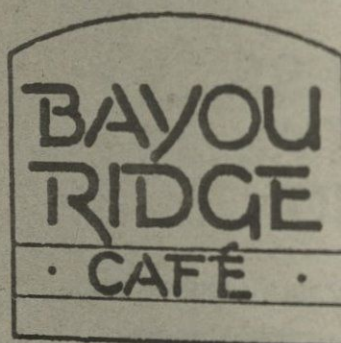
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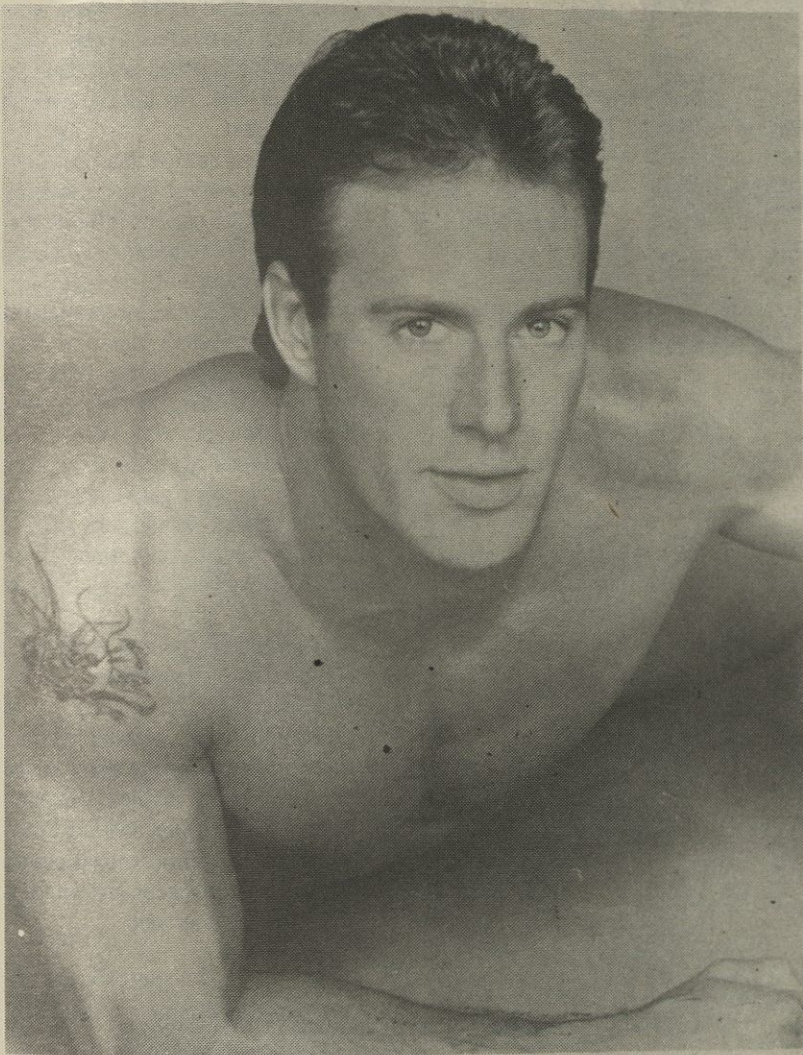
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OR JUST A LATE SNACK

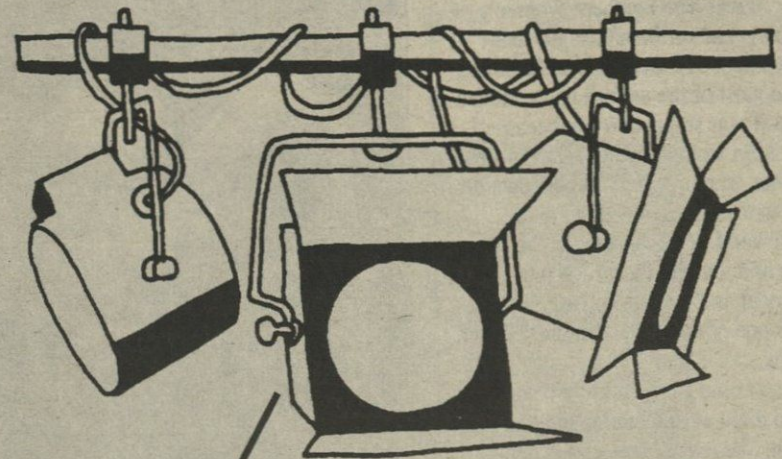


COMING ATTRACTIONS SHOW NIGHT

Wednesday, August 10,
10:30pm



TRENT REED

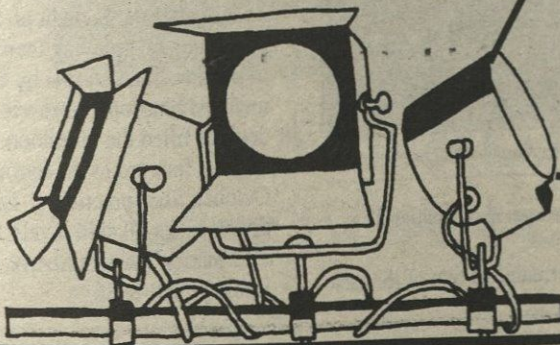


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**"Songs From Our
Favorite Movies"**

Performed by
OZ SHOW CAST

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Stephanie Williams
Ursuline Burgundy
M.C. Tommy Elias**



LESBIAN VOICES

BY MARILYN MCCONNELL

GOODBYE, JUDITH

The first time I saw Judith she was among a group of women playing football at the first women's festival I ever attended. It was The Southern Women's Music Festival in northern Georgia about seven years ago. The weather was beautiful, sunny, and most of the women had removed their shirts. I was stunned — not because I had never seen women without shirts — but these women were playing football, outside, in a field, in the sun, and without their shirts. Safe and free! That summer was the beginning of a journey for me... a journey to empowerment as a woman and as a lesbian. Judith was one of the positive influences on that journey.

