

T H E S A N F R A N C I S C O

VOL. 11 NO. 2, NOVEMBER 1989

BAY TIMES

THE GAY/LESBIAN NEWSPAPER AND CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR THE BAY AREA

YES ON

Sometimes Being
Fair Doesn't Cost
You Anything

COMING UP!

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**Sometimes Being
Fair Doesn't Cost
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COMING UP!

IS THIS YOUR PRIORITY?

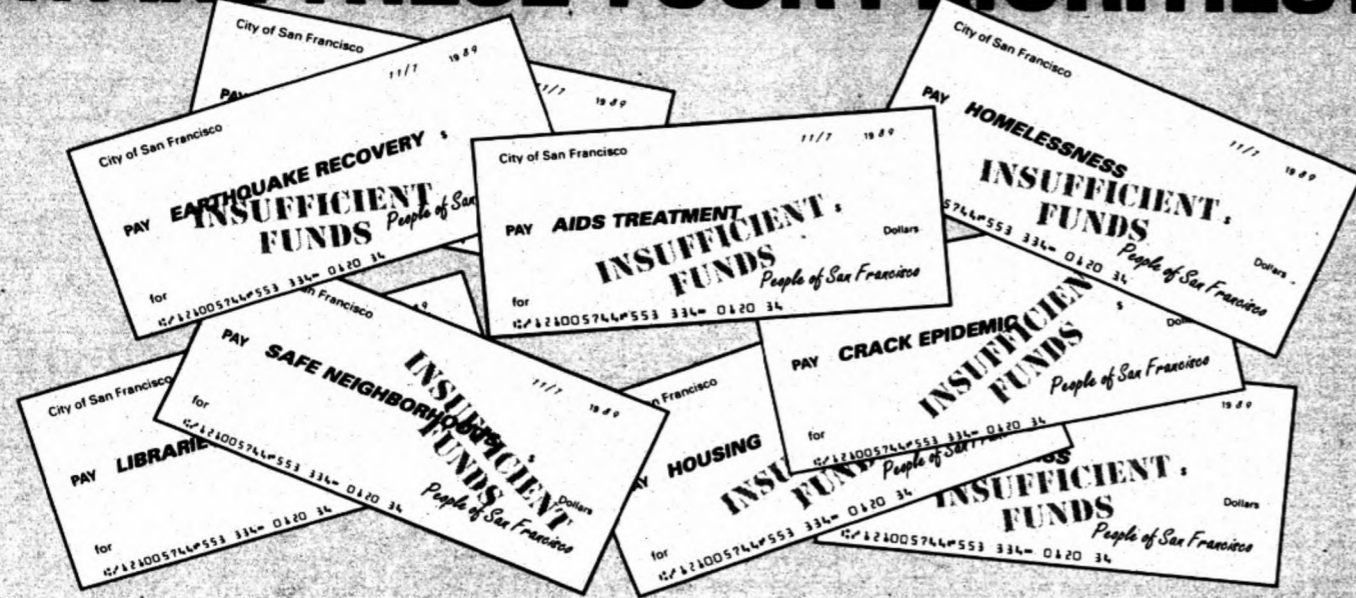
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I urge you to vote **No on Proposition K** on the November 7th ballot. This Charter Amendment will create conflict and chaos in our law enforcement community at a time when we need a cohesive and united effort to deal with the street violence and safety within our city. We must stop this indirect assault on the Office of Civilian Complaints and assure no law enforcement officer of this city is exempt from answering to it. We must make sure our safety is not compromised for the benefit of a few. **We must defeat Proposition K.**

*Harry Britt, President
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Photo by Marc Geller

The California Coalition For Traditional Values: View from a Dyke

"I never carry money, I wear comfortable shoes, and I pin my driver's license to my pocket," she said.

"Right," I replied, "And I have to get someone to feed my cats. Do you have children?"

"My sister takes care of them. I write phone numbers on my hand."

"And be careful not to wash your hands, right?"

"Right!" We laughed.

We might have been any two ordinary movement women talking of a demonstration where we risked arrest. In fact, we were a radical lesbian-feminist and one of Southern California's members of Operation Rescue, the group that attempts to close abortion clinics. We sat in a room filled with folks who shared her perspective: fervent fundamentalist Right-to-Life-ers whose weekend agenda was Homosexuality—its nature, the proper pathway to cure for its victims, its effect on public policy, and its threat not only to Normal Families but to the survival of the human species.

BY SALLY MILLER GEARHART

The California Coalition for Traditional Values held its symposium on October 6-7, 1989 at the Pan Pacific Hotel in Anaheim. It had been forced to move its location twice within a week because of the threats by Militant Homosexuals. And in the Pan Pacific the putrid smell in the elevator shaft was attributed to the stink bomb planted the previous evening by those same Militant Homosexuals.

I registered for the conference because I'm interested in the Conservative Right and because I wanted to talk as an open lesbian with individuals who hold my lifestyle in contempt. Until the night before the conference I expected to be the only outsider there. To my delight, I discovered, among the 55 people gathered on the first day, 13 other lesbians; two gay men; and two Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays.

About one-third of the symposium was de-

voted to helping the Homosexual to live a Normal Life. (The word "gay" was seldom used because, 'twas said, that word has been corrupted by homosexuals. Even lesbians refuse to use "gay" because it is too effeminate. They prefer to take their identity from the militaristic culture of the island of Lesbos.) Concerns about public policy constituted the other two-thirds of the agenda.

As foundation for both these areas, speakers from the Claremont Institute for the Study of Statesmanship and Political Policy (a think-tank for the Right) explored the relationship of Homosexuality to Natural Law: male and female organs are meant for each other and are thus the ground and purpose of human life; moral relativism—If It Feels Good, Do It—breeds promiscuity, lack of responsibility, and the disintegration of the Natural Unit, the heterosexual family. They expressed distress at the De-Gendering of the Marital Contract, i.e. Domestic Partner legislation, distress that consisted mainly of *reductio ad absurdum* reasoning ("Since the average homosexual has as many as 500 sexual partners how many others can we expect to be included in his health benefits?") and random edifying philosophical remarks ("I believe homosexuals have a longing for death because they eat feces in which there is, of course, no nourishment").

I had mixed emotions as I listened to those who, with their reparative therapy, would heal me of my affliction. Firmly based on questionable, contradictory, and condescending assumptions about the causes of homosexuality, their remarks nevertheless represented a fervent plea for good solid family therapy that few of us could quarrel with.

Joe Dallas, Director of the New Creations Counseling Service, Rick Petronella of the Alpha Counseling Center, and Steve Arterburn, Director of the Western New Life Treatment Centers and author of *How Will I Tell*

My Mother?, all assume homosexuality to be a "predisposition" that is aggravated by the child's unsatisfactory relationship with the same-sex parent or caretaker, thus rendering her/him incapable of relating to either sex as a whole person. She/he is thus driven to find the love she/he lacks among same-sex partners, promiscuously wandering from one to another in the Vain Hope of Filling the Emptiness Within.

Under a large umbrella of Compassion For The Homosexual there followed from these assumptions a compelling mixture of theory and methodologies drawn (as best I could tell) from object-relations therapy, co-counseling, twelve-step programs and feminist criticism of sex-role socialization. I paraphrase here some representative statements. "We must not try to change the homosexual. Never would I take a client who himself did not want earnestly to change." "The issue is not homosexuality or heterosexuality. The issue is growth." "Hug your son, kiss him, love him, and speak verbal encouragement to him daily." "Blame is never healthy." "Don't try to stop your daughter from playing with hammer and nails; just observe that she does that and love her." "Fathers can no longer be detached, but must be deeply involved in relating to their children." "Never joke about sexual identity. Never allow words like 'sissy,' 'queer,' 'dyke.'" "Cultivate a healthy attitude toward sex." "Deal immediately and directly with anger or hurt."

Some speakers here spoke of "lesbians and sodomites" or "lesbians and homosexuals" and the video on AIDS included a number of our favorite dykes speaking at the Washington march. In the consideration of public policy, however, lesbians were usually (ho-hum) subsumed under "Homosexual."

Regarding public policy, Roger Magnuson (Esquire), William Dannemeyer, and Robert Allen offered the bulk of the addresses while four women and three men gave short reports on efforts to stem The Homosexual Tide in the arenas of local ordinances, education, and medicine.

In part, the purpose of all the speakers was to create the image of a rapidly growing Homosexual Movement, the best-funded and most powerful of any in the nation. It has, we learned, so intimidated legislators and other officials that our laws, our money, and our youth are now virtually putty in the hands of these people and their Perverse Sexual Appetites and Behavior. I was also happy to learn that homosexuals are not only this country's principal style-setters, but as well its most affluent citizens: they make more money than heterosexuals and hold in their hands the majority of the wealth of California and New York.

Homosexuals do not constitute a minority, 'twas chanted. They cannot expect minority status. Homosexuality is a behavior, learned, mutable, and differing in kind from true minorities, i.e., persons of distinct classes like women and men, people of other nationalities or ethnic heritage, and disabled people. Allen, a Black man, deplored the fact that things are at such a pretty pass these days (with incursions on public policy and the law) that some people now insist that even animals have rights—an effort that participates, he suggested, in the same mindset that would grant minority rights to Homosexuals.

Homosexuals, 'twas said, are already protected as all citizens are by the constitution and thus to center upon them as a group would actually be to accord them Special Privileges in employment, education, health, law and commerce. (Is there an echo in this chamber of history?) Particularly, homosexuals should not be demanding more money from state and federal governments (Our Hard-Earned Tax Dollars) for the fighting of the harvest of disease that they are reaping as a result of their own perversion, blasphemy, and misconduct.

According to Magnuson, the most articulate of the speakers, Militant Homosexuals have pushed through measures without substantial public debate; they have used threats and vio-

lence to prevent free expression; they rarely debate rationally, but instead resort to name-calling ("Homophobe! Bigot!"); when they do manage to speak rationally they avoid any mention of what they do sexually and concentrate instead on *reductio* to establish minority status. Using the *reductio* with frequent and good effect, Magnuson brought consistent murmurs of outrage from his audience (e.g., when a landlady turns down a man because he likes Bach or peanut butter he has no recourse but to find another apartment, but if she turns him down because he's homosexual she can be sued).

William Dannemeyer was probably the biggest surprise to me. I expected a combination of John Briggs and Lyndon LaRouche. Instead I got a man who looked like my Uncle Frank, talked like my Uncle Reyburn, and made consistent internal sense even to those of us who could not accept his biblically-based value system. I understood why he is a hero to audiences who do hold values in common with him.

I was relieved when he finally emerged again as a villain, voicing a personal and more familiar theme: "What two people do privately is not my business. But they're not content to stay in the closet. They want Special Privileges, the right to marry, to adopt children, to be counsellors, teachers, boy scout and girl scout leaders, to lower the age of consent for sexual acts." (My paraphrase.) I was thus appropriately chilled when he announced the support of four state medical societies, among them those of Massachusetts and New York, for his HR 3102 Public Health and Protection Act which would mandate reporting of AIDS cases.

A videotape made by Former Homosexual Jim Johnson, "AIDS: What You Haven't Been Told," was shown on both days. It was a very slick presentation in nine parts that located the source of the disease in homosexual men who even today threaten the Health of The Nation because they Refuse To Get Tested (documented by interviews from Gay Pride marches). It demonstrated with shots of openly gay officials, including our own Harry Britt, how Militant Homosexuals have capitalized on the epidemic to gain their Special Privileges. It included a debunking of Kinsey, an exposé of condoms (how unsafe they are), recommendations of committed monogamy or abstinence as the only protection against the disease, testimony of vaguely identified medical personnel who suggested that HIV could become airborne and spell the end of our species, and indignation at the use in our schools of Homosexual Propaganda and Pornography cunningly disguised as AIDS and sex education. Seven Ex-Homosexuals who had AIDS spoke in interview fashion throughout the video; the video ended with an admittedly touching montage of these men, each labeled in silence, "Deceased."

As we all could predict, the conference chose to focus whenever it could on some extreme aspect of lesbian/gay lifestyle, characterizing it, of course, as strictly a phenomenon of homosexuality. Six minutes of the 84-minute video were devoted to sadomasochism (interviews with both women and men) and an explanation of NAMBLA (National Association of

Man-Boy Love). I was more skeptical than stunned to learn from Magnuson that sadomasochism is "...the second leading cause of death among young men in San Francisco" and that NAMBLA claims that "every boy eight years old needs oral sex right now."

As we could also have predicted, questions from the floor were prohibited and those written on cards were easily circumnavigated. We never got an answer from (or never got to ask) Joe Dallas where his control group was that might have shown how heterosexuals had trouble with *opposite-sex* parents; we never got to

explore "predisposition" as a cause of heterosexuality; there was no chance to point out to Magnuson that religion, also protected by the constitution and the Civil Rights Act, is pretty "mutable" too; or to push him when he dodged the question, "Are homosexual acts OK when performed by heterosexuals?" We stood up as a group within the conference and announced that we were healthy loving lesbians and gay men who represented hundreds of thousands of others like ourselves who did not fit their assumptions. We probably changed no minds, but we were an impressive presence.

Lest I sound only disgruntled or wary as a result of the symposium, let me say that I found three distinct joys during this weekend. One is that I still cherish a tiny flame of hope that dialogue with fundamentalist Christians is a possibility; they cannot escape the testimony of our individual lives. Also, I met some wonderful activists, both inside and outside the conference that have rekindled my faith in the vitality and effectiveness of our movement.

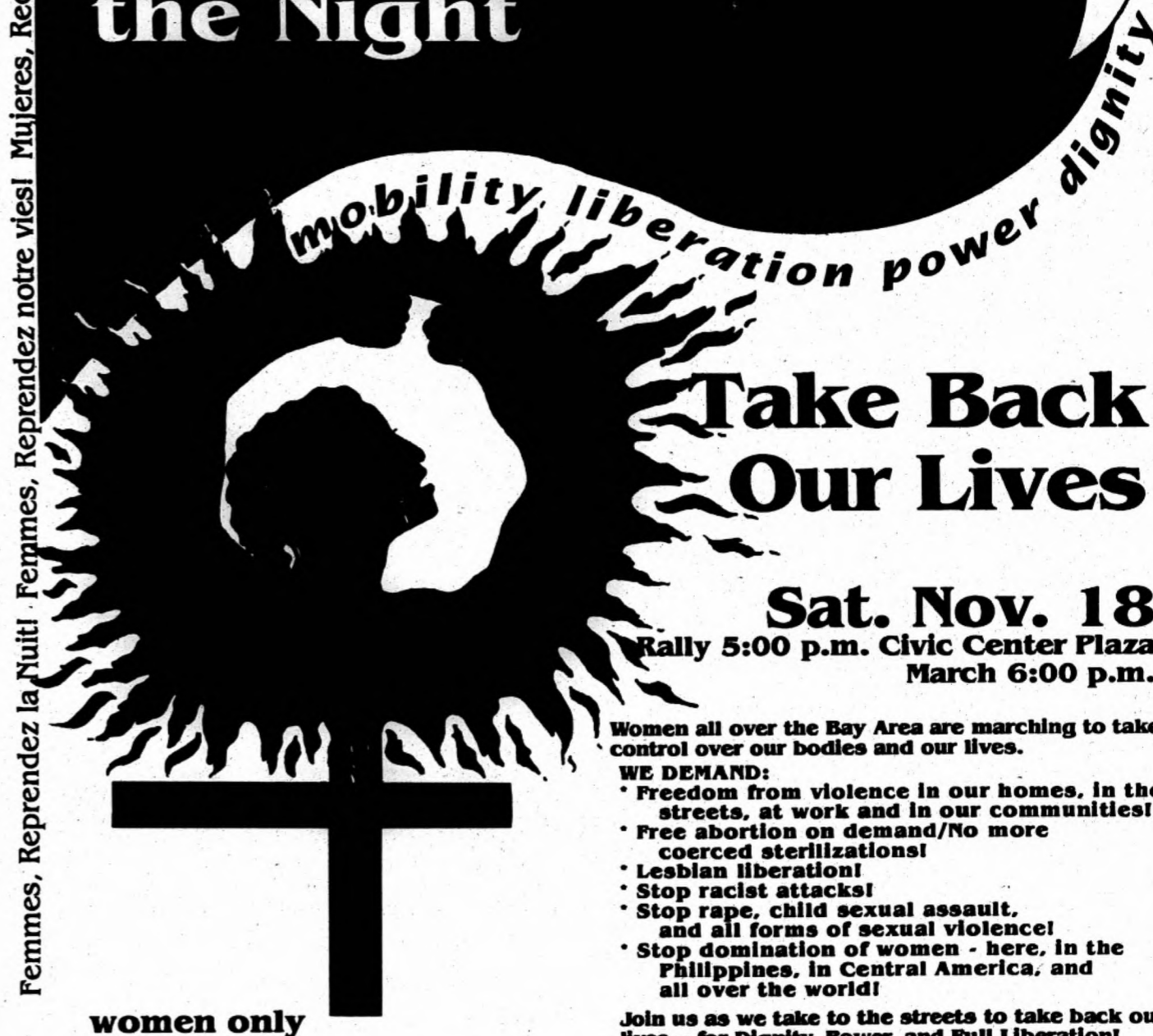
Finally, I observed a very sophisticated and exciting civil disobedience action. Some of us

(continued on page 51)

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Day of Reckoning For Domestic Partners Legislation

BY TIM KINGSTON

It is down to the wire for Proposition S, the November 7 referendum to adopt or reject domestic partnership in San Francisco. While the earthquake put everything else on hold, some things just won't quit for a mere 7.1 on the Richter scale—for example, the anti domestic partnership campaign now called "San Franciscans for Common Sense" (SFSC). Just to help things along, they got a boost with a last minute donation of \$10,000 from a mysterious foundation in Irvine, Orange County, California.

