

# UPFRONT

APRIL 18, 1979

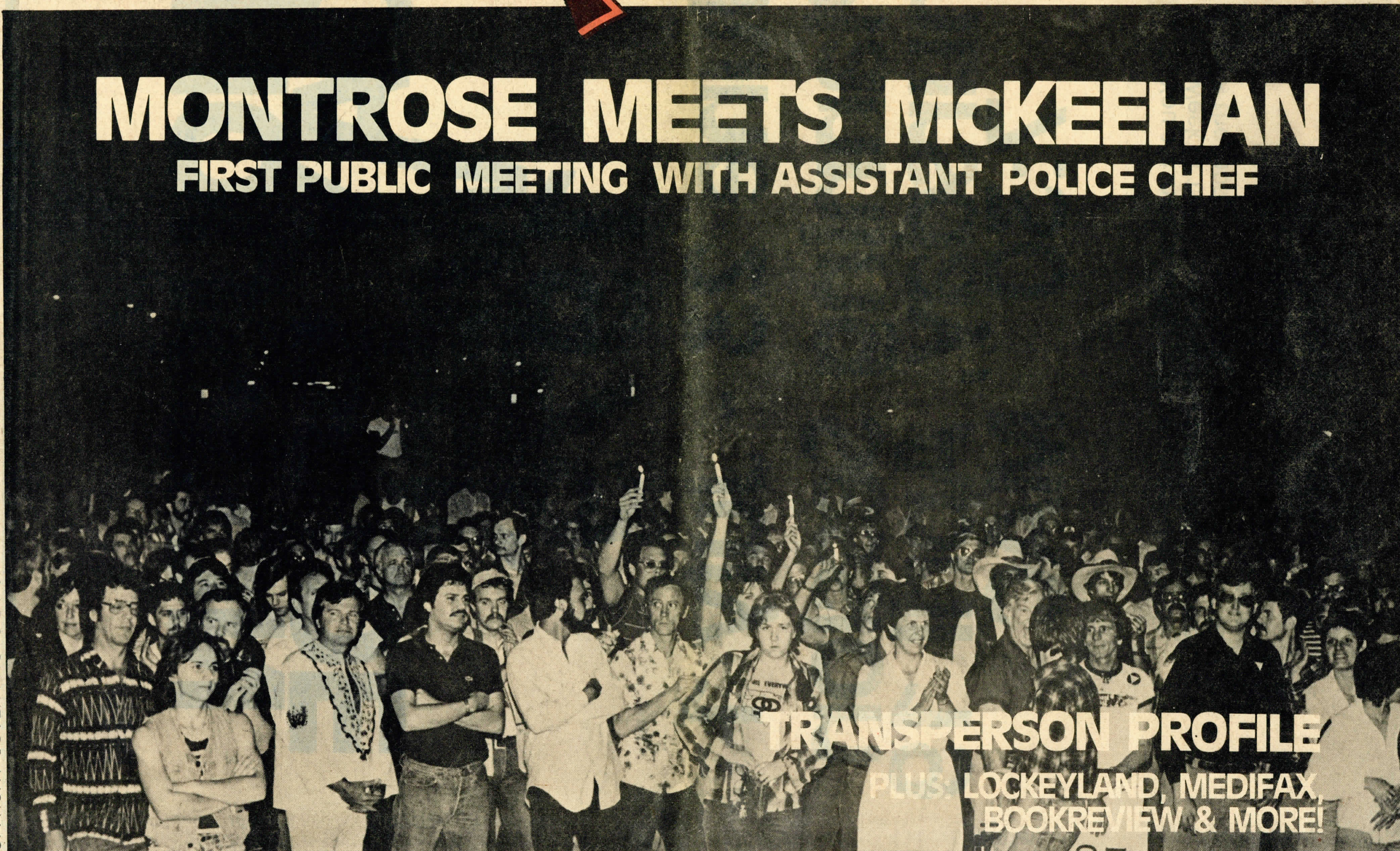
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VOLUME 2, NUMBER 9  
HOUSTON, TEXAS

## MONTROSE MEETS MCKEEHAN

FIRST PUBLIC MEETING WITH ASSISTANT POLICE CHIEF

UPFRONT COVER PHOTO BY J. HARDY WILLIAMS



TRANSPERSON PROFILE

PLUS: LOCKEYLAND, MEDIFAX,  
BOOKREVIEW & MORE!