The next time I saw Judith Wenger was the auction night at Celebration the very next month. She looked splendid in her tuxedo auctioning items, poised, quick-witted, working the crowd. I was impressed.

As I came to know her over the years, I became even more impressed. She was beautiful, articulate and, at times, an uppity, in-your-face dyke. I really liked that about her.

She's also a most unselfish person. Now don't get me wrong, because she would definitely accept credit for a job well done, but many of us in the lesbian and gay community never knew the announcements, invitations, brochures, posters and flyers that came gratis from her printing company.

When Mayor Bartholomy appointed The Mayor's Advisory Committee on Lesbian and Gay Issues, she encouraged me to volunteer, and I had my first opportunity to work with her. Although she resigned from the committee early on, she continued to work with me on the educational subcommittee.

Judith provided much-needed support at my first "out lesbian" endeavor. She was a member of the first speaker's panel in November 1989 at a UNO class, the last panel at the NOPD December 1993 as well as most of the other panels throughout the years.

Over the past seven years, my association with Judith, both socially and politically, has been important. She was a role model for me, even though she is younger than I. We didn't always agree on every issue, of course, but she never acquiesced because of another's opinion of her. She was and is a person of conviction, a woman with self confidence. She was —



After inspiring and serving the community for so long, Judith Wenger (pictured at right) and her partner of many years, Donna Barnett, will be moving on. photo by Marilyn McConnell

and continues to be — sensitive, compassionate, sometimes vulnerable, but always charged with a positive energy.

I'll miss her; in fact, many of us will.

The good news is that she'll be writing of her travels, and you can read all about her adventures in our own Impact in "Notes

Judith begins graduate studies next year. She will be working on her graduate degree in "Rhetoric and Composition" at Miami University in Cincinnati, Ohio. Someday, somewhere, I just know I'll see the name Judith Wenger on some fantastic article or book or T. V. credit. She's undoubtedly got the talent and the attitude.

I have to say it again... I'll miss her.

MOVIES BY AND ABOUT WOMEN

If you are interested in lesbian movies, movies made by lesbians, women's movies, and movies made by women, then I have a suggestion.

Zeitgeist Theater Experiments has been showing some of these great movies. Last night I saw "Warrior Marks" by Alice Walker and Pratibha Parmar. I was prepared to gather my defenses, grit my teeth, and painstakingly inform and educate myself regarding one of the most misogynistic and

films I've ever seen. Technically, it was beautiful. With regard to informational content, it communicates more than the viewer wants to know. Alice Walker, who as a child was deliberately shot in the eye by an abusive brother, does most of the narratives and interviews. Using the example and memory of her own mutilation and the concomitant tragedy of that experience, she empathizes with these female children's tragedy of genital mutilation. She also sees her blind eye as a "Warrior Mark" that can be used to empower the woman who was mutilated as an unprotected, helpless child.

She is helping empower many other brave women all over the world who are saying "no" to this misogynistic, abusive practice. The only bad news about the film is that it is gone. The last showing was the first of August.

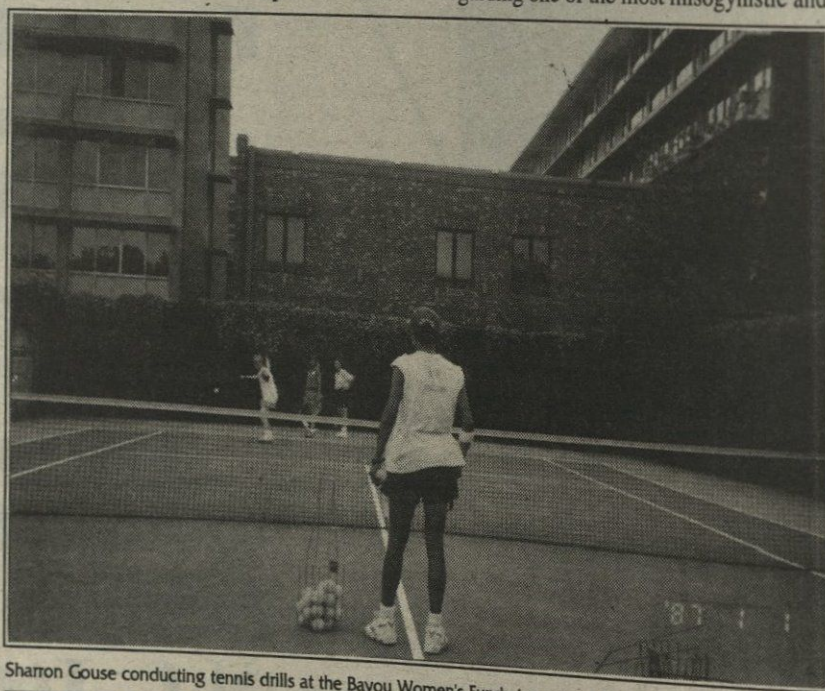
The good news is that Leni Riefenstahl and "Salmonberries" is coming. Leni Riefenstahl was one of the most gifted and controversial filmmakers of all times. She directed "Triumph of The Will," a propaganda epic, made at the request of Adolph Hitler. I can't wait to see this film. Yes, it's three hours long, but not to worry. At "Movie Pitchers," site of the new 40-person capacity showing room, one can order good food and better drink, then munch and guzzle right there in the cinema. I'm talking popcorn and coke AND — believe it or not — Abita Amber, fruit juices, sandwiches and pizza. It's a fun place.