SFSC was formerly known as the "Committee Against the Domestic Partners Ordinance"

(See SF Bay Times, August 1989), and was the brainchild of Rev. Charles McIlhenny of the First Orthodox Presbyterian Church in San Francisco. He is the man who spearheaded the anti-domestic partners petition that forced the ordinance on the ballot in the first place—with the unofficial backing of the Roman Catholic church. While McIlhenny is no longer in charge, his guiding principles are. He declined to comment on the campaign to SF Bay Times.

Just four days after the earthquake, gay historian Allan Berube received two very different phone calls. On Friday, October 20, the "Yes on S" people called to say they were suspending their campaign for the week after the quake and would instead be soliciting

money for the Red Cross Earthquake Relief fund. "Yes on S" raised \$30,000.

The next day, Berube got a call from the other side, asking his opinion on proposition S. The call angered Berube: "(This) volunteer was dedicating her time during the earthquake to make sure that people in long-term relationships did not have hospital visitation rights or bereavement leave. To me, that showed their true colors during an emergency."

The battle over Proposition S has been thrown from a close race, to a dice game. Richmond Young, religious outreach chair for "Yes on S," says, "The quake has completely destroyed any perspective on pre-existing political conditions."

Young suspects there will be a lower turnout

than expected, and acknowledges in San Francisco a low turnout is usually a conservative turnout. "On the other hand, I feel San Franciscans have a better feeling for each other than before the quake. I think they will look more kindly on domestic partners, which is a humanitarian ordinance, with hospital visitation rights, and bereavement leave."

Others, such as Dick Pabich, "Yes on S" campaign manager, are less sanguine. "The most damaging effect was that the earthquake stole momentum from our campaign." He, too, worries about low turnout: "a low turnout we lose... it makes particularly important the Get Out The Vote effort, and our final fund-raising drive in the last few weeks."

Pabich says "Yes on S" lost thousands of dollars of contributions to the campaign from delayed, canceled or ill-attended fundraising events as a result of the quake. According to Jean Harris, aide to Harry Britt, and the campaign's volunteer coordinator, phone banking for "S" did not get started again until six days after the jolt because of the Red Cross drive, costing 7,000 voter contacts. She says, "The campaign is in the air right now. I don't know what the polls show... so we are just going to proceed full steam ahead."

A few days before the quake, Pabich told a roomful of lesbian/gay leaders that "S" was losing by 20 points among those voters most likely to vote. Melinda Paras, field organizer for the campaign, said that to win the election, 25,000 to 40,000 of those who generally do not vote will have to be dragged to the polls. At the same meeting, political consultant Eric Jay said that would require 75,000 personal contacts to get those voters to the polls.

Harris says that Harry Britt has been in contact with the Sierra Club, CISPES (Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador), SF NOW and the Women's Building in an attempt to get out the straight progressive vote. She says, "We are in the process of trying to find phone banks.... We need to call all our lists to get out the vote in the last few days."

Notwithstanding suspicions in the gay and lesbian community that the "Yes on S" campaign is crying wolf to scare the voters out to the polls on November 7, the threats facing the domestic partnership ordinance are very real. What could defeat the ordinance is a sudden influx of money into the coffers of SFSC, allowing them a last ditch phone blitz, ensuring a high turnout of conservative voters.

It bears remembering that the last off-year election was in 1985—the year district elections was defeated. Roberta Achtenberg warns that, "If we lose it, we will have lost it ourselves. It is an election that can be won just by turning out in high numbers."

\$33,895 total the anti-"S" forces have raised so far.

Ahamanson is involved in "fringy" politics. Roberta Ahamanson, his wife, acknowledged the \$10,000 donation but declined to comment on the political rationale that led to such a hefty contribution. Ahamanson's personal assistant Carolyn Evans confirmed that Ahamanson does give out "gifts at his own discretion." Ahamanson did not respond to efforts by the SF Bay Times to contact him.

When Steve Sheldon, Rev. Lou Sheldon's son and press aide, was asked if there was any connection between the Ahamanson donation and the Traditional Values Coalition, he pointedly declined to comment.

H. F. Ahamanson is the son of H. F. Ahamanson (Sr.), now deceased. In financial circles, that name should ring bells. Ahamanson and Co. is the holding company for American Home Savings, and is a heavyweight in the Political Action Committee world. Kirk Pessner, a senior paralegal with Neilson, Merksmer, Hodgson and Pernell, attorneys for the Ahamanson (senior) group, stressed, "There is no relationship between H. F. Ahamanson and Co., Home Savings of America and Howard Ahamanson (Jr.)."

SFSC also received \$3,000 from the Christian Action Network Inc. (CAN) in Santa Rosa, a reactionary research and political action institute intimately tied into the national fundamentalist and new right political community. Dick Key, spokesperson for CAN, declined to comment on the donation or the nature of his group.

The combination of Ahamanson, CAN, and church donations make up almost half of all contributions made to SFCS, excepting private donations from individual members of church congregations.

While the involvement of the christian right is troubling, it should not obscure the fact that the "Yes on S" campaign had collected \$125,000 by October 26, still short of their desired goal of \$185,000. Of that, "Yes on S" has spent \$96,450 as of the October 26 filing date.

FORCES OF "MORALITY" COMING ON THROUGH


P.T. Mammen, pastor of New Life Community Church (\$1,000 donation) and treasurer of SFCS, says, "Those who have chosen a particular lifestyle must have their rights granted, including the right of hospital visitation and bereavement leave—those are legitimate human rights and, those should be granted to anyone who deserves it."

But Mammen's kicker is, "There is no need for legislation to redefine the family in order to provide those basic human rights." It is a version of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese's, "We'll give you anything you want: visitation, bereavement leave, benefits, just don't ask us to recognize or validate your relationships."

Father Bob McIlroy, chair of the Roman Catholic council of priests of the archdiocese, argues the bill "establishes equality in law between marriage and even the most temporary of relationships... It will punish people for being married because it grants all the legal rights of marriage while forcing them to assume none of the legal obligations." He adds that the bill discriminates against extended families by "limiting benefits to non-blood relationships."


The archdiocese has been careful not to get directly involved in the SFCS campaign. Father McIlroy says that George Wesolek, director of the Archdiocese Peace and Justice

(continued on page 31)



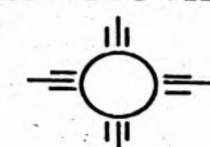
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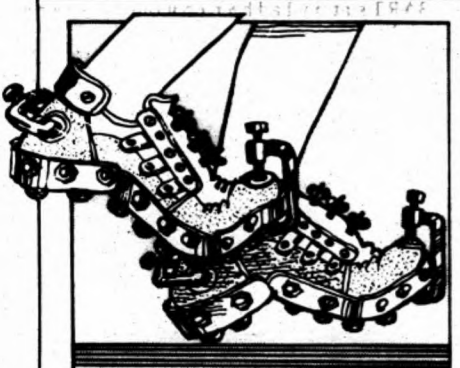
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WHAT'S GOING DOWN

BY LOUISE RAFKIN

Mass appeal: I arrived safely in Provincetown in time to be on hand for the celebration of the passing of the Massachusetts gay rights bill. Who'd have thought it? Right here in the land of the Duke. Mind you at the same time we've got the marvelously tragic and newsworthy (ha) story of Congressman Barney Frank's misguided passions. *Newsweek* took a humane approach and did a personal interview with Frank—quite honest, I thought. But elsewhere that slimeball Stephan Gobie has managed to stir the you-know-what. Slime of the year award, no?

Anyways, said article refers to some of Frank's boy-pals as "Provincetown trash" which has locals hereabouts up in arms. Ye gadz, P-town's having a hard enough time as it is with the split between ACT-UP activists and more conservative (gay) business people tearing at each other's throats. And numerous cases of gay-bashing are pending here, with reticent cops balking at filing reports...the same old same old. And I thought this stuff only happened in good old "Frisco"? I must say that P-town is a veritable gay mecca—kind of like if you took Castro Street and cut it away from all else, then stuck that piece on a spit of sand...yikes!

Coast to coast: A bit scary out there between the two, S.F. and P-town. We drove it, only traveling the smaller roads through various small towns, chatting with lots of small town folk—some of whom were a tad frightening, others who assumed that "two sisters" sharing a bed was perfectly sweet. Ah, sisterhood. Food is cheap out there, however: a burger really runs just over a buck (sometimes under). And house prices that make you think you're

at a two-fer sale. And those infamous diners? Sure thing. And not yupscale fake ones either. We delighted in finding a particularly cheapo diner in Kansas, and proceeded to order a huge meal for about three bucks each: mounds of spaghetti, steak, fries, garlic bread, including soup, salads and "choice of beverage." We were happy stuffed clams by the time we saw the petitions on the counter: "Stop the AIDS report." Addressed to Bushy-boy, they asked that no more funding be directed towards AIDS research because it is "anti-family and anti-Christian." And we slinked out...

Elsewhere out there? Great lesbian communities in such places as Lexington, Kentucky where we were fortunate to catch the all-girl band "Yer Girlfriend" at a huge bash. Watch for 'em, a great lead singer who does k.d. almost as well as the star herself.

Indianapolis gals were just winding up their softball season with a killer seventy-seven-year-old pitcher tossing out the last ball. And, yes, we really did see Dick Passwater's Insurance and Butcher's Mortuary in Upstate New York. Hard to believe...

Topic of the times? Seems like it's lezboism, at least on daytime TV. Donahue, Oprah, and Gerry all getting into the act with shows on everything from coming out to lesbian battering and women who left their husbands for other women. (A fairly positive one!) Phil's show on the lesbian baby boom was pretty good, I thought, with one smart gal assuring the audience that her son certainly does have male role models to share with him "the mysterious things all you men know."

Garbage: Yes, you know I read it all. But wait, *Garbage* is a new magazine all about—you guessed it, garbage! (Printed on recycled paper, of course.) Actually it's a spiffy, colorful new mag devoted to environmental concerns. The premiere issue had swell articles on kitchen designs for easy recycling, seafood contamination, and natural pest controls, plus—as they say—more! I loved it. But sometimes I do feel a bit fickle: it sits on my coffee table right next to *Vanity Fair*.

Some might call it garbage: but I call it good clean reading. *People* magazine, is what I'm talking about now, and specifically their two-part interview with Roseanne Barr. Who'd have thought she was a former collective member of Woman to Woman bookstore in Denver, Colorado! It's pretty great to read about her excitement in discovering her first woman's bookstore, her views about racism, and her belief in the ERA. Come on! This woman is the hero of half of middle America! (And I'll give you only one guess as to which half...)

Not chopped liver, nor chopped suety: In China things are not going too well for gay men (among others). Those who find themselves picked up by police are subject to "tests" to consider whether they are indeed queer. These tests are highly scientific: men are asked to lift heavy objects, and also to demonstrate their walk. If they walk "like a woman" or fail at the he-man tasks, they are sent to "education camps." First offense: three days. Third: a month. Boo, hiss.

Bits and pieces: Or is it mindless prattle? What about Zsa-Zsa who, in the midst of last month's legal fiasco, revealed that she didn't want to go to jail because "I'm afraid of lesbians"...And k.d. lang who has graced *Time*, *People* and *Rolling Stone* with her presence—and appeared with Connie Chung on network TV—but who doesn't really give interviews to the gay press? A Warner Brothers' rep said k.d. felt "burned" by the gay press. k.d. says otherwise, but there's a slew of gay papers that have all been turned down by her manager.

Brick Hut Robbed and Trashed

BY ROSE APPLEMAN

Three nights after the earthquake, the much-loved Brick Hut restaurant was robbed and trashed for the second time in a month. Badly shaken, owners Joan Antonuccio, Sharon Davenport and Marie Della Camera have vowed to remain open, but believe that to do so they may need to leave

South Berkeley. At 6 a.m. on Oct. 21, Davenport got a phone call from the Berkeley Police informing her of the break-in. Utter and complete chaos greeted her and Antonuccio when they reached the restaurant. The front window was kicked in, and the stereo and food stolen. The vandals "opened every drawer, every refrigerator. Everything that was usually put away somewhere was on the floor," said Antonuccio. In the previous burglary, on Sept. 19, the restaurant had also lost a front window, a stereo, and considerable inventory—along with a substantial amount of cash. There are

no suspects. Harassment is nothing new to the Brick Hut. When it moved to its present location in 1982, it suffered a spate of smashed windows, verbal threats to workers and customers, nasty phone calls like the one that said, "You faggot bitches better not touch our kids." But after the first year, Davenport said, they felt much more accepted in the neighborhood. The recent incidents are just two of many in the highly integrated area, never affluent and now fighting the social crises precipitated by Reaganism—unemployment, drugs, crime. The neighborhood, just south of the Ashby

BART station, had been economically depressed, but new businesses were moving in and it was starting to perk up. Local residents and merchants agree that crime and a sense of danger started to grow about two years ago as the area became a corridor for crack dealers and users. Two establishments down the street from the restaurant were robbed, one at gunpoint at 5 p.m.; there was a drug-related double homicide in the restaurant's backyard one night. The small business owners are organized into the South Berkeley Merchants Association, talking to each other and city officials; (continued on page 51)

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(continued from previous page)

ACTG 116 will take place at about 50 different sites in the U.S. Persons can call (800) TRIALS-A to find out if one is in their area.

• ACTG 117—comparing DDI with AZT in patients who have taken AZT for a year or longer. The purpose of this study is to see if DDI is better than AZT for patients who have already taken AZT for a 1-year time and may have developed resistant virus.

To enter, volunteers must have AIDS or advanced ARC, as defined above, and have taken AZT for at least 12 months. They must be at least 12 years old. Again, there are many other entry criteria, so potential volunteers should ask their physicians or obtain the full eligibility information themselves.

• ACTG 118—test of DDI in patients who

cannot tolerate AZT. For this study patients must be ages 12-99, have AIDS or advanced ARC, and have shown hematologic intolerance to AZT at least twice, at least one of those times at doses of 500 mg per day or less. Intolerance must be documented by specified decreases and levels of either hemoglobin or neutrophils. AZT must have been taken for at least 10 weeks but not more than a year, at doses of 500 mg per day or more. There are various other entry criteria, much like those of the other two studies.

ACTG 118 will take place at about 50 sites around the U.S. 350 patients will be enrolled.

For more information on any of these studies, call the U.S. Public Health Service information number, (800) TRIALS-A.

Persons who do not meet the criteria for any of the three trials, or who live too far away

from any of the trial sites, may be able to receive it through one of two other programs. Unfortunately many others will be excluded from these programs by their restrictive entry criteria—criteria which might be relaxed in the future.

• "Treatment IND" for people who cannot tolerate AZT. Patients must be 12 or older, have a diagnosis of AIDS or be symptomatic, and have a T-helper count of under 200. They must be intolerant to AZT in any one (or more) of at least 2 grams/month, a decrease in neutrophils to less than 750, severe nausea or vomiting, intractable headaches, acute psychosis, severe agitation, or loss of muscle strength. Any of these except the hemoglobin must have happened at least twice (i.e., happened again on rechallenge with AZT), and patients must have remained intolerant even

when the AZT dose was reduced to 500 mg per day or less.

In addition, patients who are too sick will not be allowed in this program. At least for now, patients must have hemoglobin of at least 8.0, platelet count at least 50,000, neutrophils at least 600, bilirubin, SGOT, and SGPT within 5 times upper limit of normal, creatinine less than 2.5, alkaline phosphatase within five times the normal limit, uric acid less than 7.5, and amylase less than or equal to twice the normal upper limit. These lab criteria must be met within 14 days prior to initial DDI dosing. Patients cannot require systemic chemotherapy in the first three months of DDI treatment, or have acute pancreatitis, a poorly controlled seizure disorder, or grade B or greater peripheral neuropathy. Women cannot be pregnant or breast feeding. Patients cannot concurrently take AZT or phenytoin (Dilantin), and they will also be excluded if they have taken any antiviral except AZT within 15 days. Extra tests are required for the first four months of DDI use if patients are concurrently using any of a number of drugs, including ganciclovir, acyclovir, ketoconazole, or sulfa drugs, or if patients have intractable diarrhea or are following a low sodium diet. Certain other patients considered at high risk for side effects of DDI must have tests every ten days while they are using the drug; these patients are those with "peripheral neuropathy, pancreatitis, seizure disorder, cardiac abnormalities, gout, and significant elevations of liver function tests results."

Patients who meet these conditions may receive one of three different doses of DDI, probably about 375, 250, or 167 mg twice daily; the exact dose may depend on body weight. Physicians will have to submit the required data to Bristol-Myers every 30 days to receive the next 30-day supply of the drug. The DDI will be free, but patients will apparently be responsible for payment for the required laboratory tests and medical care.

• Open label use of DDI for patients for whom AZT is not working. To qualify, patients must have AIDS (not ARC), have used at least 500 mg of AZT for at least six months, and be at least 12 years old. Despite AZT, they must have had any one of the following: specified weight loss, marked neurological deterioration, AIDS-defining opportunistic infections at least three times in the last six months, T-helper count under 50 on two occasions at least a month apart, or Karnofsky score 40 or less due to AIDS. As with the IND above, they cannot take AZT together with DDI, cannot take Dilantin, and cannot use chemotherapy in the first three months of DDI treatment. There are other criteria like those of the treatment IND, above.