# HOUSTON GAY PRIDE WEEK 1979

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**Thursday, April 19**  
**7:30 MAC**

You are invited to help plan Houston's Gay Pride Week in 1979. Come help us decide how to make this the most meaningful GPW Houston has ever had.

Carole Fennema



# Newsfront

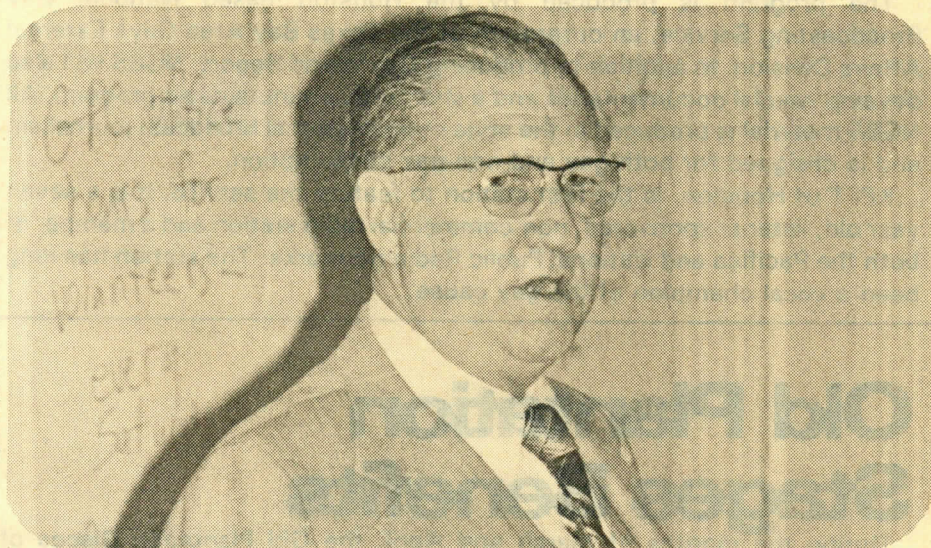
## Gay Caucus Confronts Cops

Assistant Police Chief R.G. McKeehan attended the first April meeting of the Gay Political Caucus in an effort to establish communications between gay citizens and the Houston Police Department. During the meeting in the Montrose Activity Center the floor was thrown open for questions and comments from the standing room crowd. During the 1½ hours that McKeehan confronted the caucus, numerous members of the audience rose to tell personal horror stories of physical and mental mistreatment at the hands of Houston police officers. McKeehan's standard response to these accusations was a request that the aggrieved party file a written complaint with HPD's Internal Review Board. He repeatedly stated that the HPD could not be held accountable for unprofessional conduct if citizens failed in their duty to report oppressive officers.

The program was organized by Larry Bagneris, acting president of the GPC. Although there have been a number of meetings in the Police Station downtown between upper level police administrators, not Chief Caldwell, and so-called "leaders" of the gay community, this marked the first time a major police official has met face-to-face with gays who were not ostensibly leaders of some organization.

The meeting followed by days reports that the San Francisco Police Department was actively recruiting gay applicants. This news report was frequently alluded to in repeated questions regarding the HPD's policy of screening out homosexuals from potential officers. When asked, in light of the city policy of hiring the police chief from within the department, if he would hire gay applicants should he become chief, McKeehan stated flatly that he would not. The disruptive influence such an action *might* have on the morale of the remainder of the police force.