Leni Riefenstahl is at 8PM August 5-7 and again from August 9-14. "Salmonberries" with K.D. Lang is August 5-11 (call for times). Movie Pitchers is located at 3941 Bienville near Carrollton. For information on Zeitgeist call 524-0064. The director, back from the San Francisco Gay and Lesbian Film Festival, assures me there will be lots of good lesbian films on the next schedule as well.

Be there!

TENNIS

The Bayou Women's Tennis Tournament Fund Raiser was a great success. It was held on Saturday July 23, thankfully the only day that week with no rain after the noon hour. Eating, swimming and playing tennis was the order of the day. Tennis drills by Gay Games gold medalist Sharron Gouse and games of doubles filled the afternoon. Everyone is looking forward to the tournament in October. Start practicing! There are divisions for all skill levels. For information, contact Sharon at 482-4807 or Debra at 368-8336. A



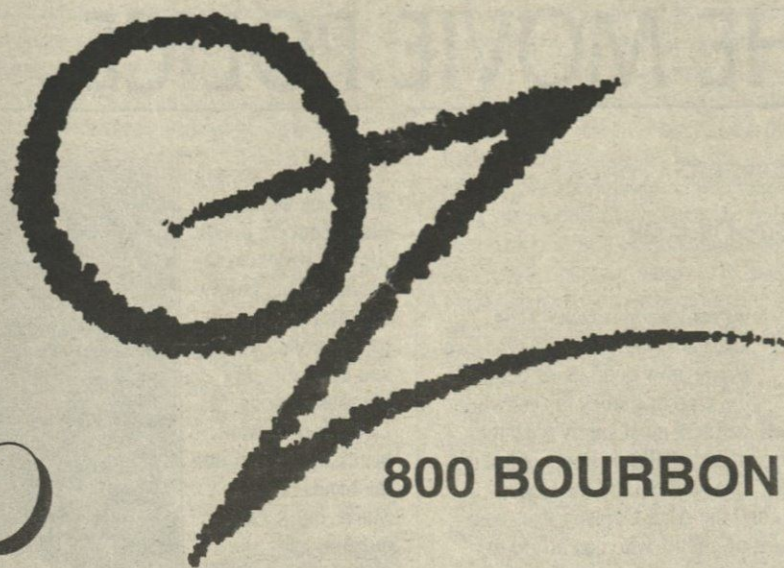
Sharron Gouse conducting tennis drills at the Bayou Women's Fundraiser. photo by Marilyn McConnell

From Abroad." She and her partner, Donna Barnett, will be cruising about the United States in their motor home "Madge" before

child-abusive situations about which I've ever heard.

I was instead treated to one of the best

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**SATURDAY, AUGUST 6, 10pm
WET DOWN CONTEST AFTER MIDNIGHT**

THE MOVIE POLICE

BY KAREL GAZDACKA

GRISHAM'S LAW

Lawyer-turned-novelist John Grisham (*The Firm*, *The Pelican Brief*) now commands per page the kind of money his erstwhile partners must surely wish they could command in billable hours. Alas, it's only the F. Lee Baileys and the Robert Shapiros and the Alan Dershowitzes who get the sort of clients who can afford to drop millions on their defense. Certainly eleven-year-old Mark Sway (newcomer Brad Renfro) would languish in Central Lock Up for more than a night (in *The*

I've been led to believe that once one picks up one of Mr. Grisham's books, 'you simply can't put it down.' I can't believe that this is because he can make the intricacies of tort law riveting to the layman. It must that Mr. Grisham tells good stories and tells them well. But you wouldn't know it from the screen version of The Client.

Client, the third of Grisham's "page-turners" to reach the screen in less than a twelvemonth) were he to offer the Simpson 'defense team' a crumpled dollar bill, his net assets, to take his case. Fortunately, scrappy attorney Reggie Love (scrappy Susan Sarandon), out of an abundance of maternal instinct, agrees to this fee—only in the movies. Little Mark and his even littler brother had chanced upon a mob lawyer (something of a pleonasm) who was attempting suicide-by-auto-exhaust, unassisted by even Dr. Kervorkian; when the kid takes it upon himself to remove the hose, the burly man grabs him, and in a drunken stupor, begins to rant about where the body of a murdered politico is buried (in N'Awlins, natch). Then he attempts to off himself again, this time with greater success.

Now the mob is after Mark to make sure he keeps his mouth shut; and an ambitious, Scripture-quoting US attorney (Tommy Lee Jones, ubiquitous these days)

wants the kid to spill the beans without much concern about the consequences to Mark and his family. It's attorney Love's job to protect the boy and his rights. For obvious reasons, Ms. Love doesn't want her charge to fall into the hands of the Mafia, but it's a bit puzzling why she feels that young Mark should not help the DA locate the politician's body. Is it simply because the DA is rather cavalier about the boy's safety? Apparently so, for when he agrees to put Mark and his kin in the Federal Witness Protection Program, everyone, including Mark, his mother and brother and Attorney Love, act as if a great victory had been won.