There are other exclusion criteria not mentioned here. Do not rely on this outline of some of the rules for access to DDI, but consult a full and current copy, obtained as described above.

The program outlined above will clearly exclude many people who might be helped by DDI, have no other viable treatment options, and cannot get into any of the clinical trials. Excluded patients include:

Children under 12; persons who are too ill to pass the laboratory criteria required, some of which do not seem to have any relationship to known risks of DDI; persons who would be on AZT except that they need ganciclovir or other incompatible treatment; persons with ARC who are failing on AZT but not intolerant to it (These people might be able to enter a trial where they could be randomly assigned to receive AZT, known not to be working for them. Are they being excluded from access in order to force them into a trial which will make AZT look bad and therefore DDI look better in comparison?); and persons who cannot afford primary care, cannot afford a physician willing to fill out the required forms, or cannot afford the required laboratory tests. This last may be the largest excluded group of all. We urgently need workable procedures to extend access to DDI

(continued on page 51)

Oral Ganciclovir Study in San Francisco and San Diego

An oral form of the anti-CMV drug ganciclovir (DHPG) will be tested in patients in a phase I clinical trial. The trial will take place in San Francisco and San Diego, and is now recruiting volunteers. Until now, ganciclovir has only been given intravenously—a serious drawback since use of the drug must be continued indefinitely.

One arm of the study will recruit 12 people with stable CMV retinitis, to see if they remain stable when switched from IV to oral ganciclovir. However, this part of the study may be filled by patients already at the institutions running the trial.

The other arm needs 36 HIV-positive volunteers who are not now taking AZT, and do not have any symptoms of CMV infection. They will be tested for CMV in the urine, which they must have in order to enter the trial. Then they will be given one of three different doses of oral ganciclovir for 28 days, to see if the drug can eliminate or reduce the virus in the urine. (The 12 patients with stable retinitis will only be given the highest dose, to minimize the danger that the retinitis might progress. For those who have no sign of infection except CMV in the urine, however, it is safe to test lower doses.)

Volunteers may have used AZT before but not during the last 28 days; they should not go off AZT in order to enter this study. The reason for excluding AZT is that it usually cannot be combined with ganciclovir, because both can cause bone-marrow toxicity. Volunteers must not now have active PCP, cryptococcal meningitis, severe diarrhea, or certain other conditions. They must have over 1000 neutrophils and over 50,000 platelets, and must be between 18 and 60 years old. There may also be other conditions.

The study will last 28 days. Volunteers will spend the first two days in the hospital for tests, then go for daily visits for one week. There will be one whole day of hospitalization after two weeks, and 24 hours at the end of the trial. There is no cost to participate in this study.

In San Francisco, patients can volunteer at any of three different medical centers depending on their preference. At San Francisco General, call Chris Kimbrell, 821-5089. At Davies, call Brian Christenson, 565-6153. At Mt. Zion, call Karen Taylor, 885-7432.

Oral ganciclovir has existed for years but has not been developed, apparently because of the confusion over the official status of the intravenous form of the drug. Intravenous ganciclovir was officially approved for marketing as a treatment for CMV retinitis on June 26. Before then, it had been given free to thousands of patients under compassionate use.

A study published over two years ago showed that the drug could be given orally and produce a high enough blood level to inhibit CMV. However, only about three percent of the drug is absorbed, and it is not clear that oral use will be feasible; that is the question the current study seeks to answer.

At least two other oral drugs to treat CMV—FIAC, and HPMP—are being developed.

Oral ganciclovir could have been developed any time during at least the last two years, and probably much longer. Approval of the intravenous drug, plus the development of potential competitors, provided a motive for it to be developed now. As in almost all such cases, no one represented the patients' interest in the matter, as both AIDS organizations and practicing physicians chose not to involve themselves in treatment research and development issues.

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On September 22 the PWA Health Group in New York announced that it will help people import pentamidine from England, where it costs about a fifth as much as in the U.S.

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For more information, call the PWA Health Group at (212) 532-0280. To purchase pentamidine, a prescription is required. The cost, including customs, shipping and handling, is \$40.

For back issues of *AIDS Treatment News*, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to: ATN, PO Box 411256, SF, 94114.

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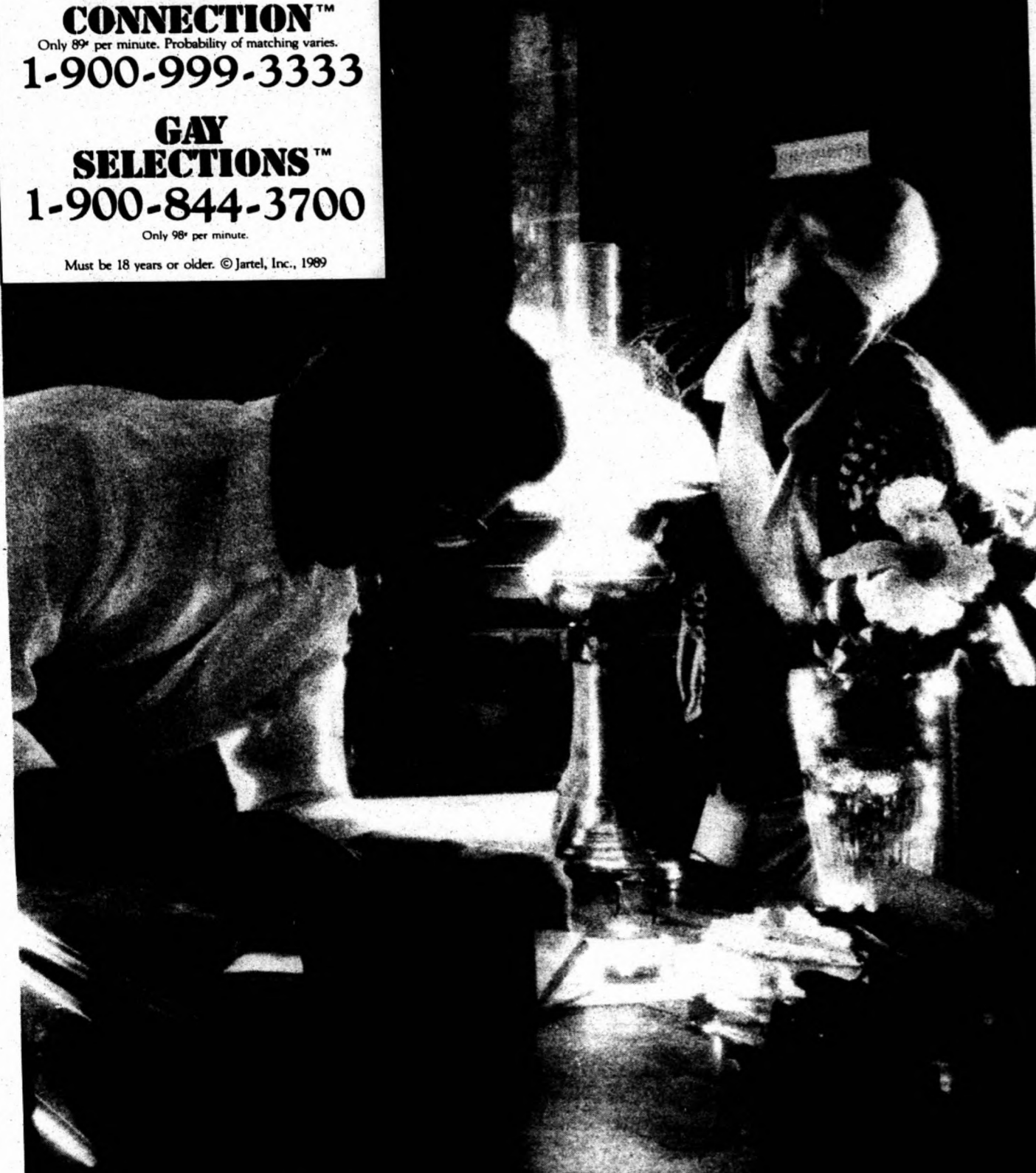
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(continued from previous page)

I usually find everywhere. This crowd had no attitude, at least not in the negative sense. It wasn't exactly like it must have been in the '60s—I've no idea what a love-in was all about—but this is almost the '90s and a "like-in" should count as quite an achievement, which it was. My cynical tendencies disappeared, with or without sunglasses.

I spent the second half of the Airplane set wandering around in a happy daze, no doubt feeling some sort of contact high, judging by the thousands of dilated pupils I saw. The band stepped more towards the fore of things during this set, getting louder and grungier and better as they did more old classics and pulled the crowd's focus tighter. I knew that "White Rabbit" was impending and I was getting excited, then the familiar slow drums resounded with a touch of eeriness I didn't think possible in broad daylight, and the song unfolded. Grace was superb, the same goddess who was invited once to the White House for a Nixon daughter's birthday party, but was turned away by security along with her date Abbie Hoffman due to a slight inebriation with alcohol and a rumor that she was gonna try to dose the President with LSD. Legend or fact, it's a nice story and the song was performed with the passion of youth and rebellion so apparent in Jefferson Airplane's best work.

Facing "White Rabbit" for the first time live, its twisted splendor intensified. The song's crescendo-type ending built up to new heights of recklessness and Grace's resounding command of "Feed your head" was definitely well-understood, no-hidden-meaning entertainment for this crowd. It was one of those grand Rock and Roll moments that I'll never forget, almost.

You see, as the last note faded, a seven foot tall, colorfully clothed rabbit with a cartoon-like permanent grin ran across the stage, its head wobbling like it could just fall right off of the sweaty guy who agreed to wear a Marriott's Great America hand-me-down and do this thing. The man in a rabbit suit would have looked more at home in a shopping mall around Easter or at a football game as the team mascot, bothering people in the stands. Since I'd allowed myself the luxury of a contact high, I decided it was fair to write this image off as a hallucination, one of the "Bummer trip" variety. It was very brief so I didn't "freak out" or need to be "talked down," although hundreds of people near me would have been happy to help out. It was a "beautiful experience—" the song "White Rabbit—" and as a rock critic, a requisite I had lacked for too long.

The crowd dispersed slowly after the show through a wide grassy meadow where, as a casual drug user, I experienced another never-before auspicious moment. It was the euphoric effects of a substance I'd never encountered. Is that unbelievable! Just when I thought I'd done every single brain-altering option. Two men with a thin metal compressed gas tank were filling up large balloons with nitrous oxide and selling them for five bucks. This was a phenomenon I'd never witnessed. Lots of folks made their purchases, sat down in little groups and started nursing their balloons, including the fine group I was with, who knew exactly what was going on. We even returned for seconds and thirds since the show hadn't ripped through our funds with an admission price. It was a fine way to end the day, rejoicing in unstoppable giggles, sensations of floating, teases of unconsciousness, and watching others do the same and more. Throughout the meadow bouts of child-like frolic, piles of boys wrestling, and prone bodies vibrating with exuberant laughter dotted the huge expanse of green grass. I wondered for a minute about brain cells dying rapidly, then my friend Steve told me that the only ill effect is a minor depletion of vitamin E from your system. No sweat. He also said this fun ritual occurs frequently at most Grateful Dead shows, sometimes for as cheap as a buck. I may have to see one of their shows someday, too.

CABARET

BY GENE PRICE

Sharon McNight Sings Bye-Bye San Francisco

Preparatory to shifting her base of operations to Los Angeles, Sharon McNight has spent the past couple of weeks rummaging through the flotsam and jetsam of ten years as queen of the local cabaret scene. Taking a break from pressing her feathered finery, she gave her lungs an airing on October 14 with two sold-out shows at The Great American Music Hall.

Though it was billed as her "Bye-Bye San Francisco" concert, McNight will retain a bedroom and a phone answering machine locally, and she has already agreed to return for a New Year's Eve gig at The Great American.

Sassy, glittery, and in fine voice McNight sang a 16-song set that recapped a number of audience favorites from the past decade, some blues, pop, Broadway, and some County Western. Patsy Montana's "Cowboy's Sweetheart" revolved in a healthy dose of the famous McNight yodel, after which the singer offered up Rick Crom's fine parody of Noel Coward's "Don't Put Your Daughter on the Stage, Mrs. Worthington." Crom's revisionist lyrics offered some kindly advice, again to Mrs. Worthington, that her son was *not* just going through a stage.

With understandable pride, McNight showed us a copy of the drawing Hirschfeld made of her (in Starmites costume) and then recalled her tongue-tied meeting with Sondheim. She then sang for us, just as she had sung for him at a Lincoln Center benefit, his infamous ditty "I Never Do Anything Twice."

Irving Berlin, whose ghost may well have been present in protest, had to endure again her superb parody of his anthem "There's no Business Like Show Business."

For some serious singing we were treated to the tenderly floated notes of Berlin's "How Deep Is the Ocean?" and her special rendition of "Total Eclipse of the Heart." Roy Orbison's "Crying" was a lump-in-the-throat winner as was Harry Nilsson's "Don't Forget



Sharon McNight

Me." A special arrangement of "Brith of the Blues Rhapsody" (DeSilva & Brown/ Gershwin) was not entirely successful, requiring perhaps a big band treatment.

Fans at the next table kept hoping for "Stars," but she didn't sing it. Maybe next time. Her third and final encore was, of course, Billy Joel's "I've Loved These Days" and everybody stomped and whistled to let her know they loved her, too.

Donald Wescoat presided with his usual aplomb at the keyboards. Lauren Carter and Horace Tolson were remarkably attuned on backup vocals.

Chasing The Blues Away At The Blue Muse

The good news is that The Jesters have been extended indefinitely at The Blue Muse. There is no bad news. The Jesters are composer/musical director Scrumby Koldewyn on piano and vocals, and baritone A.C. Griffing and tenor James Campbell on vocals.

Their forte is exuberant harmonies and lots of charm as they croon the carefree ditties and romantic ballads of the 20s and 30s. A throwback to those rhythm vocalists so prevalent then, The Jesters are unique in today's entertainment scene. Their sophisticated format should propel them right up to the Rainbow Grill atop Rockefeller Center, NYC. (There's no definite date set, but the London Ritz is pitching them to do a recording with its house band, Vile Bodies.)

Last Saturday The Jesters opened a late set with their signature tune, "Puttin' on the Ritz," and followed with a bouncy "Lambeth Walk" (the dance rage when I was in high school). "Latin from Manhattan" paired with "Lady in Red" gave Griffing the chance to loosen up his sacroiliac, after which he soloed on the Gershwins' "You've Got that Thing." A sweetly warbled "When I Take My Baby to Tea" prefaced Campbell's solo on "Steppin' Out With My Baby," and a number with some stock market lyrics, "Got the Jitters," brought a few titters of recognition from the audience.

Paying tribute to the Comedian Harmonists, a German quartet from the early 30s, the trio sang, hummed, and approximated some brassy instrumental sounds on "Creole Love Call," even whipping out kazooos for the finale. "Blue Skies," sung à cappella, best exemplified this trio's intricate harmonies and bright, catchy tempo swings.

So time-warp yourself down to the Blue Muse (Gough and Hayes) some Saturday night. You'll wake up Sunday morning humming some good tunes. They sing nine to midnight. No cover, no minimum. Phone: 626-7505.

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BAY WOMEN'S MUSIC

BY NOELLE HANRAHAN

RANCH ROMANCE

The Freight and Salvage

Contrary to press kit pulp and hype, Ranch Romance is not "where Patsy Cline meets Pearl Harbor and the Explosions." They must have never seen long-time local favorite Pearl live. One whip and a cover song just does not mean a straight-ahead, country bluegrass outfit has anything to do with Pearl Harbor's wacky, new wave B-52's look and outrageous sexual energy. Let me tell you that Pearl's spurs have never seen a horse, and I can only imagine where they have been. Ranch Romance may be unusually adventuresome for tame suburban Seattle, their native stomping grounds, but they are pretty normal for San Francisco's bluegrass scene, not to mention outright boring for the underground rock scene.

Ranch Romance combines western swing, country and bluegrass with yodels and clogging. The band members are able and committed instrumentalists. They are at their best on the song "West Virginia Gold," a gorgeous waltz with a long slow violin part surrounded by a string bass arrangement and an endearing lyric. Lisa Theo's lead vocal part is similar to Laurie Lewis' stunning style.

That pointed to the show's major drawback: not enough lead vocals. The entire first set featured close knit harmonies which did not complement the lead. On only one or two songs did Jo Miller (sporting a George Jones inspired flat-top) step out in front of the band, unencumbered by the "girl group back up sound." They closed with a slightly campy number "She Must Be Obeyed," the tune from which they took their name.

LESBIAN SNAKE CHARMERS

Female Trouble/Nightbreak, Oct 4

Lead by Jai Jai Noire, rock 'n' roll guitarist and Contra Costa County political activist, and composed of the members of Cool and Unusual Punishment, this band does justice to Noire's fiery material. The sound recalls the

Police, back when they were a scruffy punk band emerging in the wake of the Sex Pistols. Music like this can throw you into culture shock. There is just enough reality mixed into a ferocious sound to wake anyone out of a total coma. Noire's writing style is not dwarfed by history or suffocated by the enormity of political repression. "Fire Under the Bush," a wild and crazy ride on some lonely internal road, takes Buddy Holly into the '90s. Wrap this all up in reggae rhythms (where the Police and The Clash ended up anyway), and you have got the October 1989 version of the Lesbian Snake Charmers.

This was supposedly the last show of this incarnation or incantation of Noire's backup band. Why is it that every bruising and raucous all-woman band in San Francisco and probably the world over disappears like flash paper from the scene, only to make a lifelong impact on an unsuspecting soon-to-be-a-rock-and-roll-musician's brain? The last vestiges of women's dreams, screaming electric guitar runs, and worn through demo tapes of the She-Devils and Linda Perry keep me haunting Nightbreak on Wednesday nights.

FAITH NOLAN

The Freight And Salvage, Sept 24

"When I was eleven I saw a Bessie Smith record for 10 cents. I took it home, put it on and just connected. It was what I was waiting to hear all my life," says Faith Nolan.

Baptized on Smith, Odetta and Lena Horne, Faith Nolan promises to keep company with these legends some day. Nolan is an extraordinary singer of raw archetypal country blues. Her writing style directly descends from Lead-belly, Ma Rainey and Elizabeth Cotten. Raised in a generations-old Black community in Nova Scotia, Canada, she now lives among the vibrant Toronto music community. Redwood Records has just released her third album, Freedom to Love, and the first available in the U.S.

Blues is an emotional tightrope between liv-

ing life to its fullest pleasurable moments and recognizing the pain on the other side of that picture. As a Black working-class lesbian, Nolan brings all of what she owns to her musical statements. She comments, "There are a lot of contradictions for me in my life and a lot of pain... Last night I saw a movie about Oscar Romeras, the murdered archbishop of El Salvador. It was really heavy, and after that we went out and had some fancy food. Such a contradiction. That is enough to make you sing the blues."

Nolan's shows are infused with an explicit honesty that will wake you up to oppression as it is played in everyday life. She comments about my characterization of her performances as raw, and at times, in safe space like the Artemis Cafe, sexually explicit that, "I am a down home girl. That is where I come from. That is who my people are. We like to tell it like it is, I am not half as raw as my girlfriends."

Nolan deserves an audience 100 times as great as she now enjoys. Her huge talents remain mostly unheard. Accompanying herself on a 12-string guitar, harmonica and foot tambourine, she drops songs, picking them up, talking over bass parts and moving under her own power. Nolan shares with Michelle Schocked the ability to wrap a story around a song, to hold onto and demand the audience's attention. Faith Nolan is deep and soon to be famous.

LAS ENTENDIDAS,

8th Annual Encuentro de Canto Popular York Theater, Oct. 6

To its credit, the Encuentro de Canto Popular (Festival of Latin-American New Song) not only includes popular well known artists, but also has a commitment to nourish and, in this case, launch the careers of local performers. Las Entendidas' too-short, four-song set gave a brief glimpse of their original compositions now under construction. This effort forges a unique multi-cultural collaboration. As the founder of the group, Isabel Yrigoyen deserves credit for bringing Erika Luckett (guitar and vocal), Jesse Ortiz (synthesizer), Carol De Arment (bass), and Mora Diaz (percussion) to the band. At the beginning of a journey one needs direction, ambition and a generous imagination. Las Entendidas definitely has the talent and the reach.

Their debut performance was loose, and some arrangements lacked cohesiveness. At times, when trading solos or making the transition to more lush arrangements, the instruments merged awkwardly. Poor sound in the house obscured certain components of the band's play, including all of the bass and the guitar parts which were mixed low. A few snatches of songs proved that both Luckett and Yrigoyen are strong vocalists.

Las Entendidas literally means "those who understand." In the language of our lesbian and gay culture, it has come to mean "one of us." Through the act of naming themselves, Las Entendidas has made a powerful statement. The members of this group are tapping into tremendous vitality by celebrating the strength of their cultures and their convictions.

The rap song performed to the Guaguarco rhythm and written by Yrigoyen explored her love of her Cuban homeland, and the injustice of Cuban policy regarding gays and lesbians. Over a driving beat, the rap works. I am proud that they had the courage to take the stage of the Encuentro de Popular and sing about gay and lesbian struggles, as well as singing about the rest of their lives. Las Entendidas is building bridges among different communities and delivering on the Encuentro de Canto Popular's mission to present songs of struggle and survival.

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Songs from the Heart, Mind and Body

An Interview with Maggie Nichols



BY NOELLE HANRAHAN

Maggie Nichols is perhaps the most original vocalist to have emerged from the British jazz scene. She is one of those rare artists who is able to bring her entire life experience to bear upon a single performance, often using improvised monologues and humor to make her musical and political points.

Nichols was part of the influential sextet Feminist Improving Group (FIG), has worked with Spontaneous Music Ensemble, Art, and Centipede, and has performed and recorded with Julie Tippetts, Phil Minton, Robert Wyatt, Pete Nu and Robert Fripp, among others. Last month she appeared with Irene Schweitzer and Joelle Leandre, combining to form an amazing trio exploring a feminist approach to improvisation.

The *San Francisco Bay Times* had the opportunity to interview Nichols between rehearsals by phone at her home in London, England.

(*Bay Times*) What kind of musical community are you in? Do you have a jazz community or are your associates who are also improvisors?

(Nichols) My background is incredibly diverse. Years ago I was a dancer in chorus girl shows and singing in a strip club—all sorts of things. Because improvisation covers so many different kinds of music, there are people who come from rock backgrounds, classical and folk. Improvisation is an incredible meeting point for musicians of different backgrounds.

Are there many venues for you to perform in?

In the rest of Europe improvised music is really popular, or, well, relatively popular. You can work to big audiences. In England more conventional jazz is much more popular, and improvised music is more of a fringe music.

What do you think is responsible for the audience receptivity in these other countries?

I think it's not so much the audience but the promoters. More people connected with music have politics. They may be socialist-minded promoters or anarchists, even, who make the connection, or run a club where they might put on rock music, improvisation and jazz.

For me, all music is connected, and if the music is original and it's got spirit and vitality, it doesn't really matter what kind of music it is. For example, some of us have improvised at women's events, and after finding it a bit unusual to begin with, the women very soon realize that it is very much a social thing about our lives. It's very relevant to the times we are living in, our politics, our personal life and so on. If you can get to an audience you can get the music across.

How does your work reflect your political experience, and how does the audience respond?

Abroad I have worked with other improvisors for big student audiences, and there has been an amazing response, especially because I might improvise words as well. You are almost making conscious an unconscious process. Like bringing your politics into your

In the '80s the need is to connect with revolutionary struggles of all peoples—liberation struggles for women, lesbians, gays, Black struggles, people with disabilities, you name it. I think our music is very much connected to those struggles, or it can be.

There's a whole school of people who see it as a much more esoteric thing; they almost do pure research in terms of how far to take abstraction. That's not the area of improvisation that interests me. I am more interested in communicating, making connections and showing that everybody has the capacity to have more control over their lives to be creative, to take risks, to explore the unknown.

I really object to academic esoteric music being seen as somehow representative of revolutionary music. The academic side has its place, but it tends to dominate and tries to speak for the music as a whole. I think that's really wrong, because improvised music has taken place in so many areas. The punks, street theater artists have that element of anarchy which is the element of the music that I love the most. That feeling of a group of people without a hierarchy, without a leader, finding some way of evolving and developing a music or a performance in connection with the people who come to listen, in connection with the world we live in and our personal feelings. That to me is what is exciting. Everybody is creative.

How do you see the development of your voice in relationship to your improvised performance?

I like to practice. I see it as a creative process rather than a separate technical thing. I have this lovely exercise that somebody showed me years ago. I just go to the keyboard of the piano, and I will sing a note—say the lowest note that I can comfortably make that day because it changes, it fluctuates—and I might do that note in as many different ways as possible—different tones, different emotions, different qualities, long notes, rhythms—it's almost trying to make a symphony out of one note, and it is emotional, it's mental, it's technical. It works on so many different levels, and when I have explored that one note I go up to, say, the next note and do the same. It is like going into another world.

For me tone is important because your sound is you. The voice is an instrument. When I first got started I was more concerned—self-conscious—about trying to prove myself in a male world because I felt very put down. Because I came from cabaret, strip clubs and pubs, a lot of men were hostile to female singers, and they probably still are. I am just lucky that I have got some sort of reputation now which protects me.

What do you do to expand your willingness and ability to respond, to get outside of your conscious process when you are improvising?

God, there are so many ways. Sometimes it will be enough just to start with silence and to listen with your whole being. It's not formal listening in the sense that we were taught, but a very, very deep active listening as opposed to passive, and that could be listening with your body as opposed to listening with your ears, listening to the moments as they pass. Other times something might happen to you in the street that disturbs you, or you might see something and you might feel that it is important to take the risk and bring that into the performance. Or it might be that you just own up about a block that you have that you feel is creating a barrier between you and the audience.

It is being open. At the same time, I realized it got to the point where I was so open, that I began actually to expose myself so much I was not centered enough. It's a balance, so that when I take risks again it is not self-destructive or masochistic. I'm not exposing everything because I feel that I owe it to you, but it is more like here I am I want to share this. Because, as we have been saying in the women's movement, the personal is political.

When women came into improvisation they

brought a multi-dimensionality, a diversity of dynamics of moods and emotions that I think has made an enormous difference to the music. I think it is very interesting that in improvising groups with women in them you really feel the women's presence.

I have found that as I have become stronger as a woman, I can go into a situation where I am the only woman, and I can actually handle it now. But working with women is something special. Working with Irene (Schweitzer) and Joelle (Leandre) it's wonderful—that women's energy—when it is really at full tilt that particular kind of women's madness and women's sensitivity—well there is nothing like it for me, really.

How have your political ideas come through your music?

In a directly personal way, I think I am becoming more aware of my mother. She is half Algerian and Berber, in terms of the cultural difference. In the collective unconscious, which is the area you tap in this kind of music, somewhere is stored an instinctive internationalism.

How do you respond to racism in your own community?

I did not do it automatically by any means. When I was child, I experienced racism against my mother from other kids. My mom has always been ferociously anti-racist because of her own experiences. But I have also had to acknowledge that as a white woman that I have had those privileges that every white person has, and in that sense we are all poisoned by the system that we are born into.

Do you organize your life around a community?

It's difficult as an artist. You can be cut off from it if you're not careful, especially if you travel a lot. I am involved in a women's anarchist group. We meet as regularly as we can, and we are involved in certain preparations to find creative ways to do direct action and so on. And I was a Trotskyist for about four or five years, so that was quite an experience.

I do a lot of workshops with all different ages and groups, and I think that's a very political act as well, because my workshops are about giving people the confidence to improvise and to find that strength individually and collectively. Those ways of actually discovering group dynamics are enormously important socially, because the whole point about Thatcherism is to individualize in a way that really isolates us from each other.

We used to do workshops before demonstrations. A whole team of us during the big anti-section 28 (English law limiting funding for public institutions that promoted or encouraged homosexuality) demonstrations did a workshop and then improvisations during the demonstration. We would take a slogan and start improvising with it rhythmically and musically and that excites me.

How does your lesbian identity make you more vulnerable and alternately more strong?

One of the most important ways for me in my second wave of lesbianism—because when I was sixteen I was involved in more of a butch/femme area in Soho and the West End in the early '60s before the women's liberation movement—is the connection between lesbianism and feminism, and women's autonomy and women-only events. It scared me at first, and then I realized that it didn't matter what men thought of me, and that was very important. And I don't think I have shaken these all off. These things don't ever really go, these old shadows creep up on you and suddenly you are back at sixteen and feeling insecure and wanting approval again. But the strength will never go and there is no turning back. And of course, it makes me vulnerable because I live on a working class estate (housing project), and there have been times when kids would not play with my child when they found out I was a lesbian. I have friends on this estate and I get on well, but I have been here fourteen years now.

Bee-Eye

REVIEWED BY GENE PRICE

What Edward and I have is a history ...like The Hundred Years' War."

That is William's sardonic summation of his 15-year relationship with famous playwright Edward (loosely based on Albee) in Joe Besecker's new Play, *Bee-Eye*, now premiering at the Mission Cultural Center.

It's an exciting production for several reasons. The script is sophisticated, adult, always entertaining and the writing reflects an uncanny ear for real speech patterns. When wit is called for, it's rapier sharp, and there's not a boring character in the lot. The playwright was not afraid to push his neurotic, self-centered gathering of misfits over the brink into confrontation and self-awareness. All that, plus some first-rate acting.

Long-time residents of a shared condominium complex in Puerto Vallarta, Pulitzer playwright Edward (Gregg Richardson) and his lover, failed composer William (Alan Herman), observe and manipulate the transient guests.

Sharing the common patio and pool are Devera (Lori Bower), a not-so-great actress (but smart enough to realize it) whose nomination for an Academy Award has set her on the road to alcoholic oblivion; Max (Patrick Hartnett) Devera's director and Hollywood stud who has arrived to salvage his star; Thumper, Devera's sexually confused younger brother who has fled wife, child and home; Bee-Eye (Craig Dickerson), a newly-wed short story writer riding the crest of first success; and Peggy (Kim Parolari), Bee-Eye's professional therapist wife who has some deep-seated problems of her own.

In Besecker's scenario they're all doomed to an unloved and unloving existence—regardless of what material success they may achieve. But they're also survivors, Edward and William most of all. Their lust long since drained away, the two men (like George and Martha in Albee's *Who's Afraid of the Virgin Woolf*) are forever bonded into a pattern of acrimonious bickering.

Over early morning coffee William reports that he watched Devera and her Hollywood hunk making it on the patio table last night. Edward's retort is a snarl: "After all the years of hearing you boast about your bisexuality—as if it were some special gift rather than the wishy-washy inability to make up one's mind—I'm surprised you didn't join them."

Sex is definitely a moving force on this Mexican patio, and as it weaves its not-so-magic spell, frailties are exposed, secrets are revealed, and decisions are forced. Thumper, who has made overtures to William and been rebuffed, will leave his wife but he won't desert her. Devera will dump Max (who has bedded Peggy), sober up, and go to the Academy Awards—but on her own terms. Bee-Eye and Peggy will remain together because he owns her and she needs him. And for the remainder of the honeymoon on this shared patio, Bee-Eye's presence will be gall to the hostile Edward.

Bee-Eye: "You've never admitted you're gay. Why is that?"

Edward: "The question isn't relevant...I'm not going to apologize for what I'm not and what I'm not is a playwright writing about homosexuals bonding around a bonfire chanting politically correct bullshit."

Alone on stage at the end, William pleads for a show of tenderness, but Edward cannot bring himself to embrace his long-time companion. As the two time-worn lovers, Herman and Richardson acquitted themselves with fine



Lori Bower, Patrick Hartnett and Kim Parolari in *Bee-Eye*, a play by Joe Besecker

performances. Lori Bower, as the boozy actress, played her role with remarkable control, and Dickerson's Bee-Eye was right on target as the righteous yuppie writer on a roll.

The play was co-directed by Charles E. Polly and Joe Besecker. Too often they allowed the onstage shouting to approach a pitch that was self-cancelling.

Bee-Eye continues at the Mission Cultural Center, Thursdays through Saturdays, 8 p.m. through Nov. 4, with a 2 p.m. matinee on Nov. 5.

Jim, Jim, Jim Updates Judy

REVIEWED BY GENE PRICE

Illusionist Jim Bailey came to town mid-month to give Judy Garland fans their annual fix. His press material is quite explicit that he is an illusionist, not a female impersonator, and I'm assuming that the difference is that from the moment he comes on stage until the moment he leaves, he never relaxes into his own persona.

His is a carbon-copy Judy Garland—the slightly pigeon-toed drag step; the nervous hand that pulls at a strand of hair or worries at his necklace; the awkward little bow after a song as he murmurs, "thank you, thank you;" the girlish little giggle as he fumbles over a single phrase. And above all, that *inimitable* Garland vibrato.

Yes, it's all there—just close enough to be a little eerie—but there's something hollow about it, too. I think I'd like it better if Jim Bailey came out on stage as a real person and announced that he was going to do a couple of impressions of Judy Garland. The artistry of his transition would be more interesting to me than his attempt at total deception.

Nevertheless, I confess I prefer Bailey's new show, "Judy Garland from Broadway to Hollywood," to his show a couple of years ago when he played Garland at the end of her career, falling apart in front of our eyes. That was unsettling.

This time out Bailey delivers a happier Garland, a star who not only reprises her famous numbers from stage and screen but who also interprets a number of more recent Broadway hits that she might well be singing today if she were really up there on that stage.

After a rag-tag "Over the Rainbow" overture from the "orchestra," a pink-sheathed Bailey takes the spotlight on an upbeat

"Nothing Can Stop Me Now," and from the adoring gasp of his 95 percent male audience, you know that nothing can and nothing will. He does them all: "Stepping Out With My Baby;" "Lady Be Good;" a superbly phrased each-catch-in-the-throat meticulously placed "Someone to Watch Over Me;" "Zing Went the Strings of My Heart;" and that Garland anthem, "The Man That Got Away."

Bailey as Garland was most ingratiating when he paused between songs and, never breaking character, dispensed bits of Hollywood gossip as though it happened only yesterday. He even recalled with some malicious charm a few of the weirder episodes involving the Munchkins during the filming of "Oz."

Actually, the more interesting portion of the



program was Bailey's interpretation of Garland's interpretation of some "new" material. Sondheim's "I'm Still Here" was remarkably re-created with Garland's vocally unique metallic coloration. "Losing My Mind" (though uneasily interwoven with "When the Sun Comes Out") was pure Garland. Obviously her temperament would have been perfectly suited to the Sondheim standards. But whether or not she was meant to sing Andrew Lloyd Weber numbers is open to question. The ballad from "Phantom" was just O.K. at best.