Though I've never read any of Grisham's best-sellers—I don't go to the beach and I don't ride the bus and I do crossword puzzles before falling asleep in the arms of Morpheus—I've been led to believe that once you pick up one of his books, "you simply can't put it down." I feel safe assuming it's not because Mr. Grisham possesses the descriptive prowess

of Proust or the expository power of Melville; nor can I believe that the author can present the intricacies of tort law to the layman so as to make them positively riveting. It must be that Mr. Grisham tells good stories and tells them well. But you wouldn't know it from the screen adaptation

of *The Client*. While the setting up of the boy's dilemma is reasonably entertaining, *The Client* then goes on and on about little more than when will the kid start to talk.

To flesh out the characters, director Joel Schumacher (*Falling Down*, *Flatliners*, *The Lost Boys*) will practically stop the



Auld Lang Syne! k.d. lang as an eskimo named Kotzebue (vertical) with Rosel Zech (horizontal) as Roswitha, an East German refugee and engineer, in a seduction scene from Percy Adlon's *Salmonberries*, to be shown at Movie Pitchers from August 5 through 11 (general admission \$5, \$3.50 for Zeitgeist and NO Film Society members). Percy Adlon is an interesting and original director—particularly of actress-driven vehicles like *Celeste*, *Bagdad Cafe*, and *The Five Last Days*, as well as *Sugarbaby*, certainly his best film. Ms. lang needs no introduction, but Ms. Zech—who was splendid in the title role of the drug-addicted Third Reich film star fallen on evil days in Fassbinder's *Veronika Voss*—is not often seen much these days. And lang sings a tune called "Barefoot"—though we assume it is not the Robert Parker hit of several decades ago.

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movie while Reggie reveals that she once had a bad alcohol and drug problem or Little Mark's mother recites her travails as a poor single parent with two young children just trying to earn a living. At these moments, I found myself asking, Why are they telling me all this? None of it seems to have anything much to do with the movie; it's simply there on background. I was also somewhat surprised at how little action, either in court or out, is forthcoming in what is, after all, a 'suspense thriller.' While *The Client* doesn't just sit there like its dreary predecessor *The Pelican Brief*, it feels awfully tired. What energy it has in large measure derives from Sarandon's feisty turn

as the kid's protector and Tommy Lee Jones' riff on his performance as a detective in last year's *The Fugitive*, a vast improvement on Julia Roberts and Denzel Washington.

It's really time for Hollywood to take a breather from cranking out movie versions of Mr. Grisham's novels, but—alas—Ron Howard is already busy filming next summer's installment.

Compared to the OJ Simpson case, *The Client* is prettily ho-hum stuff. I admit to being hooked on the TV coverage, passing up screenings of *Wyatt Earp* and *City Slickers II* and *True Lies* to

catch up on the day's developments. I also find the breast-beating about the media coverage a lot of hooey. Throughout the course of history (billowing smoke clouds here), notorious crimes have occasioned a circus atmosphere; instead of crowds flowing into the streets or to places of execution, they gather round TV sets in bars and health clubs. What really gets in my craw is the spectacle of public officials decrying those out to make a buck "off the misfortunes of others." (Isn't that what public officials do by definition?) Case in point: The other night I saw Willie Brown, Speaker of the California House of Representatives, get on his soapbox and call

for legislation to make it a crime for a witness to tell his or her story to the press. (Jury members are another question.) Specifically, he was incensed by the poor schmoe who had been working in the cutlery store where OJ bought a knife and had sold to the Enquirer his story AFTER he had given testimony to the Grand Jury. God knows how many years this guy has been working as a clerk behind a counter for little more than minimum wage, and here was a chance to do little more than repeat what he said ON THE RECORD for something like \$14,000, which he would have to share with two other store employees. What I want to know is why Mr. Brown (famous for being a snappy dresser) isn't upset by the outrageous fees that so-called "experts" for the defense are paid to make a defendant's story look good. Why isn't he crying out to put an end to high fees for expert witnesses, PEOPLE PAID TO GIVE TESTIMONY FAVORABLE TO THE PAYER? Doesn't he find the spectacle of 'experts-for-hire' unsavory? I guess not. But some wage slave who gets the chance to make a few extra bucks fills Mr. Brown with self-righteous disgust. As you can plainly see, no movie—certainly not *The Client*—has got me going like the Simpson case. Δ

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August 21 *Tales of the City*

August 28 *Three of Hearts*

Zeitgeist Theatre Experiments

at Movie Pitchers,
3941 Bienville

Friday- Sunday,

August 5-7 &

Tuesday-Sunday,

August 9-14

*The Wonderful Horrible Life
of Leni Riefenstahl*

Friday-Thursday,

August 5-11

Salmonberries

(Percy Adlon)

Information at 524-0064

LIFE ON THE WICKED STAGE

BY ED REAL

WOULDN'T IT BE LOVERLY?

Even critics get vacations, so I am unable to comment on some of the last few shows of the 1993-94 theatre season which opened just prior to this edition. Of course, there's not a single title among them that I haven't reviewed previously—*The King and I*, *King Lear*, and *Talley's Folly* aren't exactly unknown properties around here. Though I missed these presentations, I was able to attend the Second Annual Artists Against AIDS benefit at Margaritaville, an event that lived up to its name: An Evening of Razzle-Dazzle.