For a group of encore numbers, Bailey sang all of the Garland biggies: a terrific "Swanee," a superbly arranged "After You've Gone," and finally, putting down the mike and shushing the orchestra, an à cappella "Over the Rainbow." It was like collective safe sex.

A Double Bill at The Actors' Theater

REVIEWED BY DEAN GOODMAN

For average people seeking mild diversion, a double bill of Christopher Durang's *The Actor's Nightmare* and Albert Innaurato's *The Transfiguration of Benno Blimpie* may not be exactly a cool mint julep on a hot summer's day. But for those who care for stronger wine, the Actors' Theatre production of these two plays at the Shelton Theatre Studio is intoxicating, occasionally mind-blowing, and provides a gratifying evening in the theatre.

Every actor, at one time or another, has experienced the frightening dream of finding himself onstage unable to remember his lines or—horror of all horrors!—not even knowing in what play he's performing. Appreciation of Durang's work is enhanced if the theatergoer has a working knowledge of Noel Coward's *Private Lives*, Samuel Beckett plays, *Hamlet*, and Robert Bolt's *A Man For All Seasons*. But *The Actor's Nightmare* is more than just an inside joke. Haven't we all found ourselves in situations where we were somewhat disoriented, with the feeling that we were out-of-place and didn't know quite what was going on?

Michael Vincent ably portrays the confusion of George Spelvin as he muddles through this bewildering tunnel of happenstance, groping at every straw in a desperate attempt to save himself.

One of my complaints against The Method—not the Stanislavsky system, mind you, but the bastardized version of it as taught by some American teachers—is its lack of attention to articulate speech. This mumble-fumble-stutter and-stumble school of acting has forced audiences to sit through countless performances where, even in small theatres, sounds could be heard but it's been anybody's guess what the actors were really saying. My major criticism of *The Actor's Nightmare* is that the performers are permitted, or perhaps encouraged, to play with high energy but with too much shouting. Volume doesn't equal clarity. A little variety of tone might be easier on the eardrums in this performance. We do want to hear and understand, to be sure, but we don't want to be shell-shocked.

Maybe because the actors are more experienced there is no such problem in the performance of the Innaurato play. An almost perfect ensemble performs this work with shuddering realism, depth and compassion.

Benno Blimpie is the playwright's metaphor for all the world's outcasts; the fatties and the fruits and freaks, all those who are ridiculed and despised and whose self-esteem is so lowered by society's mistreatment that they seem to wallow in their own considered aberrations and often follow them compulsively to eventual disintegration.

As narrator, Benno (played poignantly but without self-pity by Leo Laporte) gives us glimpses of his home life, his abuse by both parents, his grandfather's sexual shenanigans

with a thirteen-year-old girl, his own search for love, and his ultimate withdrawal into a dark room where he eats himself into even greater obesity. Benno is the fat boy to end all fat boys, a pitiful figure who stirs our sympathy and reminds us once again that many of the unattractive and psychically damaged human beings we see around us have perhaps become that way through causes beyond their own control.

Harsh and unrelenting, *Benno Blimpie* is a look at a part of life which, unhappily, does exist. Sara Heckelman and Louis Parnell play the parents with uncompromising honesty, creating characters who are themselves bitterly disillusioned. Keith Phillips is fine as the grandfather and Mary Nolan is alternately provocative and bawdily vulgar as the girl he seduces.

Headly stuff? Oh, yes. Not for the squeamish. But the Actors Theatre production is true to the starkness of the material, and no one can pay the company a much better compliment than that.

Secrets

REVIEWED BY RANDY TUROFF

Opening this season's production schedule at the Theatre Rhinoceros Studio is Rebecca Ranson's play, *Secrets*. Ranson is a southern playwright with 40 plays to her credit, including *Warren*, her play about AIDS, which was staged at the Celebration Theatre in Los Angeles. *Secrets* is a West Coast premiere production.

Secrets is the story of a 40-year-long romantic relationship between two women—one white, one black—in the deep South. The play spans 1930-1969. Ranson, a social-issue playwright, places the relationship against a background of changing civil rights and gay/lesbian cultural concerns. The focus, however, is unwaveringly upon the two women and a third party, the brother of one of the characters who had first introduced the two women and who, despite his crush on the other, continues to live with the couple until the end.

The cast, consisting of Cheryl Wilson, Candace Henrich and R. Michael Fierro, is well-directed by Donna Davis, and they do a fine job in bringing out the best from a script which is basically sentimental and flawed. The play does, however, exhibit a certain amount of charm and virtue.

Momentous events happen too fast in



Phoebe and Rosetta in "Secrets"

Secrets. In the first scene we see Phoebe, a midwife, coming in to deliver Rosetta's baby. The two women have never before met. By the end of the scene, Phoebe is telling Rosetta that she is the prettiest woman she's ever seen, and she's calling her sweetheart. After the blackout, the scene shifts and we are told that Rosetta's been alone and grieving for three days after the delivery of her dead baby. Phoebe comes to the door, begs Rosetta to eat and sleep, then tells her that she's been thinking about her all the time and that she's never felt anything like this before. Rosetta asks Phoebe if she'd like to take her in her arms and kiss her. They kiss and become instant lovers. It's a tad unbelievable, unlikely that a woman who's just been through labor and stillbirth would be in the mood for romance; and that she would so nonchalantly come out as a lesbian—and with a white woman, to boot, whom she barely knew—at this period of time in the pre-civil rights South.

Secrets takes too many liberties with the audience's benevolence. It's a feel-good play, and its charm often forces us to suspend our belief for the sake of liking it. And although I didn't believe a lot of it, I suspended my judgment until after Intermission, hoping that some riveting drama would occur so that I could believe in it and could get into the characters—but nothing really happened. The writer took the easy way out, with quick resolutions for every brewing conflict. There was not enough struggle presented to believe in the resolutions, and the dramatic elements were too quickly capped to as to get on with the historical charting of events in the relationship.

Secrets had some very good, natural dialogue, and some very good moments, but the moments did not a play make. It would have been better to have held and explored those moments in depth instead of zipping through the plot of the relationship. The ending of the play was too cute and cozy. In the penultimate scene, Leland, Phoebe's brother is having a heart attack. Phoebe and Rosetta have already been together for decades. After the scene closes, we are brought up in time to 1969. They are now two old ladies who've just come back from a lesbian/gay rights rally. Phoebe asks Rosetta, "Do you think we were the oldest lesbians there?" In the course of conversation, we are told that Leland's been dead for 18 years. Rosetta turns to Phoebe and tells her and tells us that Phoebe keeps loving her no matter how old she gets. The loving tenderness which is the selling point of this play, is also where it falters. The tenderness is stuck to a gooey sentimentality, as when Phoebe replies, "Now and forever, my sweetheart."

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DANCE

BY RACHEL KAPLAN



Photo by Georgia Wright

Back to the Body Earthquake Whatever Stage You Were Standing On 5:04 p.m., October 17, 1989

It was a day like any other day, quiet and simple in its own way, and then it stopped being the same and started being different and everyone within a 100 square miles might have had the same experience for one single moment: is this it? because it was a day like any other and then it stopped being the same and started being different and things started falling. For most of us the shaking has become commonplace enough this time it went on that extra moment longer and there was time for that question and people went flying off bridges and freeways and children said goodbye to their parents before they were ready and all the lights went down while the marina fires lit up and then people finally started looking each other in the eyes. the phenomena of earth unite us in a way nothing else does, not work, not money, not the necessity to do what needs to be done, not even the world series, maybe only war which carries with it the same fear of the obsolescence of the body, nothing pulls us together like earth does. fear of death, love of life, back to the body. back to the body. we are such small and fragile things finally and there is no such thing as control. it was a grand show, no doubt about it. i appreciate the grandeur of this theatre and it's not clear, four days later, if it's over yet. the day after (go find the people you love, touch them and say: i'm glad you are ok. i'm here), the day after the day after (when you thought it might be over but the air is still thick with fear and charged with that unusual electricity, it's far too hot, there's nothing to do but ride out the day, knowing it really isn't over yet, the earth hasn't stopped moving and the body shakes with small but continuous tremors), the third day after the earthquake (people fall asleep in the middle of

conversations in the middle of the day and many of us burst into tears or come down with mysterious symptoms of distress). how's your sleep been? wake up in the middle of the night afraid something might happen and you might die alone this time? this is a media plot to talk about people who are alive, what happens on the fringes of calamity, a plot to tell a different story. (media) slut george bush flies into town, declares a state of emergency and thinks this is something he can control; 40,000 people die of AIDS and where's our state of emergency? "ACT UP takes full responsibility for the non-violent aspects of the earthquake. We figure they're gonna blame us anyway, so we'll just own it right now," said one unnamed but very alive spokesperson. put that in your coverage, chronicle. i want real people to be seen everyday, not just on days when we might lose everything we have. i want the grandness of this show (you know which show i mean, don't you?) to be acknowledged everyday, not just on days when the show might be over. what we have is all we have and it is the everything, beautiful, real, mysterious, important. i don't have any pictures of broken freeways and collapsed bridges, i still want to talk to someone who was making love when the earthquake hit, but i have heard the wide variety of stories: i was on bart, i should have been driving home on the freeway but i wasn't, i was talking on the phone to santa cruz and the line went dead, i was sitting at my desk writing, i was rehearsing without my clothes on, i was in my car, i was taking a shit, i was putting away the dishes, i watched the books on my shelves fly all the way across the room, i was in the parking lot of the 18th street cala foods, i was in class and people started screaming, the mundane and the profound are really very much the same. you could be walking or talking and watching tv and then it could be over. the woman who leapt the bridge and didn't get through really got to me. that moment as the final summation of a life? god, give me a break. the reluctant spiritualist sees she can know nothing but the constancy of change and the possibilities of

love. i don't want to do anything but touch you. i know people smiled at one another more often on the street on wednesday than usual, i know that driving down valencia street at 5:21 on tuesday afternoon was the most civilized ride i have ever taken down that street with everyone looking both ways to make sure it was alright to go. i know that anarchy could work if people took that time to look one another in the eyes and see each other, every day. the question: how was your earthquake? is really a question of frame. how did you experience what we all experienced? (gently, metaphor, gently: can we begin to look at performance/theatre/art/life, etc. with this openness of perspective, asking ourselves what the personal relevance and resonance of any event might be?) how did this look from where you stood? and how does an event like this immediately reflect back all the issues of your life? when you think it might be over, that this is it, what do you do, who do you reach for? in a way, there is nothing to do but go to the beach and eat ice cream, look at each other and renounce the fear and anger that motivates so much of what we do. only with the threat of loss do we see what there is to lose. my reflection was of anger: i'm angry that it takes this to recognize how important people are, to see how much anger i carry every day and how little attention i give in the resolution of difficulty with people who matter. mom, dad, are you reading this? anger and the inability to communicate it, my mirror, my earthquake. what did you see about who you are? there is too little time, too little time, the body is too fragile, we are all here one minute and could be dead the next, no time to hesitate and then there is knowing this: i am no finished thing, i am where i am and i am all that i have met and where i am now is the only place i can be and i have no regrets no regrets no regrets. go to the beach eat some ice cream climb corona heights to look at the lights of the city and feel the warm air across your face be with people you love. back to the body. life and death on different sides of the same side. for effect

there's nothing like the threat of loss to make that much more precious what we don't acknowledge we already have. back to the body and the things of the body: i want to touch and be touched. she asked me an important question but was embarrassed because she thought i might think it was silly: what do you want to do before you die? she asked me. who are you and where are you going? how did this look from where you stood?

Back to the Body or Not To Be Outdone or The Cutting Edge Modern Primitives Southern Exposure Gallery

Modern Primitives, a visual art exhibition and series of live events at Southern Exposure Gallery, examines the contemporary resurgence of a variety of body modifications—tattooing, scarification, piercing, and bloodletting—in an art context which interprets their existence as part of a human quest for transcendence through the flesh. *Physical Illuminations*, a panel featuring Fakir Musafar, Luis Kemnitzer and Thyryza Goodeve, explored dimensions of these phenomena from the participatory, anthropological and feminist perspectives.

In the exhibit context, *Modern Primitives* is framed as a discourse about the body as a final frontier on which we can exert control and make choices. The body has been culturally inscribed with images that create our understanding of it, our experience of its sensuality and physicality, as well as our generalized alienation from and fear of its mystery and divinity. Our bodies have been/are created by such a plethora of symbolic images (in a context that abhors the delights of the flesh), that it becomes good policy and perhaps the only path to mental health to seriously reevaluate our (social) concepts of beauty, eroticism, pleasure, pain and desire. *Modern primitives* (a term coined by Musafar to describe those

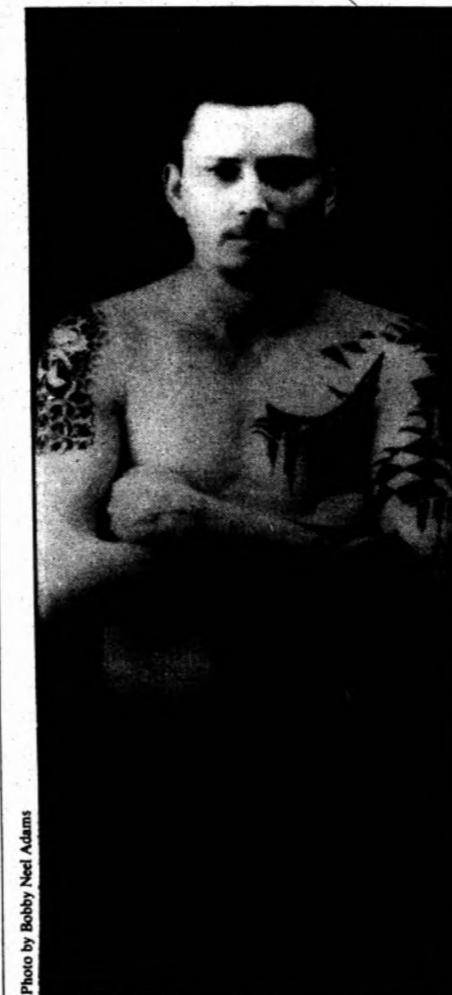


Photo by Bobby Neal Adams
Modern Primitives

who engage in practices of body modification in their quest for a spiritual experience of the flesh that goes beyond our cultural knowledge of it) are involved in a practice of literally inscribing the body with signs (tattoos, rings, scars) to reclaim, individuate and alter the body.

Our ideas about our bodies are culturally invented and relentlessly fortified by the images surrounding us. In the West, images of the body (especially the body of woman) have been profoundly affected and damaged by christian vilification and mortification of the flesh. Modern primitives search for a route to a differently sensuous experience of "the flesh" that includes divergent views of pain and pleasure, a physical experience of the body that can elevate and transcend our perceptual reality of sensation. In a culture as controlled by images as ours is, even the physical experiences of the body have been modified by the images that surround us. I would have liked more dialogue about the actual experience of pain involved in these modifications, and the reinterpretation of the relationship between pleasure and pain.

Modern Primitives as an exhibit/art event draws connections between a "human" need to modify (or control) the body (manifested in various cultures across the world and over time) and our contemporary Western body modifications (silicon injections, face lifts, tummy tucks, etc.) *Modern Primitives* sees our peculiar versions of body modification as coercive ones, with the body of woman and to some extent, the body of man, created and commodified through the oppressive reach of capitalism. The images of *Modern Primitives* seek to reclaim the "image" of the body through a series of individual choices about how the body can look. Modern primitives uncode and recode the body, claim the body as a site of individuation, asserting choices about how the body can look, feel, and act.

The *Modern Primitives* exhibit is on the cutting edge of dialogues about s/m, the search for an authentic spiritual and ritual sensibility absent in our culture, a feminist analysis of body image and desire, the hatred of physical pleasure brought about by christian dogma, as well as a deconstructionist view of the body that seeks to free it from the viral infection of the endlessly proliferating images of culture. Obviously, the dialogue of *Modern Primitives* covers a far wider scope than this piece can detail. It includes substantial history of body modification and feminist theory about the reclamation of the imagistically assaulted body as a site of power and choice, and the act of modification as a metaphorical gesture that transforms the two-dimensional body into three-dimensional flesh enacting rage, anger, desire and memory. "No wound speaks for itself," says Gregory Whitehead.

The imperialistic nature of our inquiry colors our ability to understand the cross-cultural groundings of body modification, bringing up both questions of the relevance of "primitive" modifications in our "modern" culture and in what possible context we can understand them. Anthropologist Kemnitzer was quick to point out that as prisoners and disaffected children of our culture we may seek community by emphasizing otherness while standing to lose our sense of commonality. But while our symbols and images are necessarily different, he believes our quests are similar: the search for a sensual and spiritual understanding of the body consonant with our real experience—connecting the physical, emotional and spiritual worlds. Images of scarification, tattooing, piercing, constriction, suspension and penetration (Musafar's terms) from other cultures are subverted by modern primitives. That these activities are cross-cultural suggests a human need qualified only by cultural image and waiting to be interpreted through that lens.

The *Modern Primitives* exhibit is couched in art terms to make a larger cultural statement about the associative and powerful qualities of images of the body. While liposuction, et al. and the horrific (because coercive) body

modifications "modern" women subject themselves to seem the antithesis of a more "primitive" rite of scarification, it is important to see them situated in a lineage suffused with doctrine that assaults desire and our ability to feel. That body modification exists in all its forms makes a compelling point about a drive for an understanding of the body that includes greater freedom and choice for the individual, that seeks to escape imagery that oppresses and alters the experience of the sensate, that mystifies and does not allow communion with the only ground—embattled as it is—on which we can fully claim an identity: the body.