The all-star concert was a gala mix of scenes from recent local productions, and

The Artists Against AIDS benefit, with its panoply of local talent, provided food for thought about the theatrical situation in New Orleans: In any reasonable community, producers would be seeking vehicles for a performer like Heidi Jensen, while the Bayou Theatre, which presented first-class plays and rose above the standards and onus of the typical dinner theatre, is no more, and La Maison des Beaux Arts once performed a vital function, bringing major contemporary works, but now produces only local original material of the sort that eventually shut down the theatre wing of the C.A.C.

solo turns by familiar New Orleans stars. Obviously, it's inappropriate to offer a true critical review of an event at which the participants are donating their talents in the service of a worthy cause. But, in addition to the party atmosphere and entertainment, the evening did offer food for thought about

the local theatrical situation.

Certainly the planners of the event knew their audience. How better to begin than with a direct pitch to our cultural level—the three strippers' routine from *Gypsy* (done here by the cast of the recent Starcastle production). If the crude appeal of "Bump It With A Trumpet" didn't get a rise from the viewers, the following act was sure to; Becky Allen didn't exactly clean things up with her rendition of "Laundry Man," the ribald mock blues by Freddie Palmisano and Ricky Graham.

Next came Cynthia Owen, the queen of Rivertown Rep (I'm sure there are other claimants to the title of Queen of Kenner). Owen, who should work in Orleans Parish more often, belted out "Say Yes" from Kander and Ebb's *70 Girls 70*. Though she is far too young to star in that show, someone ought to consider putting her into the same composers' *Flora the Red Menace*.

The ensuing act consisted of Bob Pavlovich (a talented singing actor who works consistently on local stages) and Diane Lala, a triple-threat performer whose singing, dancing, and comedy grace our theatres only in the summer. Wouldn't it be lovely if she could make a living here? The duo performed a number from the witty, intelligent Cy Coleman-David Zippel show *City of Angels*—something we'll probably never see on a local stage.

Butch Benit followed with a stand-up comedy bit. Last season, he won raves for a performance at the Bayou in *I Hate Hamlet*. That admirable institution, which often rose above the standards of typical dinner theatres by presenting first-class plays is sadly no longer with us.

A surprisingly serious departure from the froth was next on the menu. Carol Sutton reprised her "Angel Mama" from *Native Tongues*, and it is a tribute to the brilliance of her performance and to the quality of Sheila Bosworth's writing that the piece played so movingly in this setting. The dramatic effect was augmented when the lights faded on Ms. Sutton and rose across the stage on the knock-out glamour of Heidi Jensen, who launched into an unaccompanied "Amazing Grace" that was absolutely soul-stirring. Jensen proved herself a remarkable musical theatre performer in *Where the Girls Were* and *Guys and Dolls*. In any reasonable theatrical community, producers would be seeking vehicles for her. Hasn't the thought of Heidi in *Song of Singapore* or *Tell Me on a Sunday* crossed any producer's mind?

We were also treated to a reprise of *In Trousers*, the first segment of the *Falsetto* trilogy. *Trousers* was one of the better efforts of La Maison des Beaux Arts. That St. Charles Avenue theatre once performed a vital function, bringing us major contemporary works by Lanford Wilson,

Christopher Durang, Terrence McNally and others in addition to this Finn-Lapine musical. Now La Maison produces only local original material of the sort that finally shut down the theatre wing of the CAC.

Speaking of the CAC—in its glory days, one of its big hits was "A' My Name Is Alice." The "All Girl Band" from that show was here performed by the cast of the current hit production at the Starcastle, and the excitement generated by the five ladies suggests it may be time to dust off our passports and trek across the river.

Artists Against AIDS reminded us that the city is blessed with a huge talent pool capable of creating any kind of theatrical wonder. Unhappily, it also reminded us that few of our producing organizations have the imagination or will to employ those talents in exciting projects. Δ

August 5: A.W. Kinglake, 1809; Ilya Repin, 1844; Guy de Maupassant, 1850; Naum Gabo, 1890; Valentine Tessier, 1892; Luis Russell, 1902; Robert Taylor, 1911; George Tooker, 1920; John Saxon, 1935

August 6: Fenelon, 1651; Marquis de Vauvenargues, 1715; Alfred Lord Tennyson, 1809; Paul Claudel, 1868; Dutch Schultz, 1902; Lucille Ball, 1911.

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Thursday, August 4.
Boots v. Hamburger Helpers;
Angles v. Pub
Tuesday, August 9
Angles v. Oz;
Hamburger Helpers v. Big Daddy's
Wednesday, August 10
Oz v. Boots; Equalizers v. Pub
Thursday, August 11
Boots v. Pub;
Phoenix v. Big Daddy's
Tuesday, August 16
Big Daddy's v. Equalizers;
Angles v. Hamburger Helpers
Wednesday, August 17
Pub v. Phoenix;
Hamburger Helpers v. Oz

Open Meeting of the
William J. Fanning Foundation
Friday, August 5
at St. Vincent's
Community Center,
3024 Burgundy
7 PM

LEGAL (Louisiana Electorate of
Lesbians & Gays)
fundraising cocktail
and dinner buffet
honoring Marc Wolinsky,
attorney for
Midshipman Joseph Steffan
Thursday, August 4 at 8 pm
at 16 Richmond Place
Information at 525-7117

Men Of Color Fundraiser
Friday, August 5 at Wolfendale's
Call the bar for information

Healing Service
sponsored by the
Episcopal Archdiocese
of the Louisiana HIV/AIDS
Commission at
St. Anna's Episcopal Church,
1313 Esplanade Avenue
Sunday, August 7
Celebrant is
Rt. Rev. James Brown,
Bishop of the Diocese of Louisiana

Movies at
The Community Center
Sunday evenings at 6 PM
Admission Free
August 7 The Krays
August 14 JFK
(in commemoration of the 20th
anniversary of Clay Shaw's death)

August 21 Tales of the City
August 28 Three of Hearts

Support Groups for When One
Spouse/Parent is Gay
& their children at
The Divorce Center
620 North Carrollton Avenue
3rd Tuesday 6 PM
Gay Spouse Group
4th Tuesday 6 PM
Kids' Group &
Straight Spouse Group
Information at 488-9924
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Zeitgeist Theatre Experiments
at Movie Pitchers, 3941 Bienville
Friday- Sunday, August 5-7 &
Tuesday-Sunday, August 9-14
The Wonderful Horrible Life of
Leni Riefenstahl
Friday-Thursday, August 5-11
Salmonberries (Percy Adlon)
Information at 524-0064

Summer Safari
a benefit fundraiser for the
Lesbian & Gay
Community Center
August 19 at Rubyfruit Jungle
Information at 522-1103

Depression Glass Show & Sale
St. Bernard Cultural Center
Saturday, August 13 &
Sunday, August 14
\$3 admission good both days
Information at 392-6258

Prime Timers,
a social activities organization
for gay and bisexual men of
mature age,
announces the formation of its
New Orleans chapter.
First planning meeting:
Friday, September 9 at 7:30 PM
Metropolitan Community Church,
St. Roch at Marais
Information at 525-3299

Satires, Desires & Excesses
Songs of the 13th Century
Carmina Burana
A fund-raising concert for the
New Orleans PWA Coalition
presented by
the New Orleans
Musica da Camera
Sunday, September 11 at 4 PM
at the First Unitarian Church,
5212 S. Claiborne Avenue
Information at 944-3663
(Please send to us at Impact your
announcements, list of events, etc.)

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PRESSWATCH

BY JON NEWLIN

Former chain-smoker, truculent drug-Tsar, and contentious US Secretary of Education—as well as conservative didact for the unwashed—William Bennett (one of several favorites in a Madame Tussaud's-like line-up of 1996 Republican "hopefuls") unburdens himself of his feelings about queers in his best-selling *The Book of Virtues*. Bennett, whose self-image is that of a wit of Swiftian savagery and a cultural elitist/caretaker-of-orthodoxy in the T.S. Eliot grand manner—hey, we said 'self-image'—is a bit dodgy, even dim, with his words: "One should be tolerant and respectful of homosexuals" [help them cross the street? get up when they come into the room? push their chairs in at the dinner table? offer them one's seat on the bus?] "But that doesn't mean one has to validate a lifestyle [yawwn—that word! Was it Kate Clinton who said that there may be hairstyles, but there was no such of a thing as lifestyles?], sexual activity, or a way of coupling. [!!] I'm for leaving people alone, but I'm not for validating [as in shop-and-park?], I'm not for homosexual adoption." Bennett has long played kneesies with the Christian Right, which is unfortunate for such an intelligent gentleman, but we suppose he needs to do that if he ever aspires to be more than a mere 'hopeful.' He adds that he is "more convinced that lesbian relationships more closely resemble traditional male-female relationships than homosexual relationships." (Meaning either that, one, he's bought that old propaganda about lesbians mating for life, or two, there's some sort of psychic connection in his mind since hetero porn films always include gratuitous 'lesbian' action; we

suspect the latter despite Bennett's moral posturing.)

Speaking of Republicans who are all for leaving people alone, former Arizona Senator Barry Goldwater, one of the pillars of the erstwhile form of conservatism (and a Presidential hopeful himself three decades ago), fired off a piece to the *Washington Post* (July 13 edition) in favor of Congressional legislation prohibiting employment discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation: "Congress is waking up to a reality already recognized by a host of Fortune 500 companies, including AT&T, Marriott, and General Motors. These businesses have adopted policies prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation because they realize that their employees are their most important asset....Gays and lesbians are a part of every American family....It's time America realized there was no gay exemption in the right to 'life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness' in the Declaration of Independence. Job discrimination against gays—or anybody else—is contrary to each of these founding principles. Some will try to paint this as a liberal or religious issue. I am a conservative Republican, but I believe in democracy and the separation of church and state. The conservative movement is founded on the simple tenet that people have the right to live life as they please, as long as they don't hurt anyone else in the process. No one has ever shown me how being gay or lesbian harms anyone else....I am proud that the Republican Party has always stood for individual rights and liberties. The positive role of limited



government has always been the defense of these fundamental principles....The radical right has nearly ruined our party. Its members do not care enough about the Constitution, and they are the ones making all the noise....Anybody who cares about real moral values understands that this isn't about getting special rights—it's about protecting basic rights.