Modern Primitives continues November 3 and 10 with Don Ed Hardy, The Thinking Man's Tattooist; Beauty and Blood: Mayan Sacrifice; Blood Letting and Body Modification; and Nailed, a Video Not For The Faint-hearted. All shows at 8:00 p.m. Call 863-2141 for more information.

As the Millenium Approaches Footwork, September 29, 1989

Contradictions Get Me Hot and Bothered was an evening-length performance of two pieces, one constructed by Jon Weaver, the other by Liz Ozol. Both Ozol and Weaver are dancers who work and teach at Footwork and are relative newcomers to the Bay Area. Both pieces, *Rite* and *Cum Armageddon*, explored the contemporary themes of sexual desire, fragmentation of self, family dysfunction, the wounds between women and men, and the search for lost ritual, with personal style and some creative solutions to standard theatrical problems.

Weaver's piece, *Cum Armageddon*, elegantly performed with Sarah Michelson, was a fast-

paced and witty movement/text piece about desire, the family, and catholicism—because, god knows, there are no other issues as we so swiftly approach the millennium. At least i can't think of any. *Cum Armageddon* goes from Weaver dressed as a nerd in plaid pants and suspenders with "a furious wish for something to believe in," to a preacher's rant, a child's tortured obeisance to Father Right (an almost-cheap shot with banana under hot lights which really worked), to not-so-veiled allusions to the s/m homo/eroticism of catholicism, and campy jokes about Jesus ("Mary, get me my pumps, these spikes are killing me!"). It made historically trenchant commentary about god, and the decentralization of culture which creates our necessarily decentralized (i.e. fractured) sense of state, self, and spirit. It was a well-articulated rant about Weaver's conflicts in this

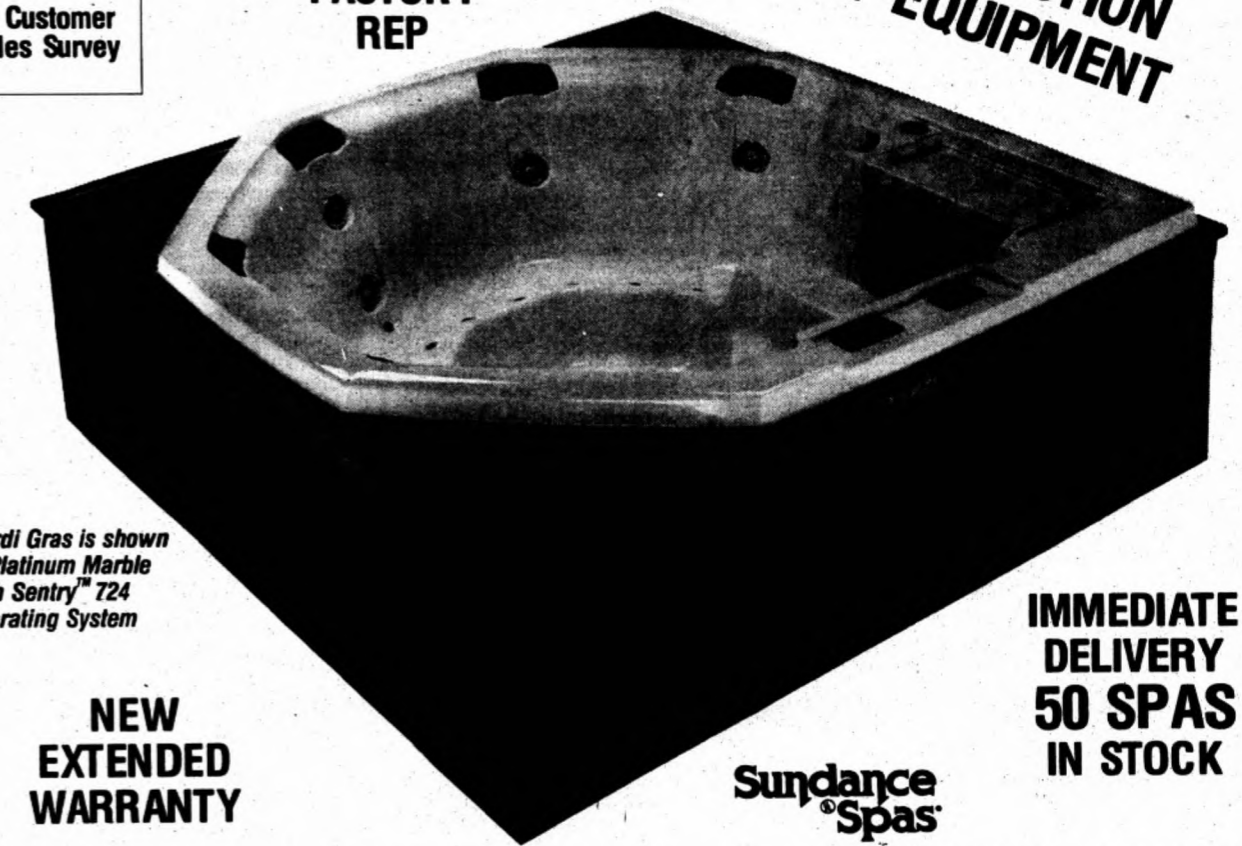
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"technologically hallucinogenic world" where "excitement feels a lot like fear and fear feels a lot like terror and terror feels a lot like orgasm. cum armageddon. cum and get it." A good pun, that. Weaver dealt well with questions of sexuality in a religious context that mortifies the flesh and punishes desire.

Weaver's solutions for standard theatrical problems, reflected in the fragmentation of the text, were clever: he set up lights on two ladders and had Michelson turn them off and on throughout his monologue to signal his shifting perspective and persona. The whole of *Cum Armageddon* was well done, and for a

dance-thing, about the unhappy alliance between god, desire, and gender in our over-mediated world, done under the lights of a black box theatre, I liked it well enough. I really would rather see this sort of stuff under a freeway—out in the world—but in lieu of that, *Cum Armageddon* hit important issues in a way that communicated its message.

Ozol's piece, *Rite*, inspired by an essay about the sexuality of Russian working women (which just goes to show the post-modern range of possible inspiration), was a dance of circles, circles of women dancing and circles of women singing. Shira Cion, with members of Kitka, an Eastern European women's chorus,

created a lavishly beautiful sound score to accompany Ozol's choreography. *Rite* speaks about the culturally formed connections of women as they compete for men's attention and how this competition fractures the bonds women are able to make among themselves. This intellectual subtext buttresses the structure of a dance that uses language, modern dance, and image to represent possibilities of women—together in opposition to the garbled cultural noise we're forced to hear.

The center of the dance is a complicated text read by Ozol in male doctor drag, about the oppression of men. S/he is subsequently revealed as a poser by a group of determined women and, at that point, goes into a formal "dance" which ends the piece. What is this dance/theatre thing, anyway, I wondered. I didn't understand the relationship between words and movement in the context of an intellectual manifesto contrasting a rather dancier dance about—what? What is the shift from words to movement about? Is the body to be read as the more pure expression of an emotional situation already articulated in language? Does the movement reify what has already been said in words? Is movement used because it is, after all, what dancers do? Is dance/theatre just a showcase for a variety of performance skills organized into a semi-coherent whole?

What Ozol did well was organize images of women dancing, playing and speaking around a construct that interests her. What she objects to about the fractured bonds between women is clear in *Rite*, as are some possibilities for toppling the set-up. Female relationships are represented in the various duets and circle dances throughout the piece.

Another PIG Performance ATA Gallery Friday the 13th, October, 1989

It really smells in the basement of ATA. It smells like puke and red paint and 4 a.m. and the nasty nightmares performance artists articulate in their spare time when they aren't working at Rainbow or delivering messages to downtown corporations or walking in the Castro and getting beamed by cops. I love it down there. Its squalor reaches near elegiac proportions, or, at least, the romantic version of this squalor in my prose about it seeks to reach such heights.

I watched Esther Amy perform down there on Friday the 13th when the moon was nearly full and everyone I knew was running around in a crazy sort of way, moving couches or looking at Scot Velardo's paintings at Footwork, or being inundated by parents visiting from out of town, and generally if it wasn't one thing it was the other, and we all try to catch one another in these spastic (but loving) ways we have and sometimes we miss but I believe we do the best we can. We commit to falling with each other mostly because that's what we keep doing mostly, and then we end up in basements that smell like puke to watch women with blindfolds over their beautiful Jewish eyes exercise personal ghosts about incest, danger, rape, the face of distress, the outraged cry that is so much of our performance. Just add water and stir and watch the responses rise; we sit in the basement of ATA or outside old military installations and watch—it smells like puke or fresh ocean air and we can't help but remember our own nightmares, our own dreams of work and how it should be but never seems to be, what we want to say about what we see, where we are: inching towards community, towards finding a way with one another that might resemble family through the exorcism of that first family on days like Friday the 13th, a day of a nearly full moon when everyone is running around trying to escape their parents who suddenly drop in from out of town.

Esther Amy Fisher (who used to be just Amy Fisher and who I went to college with years ago and who was making definitely dif-



Photo by Mia Fineman
Esther Amy Fisher

ferent performance than in the modern dance studio of this really very uptight college with its pretensions towards liberality, which really are, you know, nothing but pretensions in the face of an old-boy network over 150 years old which gets more turgid with reputation every year) performed in the basement on Friday the 13th, exorcising that familiar (metaphoric) and real scourge of incest, the ghost of incestuous brothers, that old mind-fuck full of desire.

A blindfolded Fisher approaches the audience, holding a candle against the dark. She blows it out and says: "the real truth about my brother is unspeakable... unbearable... intolerable... the real truth about my brother is a lie..." Estrangement uses image, gesture and song to effectively create a statement about incest and female powerlessness, about the power of woman locked up in the beautiful body of woman which has been used against its will. The key has been thrown away. Is this theatre the key?

The jumpcut images (a frieze of physical rage, the chant of "i want you to suck my cock, i don't want to suck your cock" to the gyrations of her pelvis) worked well with Fisher's singing and the drumming done by a somewhat dissociated woman stage left. The text of Estrangement was clear and well-delivered; Fisher's singing voice is a strong tool she uses well, albeit oddly. Her voice is beautifully irritating—she sings in a strange key and contorts her long beautiful body in an odd way. Her face, her gaze, her gestures are clear, precise; she is serious about what she says. The slippage from text to song to visual images of torch song dancer, tormented girl lover, woman masturbating on a chair against the splattered brick and broken wall of ATA conveyed the distress. "Incest is a cold rage" she says.

The final song, the lines of which "brother let me touch you... you're the best man I ever had," creates a circle of a woman seated in darkness to a woman with her eyes open—seeing a relationship between her past and her present hungers and in the act of moving beyond the past into a free future. Performance like this exorcises ghosts, explicates the past sufficiently enough to mediate its vanishing act. It finds family dropping in from out of town or from the arc of the full moon. We keep falling and catching each other. Just add water and stir: watch the troubled responses to a difficult time rise. Theatre like this has to be the key.

ART



Bound and Uniformed from "Lost on a Sea of Desire," by Mark I. Chester

Mark Chester's 10-Year Retrospective

REVIEWED BY SUSIE BRIGHT

I first got to know Mark Chester after the 1984 Folsom Street fire. I'd been invited to his home/gallery in September of that year by a friend who said we were going to see fire-damaged photography. All I could think of was Tom Waite's radio commercial on "smoke damaged furniture—you can drive it away today!"

I'd watched my own home and belongings go up in flames once, and I had the unpleasant memory of the smell that lingers. I'd had a hard time even collecting soot-covered remains of my belongings because it seemed so pitiful and useless. I had a hard time imagining what someone would do with that kind of wreck.

Mark had a playroom in his South of Market apartment, a dungeon/studio that was the only room in the flat not reached by the flames. But the SFPD reached it. They ransacked the room, destroying and looting much of Chester's work. Afterwards there was a big news story about a "South of Market Torture Chamber Uncovered in Mad Fire."

I don't know how our boys in blue were able to go through those photographs without being affected more profoundly. Mark's pictures are not typical swinger advertising fare, nor are they Diane Arbus on Fright Night. They have been called fetish photography or even erotic portraiture but that is like calling an American flag a diagram of red white and blue—it means something more than that. Not because fetishistic portraits are not compelling enough in their own right, not because sex, itself, isn't plenty of dynamite, but because Chester's work is so classical and soulful it takes on dimensions beyond its apparent subject.

I remember going to the Whitney museum in New York last year to see Robert Mapplethorpe's retrospective. I watched the docent lead a group of orderly museum patrons to a wall with Mapplethorpe's gargantuan flowering calla lilies on one side and gargantuan flowering penises on the other. I overheard the docent speak about light and shadow, and I was awfully tempted to interrupt with the obvious: *This work is Venus-rising-off-the-foam, beautiful, an orchestra of the erotic and cerebral.*

I felt this way, then, looking at Chester's

"Wounded Art" from the Folsom Street fire, and again, now, when I see the retrospective of 10 years of his work.

An early close-up picture, titled "Gary," appears first to my eye as a penis covered in pools of semen. Then I realize it is wax, not semen, and then in the same instant the whole composition turns into a view of Mt. Fuji, of lava flows. It's deeply pornographic and just as deeply *National Geographic*.

Close by "Gary" is "Marilyn Fantasies," a picture of a man's torso, smooth-shaven and muscular with a low-cut leather vest on. It recalls poignantly Irving Penn's classic photo of Monroe embracing her cleavage in a shirred white dress.

"Mark, these nipples are going to haunt me," I told him. "I'm going to wake up in the middle of the night with these demanding nipples asking me questions, telling me to pull down my dress." I wandered off into a little Marilyn Fantasy of my own.

Mark's retrospective included a special wall for his fire-damaged fantasies: I felt Man Ray over my shoulder looking at the marker-blackened, blade-patterned mystery pictures: a body part revealed, a small movement or object willfully puzzled by Mark's combined efforts with the police force. Each photograph is a little pool of surreality, the finest mindfuck imaginable, a picture that asks to be looked at again and again.

I paced myself through the rest of the retrospective, reviewing a lot of Chester's work that has been familiar and dramatic to me in the past: "The Rubber Garden," the tarot card "Hanged Man," his portraits of playwright Bob Chesley, or the performance artist who tied himself spider-like to a baby grand piano (and I assume played it magnificently).

Finally I came to some of the most recent work, a series of sexual portraits called "You: Eyeglasses and Hard Dick, Me: Art Camera." Each is a picture of one man, our point of view looking straight at his erection and also his gaze through a pair of fashion lenses. I stared at each man, thinking that while their bodies were not Colt material, somehow their attitude was! They were glamorous and sexy and individually masculine, yet they looked so different from commercial gay cheesecake.

"What is it about these pictures, Mark?" I asked. "They look like they should be in *On Our Backs*, I said, hoping he would understand the aesthetic I referred to, not the gender.

He echoed my sentiment, talking about how

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Photo Peter Marcus

important it was to shoot images of men who will never make the pages of *Mandate* in their spectacles. Their sexiness, and the very irony of their glasses and hard-ons battling for the camera's attention, is what makes these pictures a special erotica and an unusual look at self-image. The mainstream press won't print them for fear of "obscenity," and the porn press won't publish them because it violates their formula. Their loss.

It wasn't the first time I thought that lesbians in magazines like *On Our Backs* and similar materials have developed a place to parade the titillating diversity and nuance of our sexual stripes, while gay and straight porn keeps limping along with the same weary faces and asses. Someone is going to get their shit together in the next decade and publish people like Chester who have broken such sexual stereotypes with originality, beauty and spirit. We are going to see the pioneers of hot intimate pornographic art redefine what people thought porn was in the first place.

If you are able to see Chester's work in the modest, warm settings he's created for now, you'll have the pleasure of being able to go to the Whitney years from now, pass by the docent explaining the vanguard of contemporary erotica, and say, "I remember when..."

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FILM

BY RANDY TUROFF

Malpractice

Malpractice, subtitled *Every Mother's Nightmare*, is reality drama taken to the max. The Australian feature film, shown at last month's Mill Valley Film Festival, is a totally gripping and suspenseful film. Bill Bennett has directed a powerful story based on a compilation of actual cases of maternity deliveries gone wrong. The fascination of the film arises from its direct, unflinching "you are there" style. Not a moment is lost, not a shot is uneventful. There are no cutaways, fast forwards or memories. Every scene is fast paced, present tense, and as crucial to the whole as each beat on the heart monitoring screen. Anyone who has ever faced hospitalization would do well to see this film.

Malpractice begins as the titles are rolling with the lead character Coral (exquisitely played by Caz Lederman) announcing to her husband that she is expecting their third child. She's all joy and smiles. The titles end and we are immediately immersed in the drama. Coral is in the labor room of the hospital, her water already broken and a problematic trace of fluid on the napkin. The female attending nurse, the female midwife and the young male doctor are hovering around the bed, and the scene is set for the action to follow. The film is shot in intense close-ups, with hand-held camera acting as a kind of passionately observing fourth entity studying the physical procedures, and the extremely emotional faces and reflexes of all involved. Whatever happens—from labor pains to forceps, to Caesarian operation—no visual or emotional detail is spared.

The film focuses on the life/death struggles of childbirth complicated by a twist of plot which puts the patriarchal institution of the medical profession under extreme scrutiny. There's one woman who is snowballed by the medical power structure, one baby improperly delivered and born to suffer the lifelong consequences, one young and relatively inexperienced doctor whose misjudgment and rash arrogance profoundly affects the fate of all involved, and a head nurse whose warnings and advice are ignored by the doctor despite her years of experience in delivery.