"It's not going to be easy getting Congress to provide job protection for gays. I know that firsthand. The right wing will rant and rave that the sky is falling. They've said that before [indeed, Senator Goldwater was among those saying it at one point decades ago—though not about queers]—and we're still here. Constitutional conservatives know that doing the right thing takes guts and foresight, but that's why we're elected, to make tough decisions that stand the test of time. My former colleagues have a chance to stand with civil rights leaders, the business community and the 74 percent of Americans who polls show favor protecting gays and lesbians from job discrimination [but possibly not from much else]. With their vote they can help strengthen the American work ethic and support the principles of the Constitution." An interesting screed, but

will it change any minds? It's especially poignant to hear Senator Goldwater go on about Congress' job description—"to make tough decisions that stand the test of time." This seems to be the last thing on Congress' collective mind these days, when minds and the faculty of independent thought, period (and not just in Congress) have instead been supplanted by ideological notions that would have seemed Procrustean to the Jacobins. The note Senator Goldwater strikes is one of, unfortunately, quaint Americana—of trusty shootin'-irons and sodbusters and Conestoga wagons in a circle against the Indians, five-mile-walks in the snow to the one-room schoolhouse—not the shark tank of Capitol Hill today.

Incidentally, some of the best and most succinct words we've seen recently on the subject of equal employment opportunities for queers were in Patricia Highsmith's 1983 Afterword to her famous, pseudonymous lesbian romance, *The Price Of Salt*, first published in 1952 (and pure Susan Hayward, my dear!). In the novel, the women are smart and ambitious and independent, dress well, smoke a good bit and drink a great many cocktails in ritzy bars, gad about the country in sleek roadsters, are followed by

There is no truth to anyone's claim to be beyond ideology. Kant's appeal, in The Critique of Judgment, to the faculty of taste as "a sense common to all mankind" was unwise, and regrettably it has been used by those who want to sustain the notion that each of us is spiritually the same, at a level of being far deeper than that of our differences. It would be more reasonable to claim that equality, universality, and disinterestedness are sentiments to be imagined, not states of being or gifts of God to be enjoyed.—The critic and essayist Denis Donoghue, in "Doing Things With Words," Times Literary Supplement, July 15.

a detective who plants Dictaphones in the hotel rooms as the lovers wander from one posh Western resort to another...Highsmith talks in her Afterword about the effect the book had on lonely, alienated small-town queers and dykes, about the poignant letters she received, and how dated the novel must seem in the Swinging Eighties. But about jobs: "...the fact of being a homosexual can still cost a person his or her job, depending more on the job than on the person's behavior or character. Very perverse, since a happy person with a happy personal life is bound to do a better job than one without, whatever the job is."

The data of the past may not be all that happy for the liberationist movements of our time. Why else would those movements come into being? But what the sources record is, for better or for worse, what the sources record. A good part of what they record, certainly, is made up of systematic and successful repressions, but tinkering with the moral balance of the past is a disservice to the study of history and to the reform of society. The past is dead. We cannot change it. What we can change is the future; but the way to a better future requires an unsentimental and accurate understanding of what happened in the past, and why.—Brent Shaw, in a lengthy (and unfavorable) review of John Boswell's *Same-Sex Unions in Premodern Europe*, in the *New Republic*, July 18 issue.

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Photo: Bryce Lankford

One of the dumbest things we've read of late is a disparaging piece on the gay English poet Thom Gunn by A. Alvarez in *The New Yorker* (August 1 issue); Mr. Alvarez chastises the poet for applying rigid formal forms to messy forms of experience—hustlers and drug pushers and LSD trips and orgies: "He has a poem on surfers that might have been written by Lovelace," sniffs Alvarez. What really seems to burn his ass is that Gunn, once he got to San Francisco and immersed himself in a culture in which he felt at home and was no longer miserable. "Happiness, for the past two centuries, has not been a great inspirer of poetry..." says Alvarez, and then takes Gunn to task for not being a wild man. Well, actually this is nonsense—although poets generally seem exempt from Flaubert's wise dictum that artists should be conservative in their lives so as to be radical in their art. The idea of the Suffering Poet is a great, spurious Romantic creation—and it is easy to think of all those who fit that particular pair of shoes, from Cowper and John Clare and Thomas Gray, through Hölderlin and Keats, to Swinburne or Emily Dickinson or Péguy, to Gunn's contemporary, Philip Larkin, who swilled in the miserable and mediocre. But this doesn't seem to be a hard and fast rule by any means. Browning and Cavafy, Marianne Moore and Paul Valéry, Auden and Apollinaire, James Merrill and Edith Sitwell don't seem to have been particularly agonized creatures, for instance.

Alvarez feels that only AIDS and its attendant horrors had a transforming, reactive power over Gunn's formalism—"suddenly the technical skills he had labored over for so long came into their own." Somehow, this is like saying that civil war in Rwanda finally gave some of those farmers a chance to go on vacation and see the rest of the world. What's wrong with a bit of "formal elegance" in a world increasingly bereft of it? Δ

LETTERS

To the Editor:

It is unfortunate that Frank Aqueno choose to fire off a letter to the Editor about NO/AIDS HIV-counseling and testing a program without first making an attempt to contact us and check his facts. It's true that several months ago, Mr. Aqueno expressed concerns about the time delay in obtaining HIV test results. Unfortunately the steps we took to address those concerns were ignored or unknown to Mr. Aqueno. He makes it appear that we leave clients dangling for two or more weeks simply because NO/AIDS has an outmoded system of scheduling appointments. The reality, of course, is much different.

We are funded by the Federal government and, like most counseling and testing sites in the state, we must take out blood to the state lab for testing. It takes an average of nine days from the day a person is tested to the day the results come back from the lab. It can take up to fourteen days. Short of building our own lab out back (which won't happen in this century) there is nothing NO/AIDS can do to shorten the amount of time. (In fairness to the lab, they do a tremendous number of tests, not just HIV.) Someone from NO/AIDS goes to the lab and picks up the results, to avoid the mail delay, and the results are always posted the day they are received.

NO/AIDS has 192 possible appointments every week. Forty-eight of those now reserved for post-test counseling sessions only. This means that currently, NO ONE WAITS MORE THAN A FEW DAYS TO GET AN APPOINTMENT. OFTEN TIMES APPOINTMENTS ARE AVAILABLE THAT SAME DAY. We offer counseling and testing every day except Fridays and Sundays, usually in the evening or Saturday morning, but weekday appointments are also available. We now offer testing at five different locations, including a site in Metairie, two in the Uptown area, one in the French Quarter, in addition to our offices. We also offer special days of drop-in testing, the next one will be in the fall. One paid staff person oversees this program, and that position is only funded half-time.

In 1991, 1,669 people were tested at NO/AIDS. In 1993, that number was 2,896. Over that same period, funding for the program was cut.

Commercial labs can get results much faster. They just charge \$80 and up to do it. In the state of Louisiana, labs are required to report the names of anyone testing HIV+. NO/AIDS is an anonymous site and does not report names, only demographics. Our testing is free. For many people, cost and anonymity are extremely important considerations.

We have changed the program, expanded sites and hours, added extra result-only time slots, recruited and trained more volunteers, while at the same time, making the training for volunteer counselors more rigorous. Every

client who comes in is offered a form on which to anonymously evaluate the program. Is there more we can do? Of course there is. We are committed to not let the boundaries of time and money become limits, but instead challenges. It does take time and hard work to overcome these challenges.

Mr. Aqueno offers no suggestions, merely criticism. He comes across as a person more interested in armchair activism than as someone who is willing to do the work and take the time to really help people. Improving and expanding our counseling and testing will not come from diatribes to newspaper editors, instead, it will come from hard work and the commitment of time from the volunteers who are the core of the program. Without them, we would not have been able to double the number of people we can see from 1991 to 1993. We would not be able to offer over forty hours of counseling and testing every week—not paperwork, not keeping statistics—but spending time with people.

And, finally, from the evaluations sheets, some comments from others who have used our services: "Very helpful and reassuring." "She really seems like she cares for people and giving so much information as she can." "I have known much about HIV for over a year, but the session was able to help me over the fear I had about being tested." "Thank you for providing this service and this information!" "I'm very impressed with the entire establishment of NO/AIDS Task Force! Keep up the good work and thank you!" "He is a very warm human being with whom it has been a pleasure to perform this test. Thank you very much." "Good service to the community." "Y'all ought to be sainted for the work you are doing." "I think more people should do this. Thank you." "Thank God for programs like this and people like you that care about others." "Great, and free, too!" "Excellent. Appreciate the service." "Very knowledgeable, warm, sensitive, supportive." "Both counselors were very knowledgeable and talked in a way that put me at ease. It was a stressless experience." "A great sense of gratitude (whatever the results). I would like to help. Thank each of you." "Keep caring. God Bless." "I was treated with dignity and respect. Everyone was extremely courteous and kind." "Thank God for you guys." "Overall, great program. I learned a lot." "Learned even more about how I can protect myself, but more importantly others. Thanks!" "Wonderful job you are doing. God bless you and your team—Long, happy to you all." "I found everyone here to be helpful, considerate, and they should all be commended."

Sincerely,

Michael Kaiser, MD
Executive Director/
Medical Director
New Orleans AIDS Task Force

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OBITUARIES

In Memory Of
Ian Colcannon
1950 - 3 May 1994

Ian lived in New York and North Carolina before moving to New Orleans. He was employed as a waiter at Sbis's Cafe for more than five years. He returned to Pennsylvania to his mother's home on April 3; he died from Hiv complications and oversaw the planting of a garden where his ashes were sprinkled.

Surviving are his mother, Pauline George (19056 Stony Hill Road, Willow Hill PA 17271; telephone 717-349-2284), sisters Rebecca Green, Catherine Ford, Linda Clark, and a brother, Charles Shoop. Contributions in memory to the New Orleans AIDS Task Force; the family will be making a patch for the NAMES Project AIDS Quilt and would like to have--at the address or telephone number above--any photos taken over the years or any reminiscences from friends.Δ

Dorr Legg
1905 - 26 July 1994

Dorr Legg, one of the early leaders of the gay and lesbian movement, died of natural causes at his home in Los Angeles this week at the age of 89.

Legg is known most of all for his participation in the forming of the national gay and lesbian magazine called *One*. For a time, the US Postal Service refused to mail this "homosexual literature," so the case eventually went to the US Supreme Court, which ruled that it was, indeed, legal to mail this type of information. The organization *One, Inc.* is still active, though the magazine is no longer in existence.

Mr. Legg is succeeded by his lover of 37 years, Mr. John Nojima, who said "He worked here in the office (of *One, Inc.*) up until the day he died."

There will be a memorial service at *One, Inc.* at 2 pm on August 27, 1994.Δ

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