The realism of *Malpractice* is heightened through the use of hand-held cameras recording "near-to-life" hospital conditions and surgical procedures. The use of a cast of mixed professional actors and non-professional senior nurses and lawyers is most effective. Much of the dialogue was improvised and the natural, everyday look of the cast gives the film a common folk flavor—common folk caught in the vortex of high drama.

The film is profoundly dramatic, never melodramatic. It evokes the deepest emotions and portrays the issues, characters and relationships in ways which are never grander than the material itself.

Malpractice, unlike other docu-dramas, never steps outside itself for its point of view, thus giving us the feeling of immediacy and present tense action. The mythic, the heroic, the questions of ethics and responsibility, surface from the intensity of the action on screen. You experience this film, you don't just watch it.

The female characters—Coral, the nurse, the midwife, the social worker—were very strong and adamant in their search for truth. Female bonding was portrayed as nurturing and supportive. The male characters in charge were insular and evasive, and their bonding arose from a mutual need to abdicate responsibility and to cover up misconduct. The husband, in the middle between male authority and female rebellion, remained pretty much in



a state of angry denial, coming to his wife's side only after she had spoken to person after person and committee after committee to finally get a hearing before a Medical Tribunal.

The malpractice trial highlighted the issues and clarified exactly what happened during the childbirth, providing us with a sober appraisal of a terrible situation, a situation which caused extreme duress, pain and profound sadness for everyone.

Malpractice is an intelligent, radical, and unmanipulative film. It has a perspective, a gravity to its approach which is very well-balanced. The film rings true and translates far beyond its specific crisis into universal realms with which we are all painfully and humanly familiar. The film has stirred up quite a controversy in Australia, and it has yet to be screened in a public theatre there. It's been receiving critical acclaim abroad and has been well-received here in San Francisco.

Common Threads: Stories from the Quilt

Academy Award-winning filmmaker Rob Epstein (*The Life and Times of Harvey Milk*) has joined with Bay Area filmmaker Jeffrey Friedman to make *Common Threads*. The film is about the AIDS epidemic told through the lives of five people who've died and who are commemorated by panels in the Names Project AIDS Quilt.

The fabric of the film, like the quilt itself, is a tapestry of names and stories. Through home movies, still photos and narratives by surviving loved ones, the five people represented by the panels on the quilt are brought to life again to tell us of their strug-

gles with AIDS. Through Epstein's multileveled and compassionate perspective, this handful of people is able to serve, without losing their individuality, as representatives of the 10 million people who have been lost to the virus worldwide. The personalized approach used in this film is more than effective, it's emotionally heart-wrenching. It's a powerful film which takes us inside the lives of the lovers and families who, while grieving their loss, also celebrate the beauty and specialness of their loved ones.

Alongside the individual stories, the political overtones of the crisis are continually explored. We are shown how the AIDS epidemic has not only been grossly mishandled by government agencies but how government indifference to anti-gay discrimination has allowed AIDS research to be undermined.

The statistics build exponentially. In 1981, 335 Americans were known to have died from AIDS. The newspapers started to report the phenomenon with headlines like: "Rare Cancer in 41 Homosexuals." By 1983, 3,933 Americans were dead, and the NIH was still dragging its heels. Roger Lyon, an AIDS activist was quoted in the newspaper as saying: "Don't let my epitaph read: I died of red tape." In the film we are shown just this epitaph on Roger Lyons' patch on the quilt.

It took then-president Reagan until 1985 to mention the word AIDS in a public statement, and when he did it was in a derogatory manner. By 1986, 31,452 more people had died.

Already, more Americans have died from AIDS than died in the Vietnam War. As Vito Russo pointed out in the film, it's not at all unique to have people tell you that every one of their friends is dead.

The Names Project is the positive focus of this film. Through the Quilt, the loving

memories continue to remind us of the ongoing reality of AIDS deaths and of the political struggles to gain a foothold in fighting this epidemic. The Quilt is at the heart of the film, and its importance, both as a political symbol and as a metaphor of love, is brought home to us in *Common Threads*.

As Russo tells us: his lover Jeffrey's been dead for three years, but the sense of loss is always present. "I still wonder every day where he is. For me, wherever the quilt is, is where Jeffrey is."

Common Threads is an in-depth look at the people behind the categories. It's an important film; it moves both the heart and mind, while it succeeds at achieving its ultimate goal—raising political consciousness about AIDS.

La Ofrenda: The Days of the Dead

La Ofrenda, by Lourdes Portillo and Susana Munoz, is a colorful film about the Mexican cultural celebration commemorating the dead. On the first day of November, the dead come to visit their living relatives. Elaborate preparations for the visit go on in the homes of the relatives, at the cemeteries and in the streets of the villages. The ofrendas, or offerings, of favorite food, flowers and souvenirs of the dead are laid out for their visit. The special days and nights are times of magic, times for sharing memories, and catharsis through joyful festivities. The celebrants do not fear the dead, but, on the contrary, welcome them with open arms and hearts, to become part of the family once again and to enjoy the hospitality of their loved ones.

The skull, or calavera, is the favorite icon of this celebration. It symbolizes the passage of the living towards death, and it is reanimated during the festival days to include the presence of the dead among the living. Skull dolls dangle in the marketplace, and children are given skulls of sugar, with their own names written upon them, as candy favors. Skeletons in wedding gowns and calaveras of politicians comically mock the vanities of the living.

During this festival of the dead, as during our Halloween, people are free to shatter the restraints of their usual social roles and to come out and lose themselves in poses and costumes which are conventionally forbidden. The film shows a number of men in mourning drag playing Our Lady of the Dead; in black gowns and veils, playing martyred widows still in love with the men who had mistreated them when alive. On the Days of the Dead, people are permitted and encouraged to expose their inner lives and fantasies in a carnival-like public setting.

La Ofrenda is an entertaining, sensuous and informative film. It vibrates with life. It is often humorous, but it isn't at all deprecating. The film traces the Mexican holiday back to its pre-Hispanic Indian roots, where the Dia de los Muertos were celebrated for an entire month. In the ancient Indian ruins, in the place of the dead, we see endless stone friezes of skulls and stone masks which are laughing. For the ancient cultures, life and death were interconnected in the cycles of nature, and the Wheel of Life was also the Wheel of Death, encompassing all the opposites in its turning.

The film suggests that in our present Anglo culture, we are separated from death and so we unreasonably fear it. When a culture can celebrate and integrate death into its life, a working relationship is established and a natural balance is restored.

The film switches from Oaxaca to San Francisco to show us the celebration of Dia de los Muertos in the Chicano culture of the Mission. "The past," expresses one woman, "is a never ending source of nostalgia." A woman working with the Galeria de La Raza on the festival put it this way: "We all share the same ancestors."

On an elaborate altar, glazed bread is

Forbidden City USA

A Conversation with
Producer/Director
Arthur Dong

BY GENE PRICE

In the mid-1940s while in the Navy, my ship was ported for a time at San Francisco. There was a nightclub—a favorite of service men—on Sutter Street, called Forbidden City. It was unique in that it exclusively featured Chinese-American entertainers. Harlem had its Cotton Club with all-black entertainers; San Francisco had the Forbidden City. The ambiance seemed exotic: there were jugglers, singers, and always a line of exquisite dancers. It was the place to go.

Academy Award nominee Arthur Dong (*Sewing Woman*, *Lotus*) has been developing his documentary on the Forbidden City since 1985. He has assembled new film prints from nitrate negatives which have been in storage for some 50 years. He has also filmed interviews with many of the original performers. The completed film will be premiered at a benefit screening at the Palace of Fine Arts on Wednesday, November 15, at 7 p.m. Proceeds from the benefit will go to NAATA (National Asian-American Telecommunications Association) and A/PAC (Asian/Pacific AIDS Coalition).

Dong, a native San Franciscan and a 1982 graduate of S.F. State, was up from Los Angeles recently and we talked to him in his suite at the Nikko. What surprised us on first meeting Arthur Dong was his youth. He could not possibly have been around when the Forbidden City was flourishing. We had to ask the impertinent question.

"I'm 35," says Dong. "But I've always been interested in the '20s and '30s. The Surf was a revival movie theatre, and when I was growing up, I saw all of the films of that period. I studied the techniques. And everybody knew about the Forbidden City. It was just a block away from the entrance to Chinatown at Grant and Sutter."

decorated with tears. Vibrant orange marigolds rest under a cloud of incense, attracting the dead to come by. A young Chicano artist shows us his personal altar and talks about art as the thin space between life and death where magic can occur. It's a place for healing. On his altar are photos of his cousins and grandparents who have passed on and there are calaveras of friends who have died of AIDS. In the Gallery exhibition are modern altars which have become new art forms, with videos tracking between the candles and flowers. In *La Ofrenda*, death is made to be lovable and humorous. For the Mexican culture, as Octavio Paz said, "Death is a favorite toy."

I walked away from the press screening feeling uplifted and more lighthearted about death. Soon afterwards, the Earthquake struck, and I thought about all of the people killed in the Mexico City quake. I wondered how many more photos will fill the death altars this November in San Francisco.

Samsara: Death and Rebirth in Cambodia

"Samsara" refers to the Buddhist concept of life as a perpetual attachment to the cycles of death and rebirth. Life in the world is an immersion in the ocean of birth and suffering. The particularities, the causes and conditions of human suffering are always changing, but they are always there. Beneath each face is a skull. Behind each birth are many previous births, and life continues to be resurrected on the



Photo by Zand Gee

"Then in 1982 I read an article about the club that mentioned Jadin Wong, one of the performers," Dong continues. "She was living in New York, so I immediately flew out to meet her to discuss my idea. It took three years to track down most of the performers. Even then I wasn't ready to start shooting, but I had no choice. Some of the original performers had only recently died and I couldn't afford to wait." (Owner Charlie Low died this past August.)

How did Dong handle financing? "The original financing was my own credit cards," he says. Despite an Academy Award nomination, there was no backing from the studios? "By the time the film opens, I'll be \$40,000 in debt," says Dong.

Since the club no longer exists, Dong faced the formidable task of documenting it on

film—originally with no available footage. "I knew I wouldn't have a film if I couldn't locate some authentic period-footage. That I had to have," says Dong. "I haunted the film archives, public and private, for footage. Then one day Charlie Low, the club's owner, discovered a dusty old Chinatown bank money bag. It was full of 16mm film. That was the beginning."

"But my story isn't about the club. It's about the people who made it," continues Dong. "I'm attracted to stories of people who go against the grain, who know what their dreams are and go after them. My film is about those people, how they dealt with racism and their own cultural barriers. And what they did with their lives after the Forbidden City closed in 1962. I used the club only as a focal point (continued on page 50)

Center before they were murdered. We see piles of skulls, two tiers high, in a warehouse. (continued on page 51)

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CHATTER BOX

BY DEENA JONES

Earthquake, 7.1 and where were YOU! Honey child—scare me. And how Ms. McDonald had time to sing, I will never know. I hope all of you made it OK, with not too much loss. For those who did, our hearts are with you.

If you have some time and you're downtown, stop by and see the new glassy and glitzy Marriott Hotel. I went by the day it opened, the same day as the earthquake, and found it to be just beautiful.

In the news last month: from Sedalia, Missouri, a respected pediatrician who underwent a sex change surgery to become a woman 11 years ago wants to become a man again (at least I don't have that problem). Dr. Ashley, 38, also has a 4-year-old adopted son. (Now explain this, Miss Thing!)

We should be real proud of the great Jim Bailey for doing so well on his trip to S.F. with his new show. And speaking of entertainment, a special thanks to all of you who made it to the Castro Street Fair to see my show. I hope you had a good time. I know I did.

"I've Written a Letter to Daddy" will live forever in the hearts of many queens who were Betty Davis fans—wonderful woman!

DRAG QUEEN HEAVEN...

...could only mean one thing: The Muscle System and Cafe San Marcos' big Halloween bash. If you were standing outside, for free you could have seen big, beautiful and buffed men transformed into Ladies or Creatures of the Night. At \$20 a head, the event raised thousands of dollars for our community. Lenny of the Cafe MC'd what turned out to be a great evening. The girls (Big Girls) did not stop there. They moved through the Castro like queens in heat, proclaiming to be the Biggest and Best Drags in all the Universe. But in real life they're just those big, wonderful boys from the gym.

VOICES OF FREEDOM

Our Bay Area community has a talented new lesbian choral ensemble committed to musical excellence and community involvement. They are committed to performing music that is relevant to our lives, music that speaks to us as women and as lesbians. To achieve their goals, Musical Director and Conductor Sonni Zambino brings her strong musical expertise. Assistant Director and Keyboard Specialist is Carol Park, an accomplished accompanist, solo performer and teacher. Saturday, Nov. 4, at 8 p.m. Voices will be in concert at First Congregational Church, Post at Mason, S.F. For more information call 773-9181. Best of luck ladies with the new group.

GOING TO BROADWAY WITH THE LESBIAN/GAY CHORUS

The Lesbian/Gay Chorus under the direction of Pat Parr has once again put together a great show. The kids looked and sounded wonderful, with new music and many new faces. Opening the show with "Skid Row" from *Little Shop of Horrors* set a great mood. (You did a wonderful job, Brandon). My boys, The Fiddlestix, sang "Tips" as only they could. Marjorie Sheffield takes top stars for diction as she moved through "Lucy and Jesse" from *Follies*. But for the second year, the girls pulled out all the stops with "Nothing Like a Dame" from *South Pacific*. You just can't beat 'em.

The Chorus has been trying to do some outreach to Third World members of our community. Clyde Howell, a Black man in our community, made his debut performance singing "Home" from the *Wiz*. Walking like Joan Crawford and singing like Ms. Mills, it left my heart on fire. Need I say more?

The Special Guest of the evening was



Curtis was auctioned off for \$250 to benefit the AIDS Emergency Fund at the Eagle Bare Chest Calendar party



Newly crowned Grand Duke Bruce Harrison and Grand Duchess Colette



Royal Duke/Duchess Court founder H.L. Perry

Cabaret Gold Winner Lynda Bergren. Lynda was in top voice. Beautiful long vocal lines left everyone speechless. Menage was in good voice and did one of my favorites, "The Little Things We Do Together."

Now! Can we talk? I sat there and kept saying to myself, "Who is the hot woman in the pick-up dress." I looked again and it was the sweet and quiet Linda Rhode. So a special note to Linda—"Loved the new look, girl!"

Mary Cantrell and Randy Kikukawa sang "Together" from *Gypsy*, while Bruce Reid and

Jesse Kane did "Bosom Buddies" from *Mame*. The hot, hot number for the evening should have been done in an all pink room with singers Donald Mitchell and Michael Carey doing "It's You" from *Dames At Sea*. They were perfect for each other, and thanks to them, I still can't get that tune out of my head. The show was good, the voices were great, but just could not match last year's "Movies."

Best of luck on your 10th Anniversary and thanks for supporting our community. We love you. If you wish to join the Chorus, call 586-8022.

THE BARTENDERS' FOLLY

Congratulations to all the newcomers and to the old gang for making the cut to be in *Men Behind Bars V*. Trust me, it will be the time of your life. Tickets will make great Christmas gifts, so order early. Prices are from \$30 to \$15, and you can get them through BASS or by calling 552-3656. And remember, Ms Black Pusse lives.

THE CASTRO STREET STATION

The 14th Anniversary Party of the Station is set for Nov. 14th, "A Tropical Night" on a 115 ft. luxuriously appointed yacht. The cruise is from 8 p.m. to midnight with tropical music to dance the night away, breathtaking views of the Bay and an empty Bay Bridge, sumptuous hors d'oeuvres, entertainment by Danny Williams and myself, and many other surprises. The cost is \$50 and is a benefit for the AIDS Emergency Fund. You can get tickets through the Station so stop by. Chatter Box and the *S.F. Bay Times* would like to thank Jim Baroni and staff for all of their support to our community.

PUT A CHEST ON YOUR WALL!

The 1990 Bare Chest Calendar is out and boy is it HOT! On Oct. 22, The Eagle had a beer bust benefit for the AIDS Emergency Fund to show off and auction off the men on the calendar. Congrats to Wally Hansen, Mr. January; Curtis Greenhaw, Mr. February; Brett Lancaster, Mr. March; Bruce Combs, Mr. April; Robert Kumar, Mr. May; John Dopp, Mr. June; Darrell McQueen, Mr. August; Jim Reuth, Mr. September; Andrew Vasquez, Mr. October; Mitch Johnson, Mr. November; and Mike Ferguson, Mr. December. The man with the plan, Mr. July Brad Cavalier and Cover Boy looked real good on that Sunday. I think of Brad as buffed beef. Thousands of dollars were raised by auctioning off The Boy with dinner. And just between you and me, men going for \$250, I truly hope desert was included—and I don't mean pumpkin pie!

A DATE AT MINSKY'S

The SFGDI Bike Club once again put together their 16th performance of Minsky's. It was a good show with some fun people. Bucky did a great job of "Somewhere Over the Rainbow," while Inga Nations did "City Lights" before the earthquake. But leave it to Gladys Bumps to bring down the house in Act I with Miss Subway of 1952.

In Act II they opened with a set of songs from *Les Miserables* which is in town now. Goldblatt gave a wonderful safe sex performance of "Mr. Monotony," while Ms. P did "Happy Ever After" with a new look. Stephanie Miller, cast member from the *Odd Couple*, was great as she and the cast did "You Got Me." But the winning number in Act II was "Only You," with Miguel Gutierrez and Goldblatt. Great sets, and Goldblatt should win an award for not falling in those skates.

In the dictionary next to the words "Cheap Woman" is Miguel Gutierrez' photo. This man/woman is just too funny for words. Congrats to Director Les Johnson, Producer Bruce McCutcheon, and Choreographer Jason Montana for putting on a great show!

THE ROYAL INVESTITURE

You, the community, are cordially invited to the Royal Investiture of Grand Duke Bruce Harrelson and Grand Duchess Collette

LeGrande and the naming of their Court, Friday, Nov. 3. Doors open at 6 p.m., Investiture begins at 7 p.m. at the California Club, 1750 Clay Street at Van Ness. A donation of \$10 is asked.

SUNDAYS AT THE LINE-UP

The Best Place to be on Sundays is the Line-Up Mexican Restaurant at 398-7th Street. A great group of people are waiting to serve you. You will be greeted by my buddy Dan Hirschberg who will make you feel right at home. If there is a wait, don't worry, because you are in luck. Just move yourself right over to the bar and spend some time with their hot stud bartender Stanley Stenger. Trust me, the man will make your mouth water. Last Sunday, Ms. Green was our waitress. A great smile and a great pair of legs, and it was all about that tight skirt. Check it out, girls. Great margaritas, good food and a wonderful way to end a weekend with the one you love. P.S.

Thanks, Dan for being so wonderful. Love 'Ya!

VINNIE PRESENTS PROGRESSIVE DINNER

Community worker Vinnie Russell will present a Progressive Dinner on Castro Street Sunday, Nov. 5. This will be a fundraiser co-sponsored by the Christmas Eve Dinner for

People with AIDS Committee. 6-7 p.m. is check-in time at Uncle Bert's, 4086 18th Street. From 7:30-8 p.m. soup will be served at The Special, 469 Castro Street. From 7:30-8 p.m. salad will be served at The Bear, 440 Castro. 8-9 p.m. your entree will be served at that hot spot, The Castro Station, 456 Castro, and from 9-10 p.m. dessert will top off your evening at Fran-

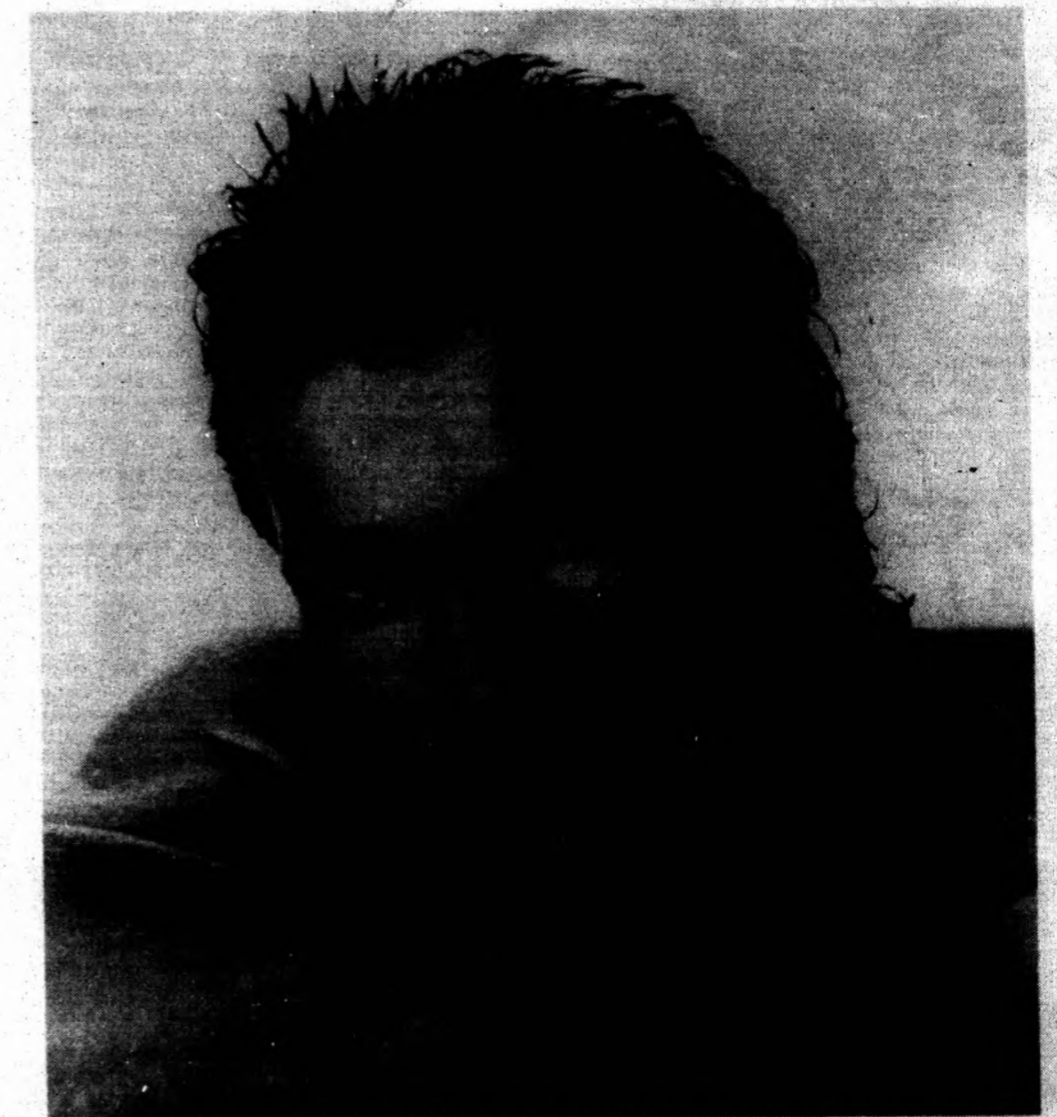
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ly considered "goodlooking," good natured, seeks friends (&?) into similar: slowhand videos (Matt Ramsey, Peter North, David Ashfield, Jeremy Scott, Bobby Rivera, Michael Chang), phishers (Karl, Kierkegaard, Heidegger, Spinoza, Buber, Buscaglia...Budweiser...) music (Sade, Santana, Simply Red, Joe Cocker, Sting, jazz), etc. (Twilight Zone, "Koyanisquatsi," The Shining, Tolkien, The Far Side). Anything in common? Letter with photo please. Reply BT Box NV117.

Open to FF
and many interests in-between. One interest is meeting a professional, handsome, versatile man who is willing to try to develop a relationship. I'm 6'4", 175 lbs, HIV negative, professional, handsome, masculine with a runner's build, nonsmoking, drug-free, and a fun person to be with. Enjoy classical music, tennis, the outdoors, working out, cooking, travel, etc. I don't look like I'd be pierced and into WS and FF, but I am. Seeking a nonsmoking, handsome professional, 30-45 who's comfortable in a suit or leather and shares many of my interests. Send letter and photo to Boxholder, P.O. Box 460856, SF 94146-0856

Quality Man Seeks Quality Man
I'm a successful, professionally employed GWM, 31, 6', 170 muscular and lean with light brown hair and blue eyes. I am a nonsmoker, free of substance abuse and a healthy, asymptomatic HIV positive. My interests include personal and spiritual growth, regular gym workouts, running and other sports, movies, theatre, museums, out doors, volunteer work, investing and spending time with genuine, caring people. I'm communicative, affectionate, playful, responsible, sensitive but independent, and capable of true emotional intimacy. I'm seeking a goal-oriented, professional GWM, mature 25 to youthful 40 who shares the personal qualities mentioned above. I cannot promise a relationship free of conflict, nor would I want to do so, since it is out of conflict and its constructive resolution that comes growth and understanding. However, I can promise you complete acceptance of who you are, companionship free of dependency or the need to control, unquestioned monogamy, respect for your independent needs and an atmosphere in which both of us can take charge of our lives. Reply BT Box NV118.

Latin Male Seeks Hot Times
Seeking discreet times with other handsome men that enjoy being adored and catered to. I enjoy pleasing you in any way that I can. You can give me suggestions. You: Attractive, under 40, well built, HIV neg. and adventurous. I'm 145, handsome and eager to please. Please respond with photo—will return. Reply BT Box NV119.

GWM—HIV Neg.
seeks GWM with similar interests: music, movies, theatre, parapsychology, reading, safe sex, good food, not necessarily in that order. Photo appreciated, returned if requested. Reply Boxholder, P.O. Box 2832, Oakland 94618.

Available For Love
But only for Big Black Bears. I'm a cute boyish looking GWM, 33 y.o., 5'8", 120 lbs. I'm stable, hardworking and I want to share my life and love with a man who can appreciate my direction in life. I'm quickly climbing the corporate ladder from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. I'm dominant, aggressive, demanding and I won't take no for an answer. From 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. I'm quiet, reflective and somewhat introverted, but after 7 p.m. I'm passionate, erotic, sensual and passive. If you're the kind of man who can spend his days taming a tiger, your reward at night will be a purring pussycat. Warning... I'm a Latin and a scorpio, loyal and monogamous. A photo of yourself would be nice, but not necessary. Reply BT Box NV120.

Natural Man
Looking for that special connection with a like-minded boddy. I know you're out there, friend. You've been around long enough to know who you are, be comfortable with that, but still look for new ways to stretch yourself. You're naturally masculine, down-to-earth, playful, adventurous, generous in spirit, and while you're bright, you talk from the heart and balls, not the mind. You also have a fit, solid body that you maintain with pride. I'm 39, 5'11", 155 lbs., HIV neg., brown hair/beard, goodlooking, very athletic, with a solid defined body. I have a great love for the outdoors, swim, cycle, and workout daily, read when I can, have a quick mind and open heart, love wrestling under the sheets, dig music (from rock to Bach), and I'm primed for a rousing, lusty relationship with the right man. If this ad is talking to you, write and let me hear about it. A photo would be appreciated. Reply BT Box NV121.

Younger Guys Who Are
comfortable with their bodies, pleased with their technique, not shy, like to show off their equipment to a grateful audience, your dad would like to watch you use it, beat off, pound your pud, rope your mule, jerk the gerkin. He encourages you to enjoy yourself as nature intended. Tell him how he can demonstrate his appreciation to you. Reply Boxholder, P.O. Box 460305, SF 94146.

Sex Sex Sex
Is that all you think about? So do I. Attr. GWM, 32, 6'8", 160 lbs. is looking for playmates/buddies to have fun with. Safe sex, discreet. Reply Boxholder, #250, 740A 14th St., SF 94114.

Looking for a lover that won't blow my cover, but he's so hard to find...
Professional, good looking GWM with brown hair, green eyes, HIV neg., tall and lean, loves the outdoors and travel, a Virgo, nondrinking, artistic, masculine acting, seeks similar guy on peninsula between 25-35 for fun, friendship, and possible

partnership. Reply with photo to Boxholder, P.O. Box 7088, Redwood City, CA 94063.

Recovering Codependent
Cute, GWM wants functional, committed, nurturing, supportive relationship with GWM preferably older than me, 34, bigger than me, 5'10", 150 lbs.; healthy, nonsmoker, light drinker, non-druggie. Willing to work at staying intimate and vulnerable. Committed to continued personal/spiritual growth and recovery. I'm physically fit and active—ice skate regularly and own a horse. (Makes for great busts!) I find nothing sexier than the feel of another's hairy chest. Like the usual things: cooking and eating, staying in and going out, feeling and being felt, playing and being serious. Admit it, looks are important so show me your picture and I'll show you mine! Reply BT Box NV122.

Monterey Peninsula Calling!
Handsome college grad (Anglo), 24 years old, 6', 165 lbs, 1 br/br, and HIV neg seeks the same 22-29. I am loyal, affectionate, intelligent and masculine. My interests are sports, the arts, classical and rock music, as well as traveling, etc. Please reply with a short letter and photo. Privacy assured and expected. Reply BT Box NV124.

Let's Be Friends First!
GWM (6'2", 188, Br. hair & eyes, HIV-neg.) who's

considered masculine and attractive and much younger looking than my age (51), seeking a Romantic who is also caring, sensitive, a nonsmoker, and hopefully, handsome too! Do you like long walks, travel, music, dinner dates, entertaining friends at home, going to the beach, theater, sex, and cuddling by a warm fireplace? Are you sincere, affectionate, secure, sometimes aggressive, considerate of others, not afraid to be yourself? If you're willing to take the time to build a good friendship and maybe more, please send a detailed letter about yourself (recent photo and phone number will show you're serious) to Boxholder, P.O. Box 31273, SF 94131-0273.

East of the Bay
Athletic, quite attractive sports and science enthusiast, clean shaven, GWM 30, 5'11", 170. Well employed, peaceful and nonpossessive. Neither emotionally nor sexually intense, but do greatly enjoy being affectionate. Interested in very stable, independent nonsmoker for monogamous relationship. Your photo returned. Reply BT Box NV125.

Are You 40 to 50 GWM?
I'm a foreign born attractive 28 y.o. GWM, 6'11", 170 lbs, curly brn hair and eyes, hairy body, cleanshaven, masculine, very healthy HIV pos. Relationship oriented, very supportive, affectionate, romantic, gentle, mature and responsi-

ble. I thrive on being in a relationship based on mutual trust, support and understanding. Not into the gay scene and lead a conservative lifestyle. I enjoy sports, classical, opera, light rock and some western music. I love pets, and enjoy quiet evenings at home and weekend drives to the country. I'm looking for someone, besides sharing my interests, to be of my height or close to it, dark hair (balding ok) dark eyes, hairy chest, masculine, nondrinker, moderate smoker, professionally stable and full of love for life. Photo appreciated (will return). Reply BT Box NV126.

Samoa Wrestler
Good, now that I have your attention in this brutally competitive world of personals ads, perhaps you'll read on. While I don't have one drop of Samoan blood in me (that I am aware of), I am a smart, good looking, self-employed 40-year-old man, weighing in at 170 and slightly over 6' tall. Other factory-installed options besides the usual number of arms and legs include black hair, blue eyes, a keen interest in the arts and sciences (especially the metaphysical), and an overriding desire to stay healthy and continue to enjoy the large circle of long-term friendships that I am blessed with. I am a fortunate and happy man and like the idea of meeting an equal, not a daddy or a son, but someone who is secure in his life regardless of age—a tall order it seems. If you like

the idea of sharing good food, sparring with totally irreverent humor and perhaps getting a little nasty with one another in a horizontal position, you should reach for the pen, paper, and your favorite mug shot now. I will respond if you address your envelope to BT Box NV127.

"Yeah, you've seen me..."
Probably out and around town, or maybe in that dirty film you rented, you wanted to introduce yourself, but never did. "A goodlooking guy like that couldn't be single," you said. "He wouldn't be interested in me." Well, nothing ventured nothing gained! 28 y.o. coverman type, br, blu, muscular, smooth and hung, with the kind of muscular butt you follow down the street for blocks. Creative and spontaneous, looking for men with similar stats who are willing to have serious fun, in bed and out. Photo and phone to BT Box NV128.

The Wind Beneath My Wings
Bette sings my dreams and for whom I'm looking. A little shy and private, quiet, conservative in lifestyle, but not attitude, drug and tobacco free, GWM, 47, HIV neg., mustached, 145, brn/brn, 5'8", opening to his feelings; tender, humorous, privately sexy, responsible, trustworthy, sincere, glad to be gay. Looking for a man; open, understanding, patient, slightly more assertive; who can add sparkle. Who enjoys lov-

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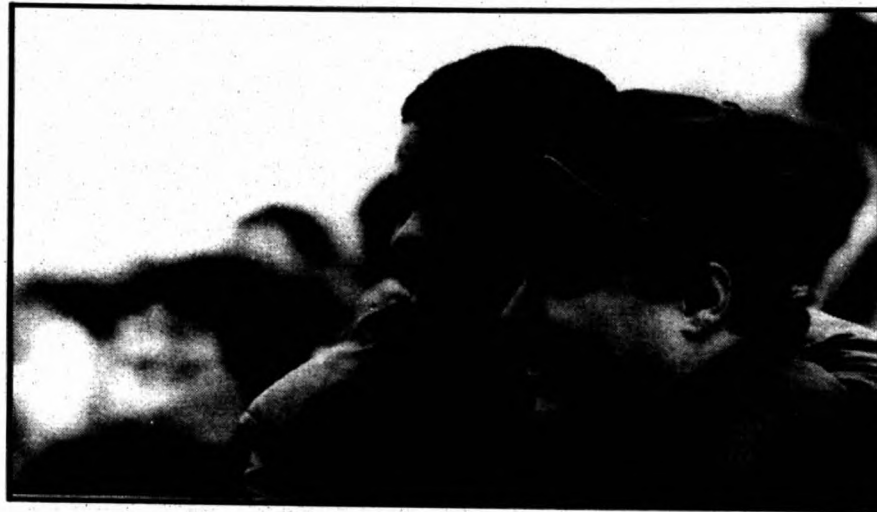
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as charitable contributions for federal income tax purposes.

Powerful religious groups are conducting a deceptive, intensive campaign to defeat Proposition S, San Francisco's historic Domestic Partnership law. The extremists are counting on a low voter turnout and apathy in our own community to defeat Proposition S. They know that if they can defeat us here — they can defeat us anywhere. Polls show that the election could go either way.

That's why we need your help — right away. Please cut out the form above and mail it to us, or better yet, bring it by our campaign headquarters: 1586 Market Street, San Francisco 94102 — or call 864-0860. **And get out and vote next Tuesday, November 7th. Our political future depends on it!**

YES
ON