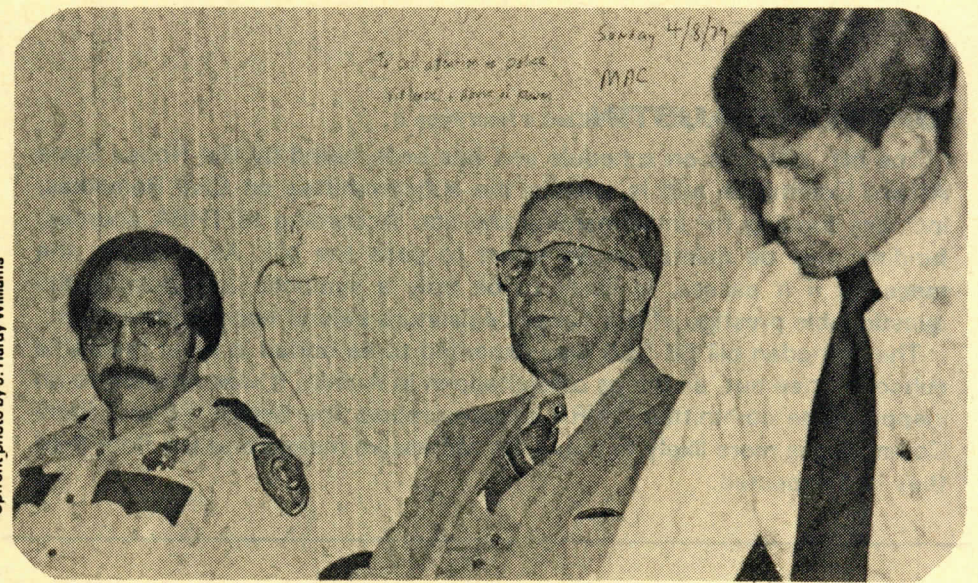
McKeehan went on to say that he felt it was asking a lot of a police force to hire gays when it had only been hiring blacks for 12 years and women for 3. According to McKeehan, it had taken that long to bring these minorities into the police department because it was felt that they would cause a disruption of morale. He did not offer evidence of such a problem when blacks were hired nor did he say who had felt they would be disruptive. Regarding women as officers, he felt that they were able to handle street situations only 97% of the time. He could not offer any examples of female officers not able to perform the physical aspects of their positions but he did say that it was expected that they would also disrupt morale.



Assistant Police Chief McKeehan answered questions and spoke to issues affecting the gay community at the GPC April 4.

In closing McKeehan suggested that it was unlikely that Chief Caldwell would meet with gays in the near future because he (McKeehan) had been assigned the job unless he could not handle it and he was unlikely to tell his boss he was not capable of performing his job. Chief Caldwell, who apparently did not feel it important enough as an event to come to the GPC meeting, has been more than willing to meet with a half dozen Southeast Houston housewives picketing a massage parlor. Television cameras were present for that meeting. Last month the Chief spoke with the American Civil Liberties Union at a meeting which drew less than 1/3 the number of those in the Caucus room for McKeehan.

Also in attendance was Lt. Joe W. Kunkel who took up the challenge to field a police baseball team to face a GPC team. Kunkel did not confirm the suggested disruption among officers should gays openly enter the force.



Lt. Joe Kunkel (left) and Assistant Chief McKeehan listen as Acting GPC President Larry Bagneris (right) reads a prepared statement concerning gay achievements.

Following McKeehan's comments Bagneris attempted to read a statement on the diversity and economic impact of gays but was interrupted by Steve Shiflett. After Bagneris had finished his statement Shiflett was given the floor and immediately commented that he felt that if past performance was any way to judge, the meeting would have no effect upon the performance of officers so far as gays are concerned. He offered Operation Documentation as the most viable method for effecting a change in the manner in which the HPD interacts with Houston's gay community.

Bagneris, on the other hand, publically disagreed and complimented Chief McKeehan on the honest and forthright manner in which he presented the unfortunate facts of the situation. Shiflett, newly hired Houston market advertising representative for The Advocate, a large California based gay tabloid, is currently on a two month leave of absence from the GPC presidency to take care of personal business.

## Dateline: Austin

Two bills recently introduced into the current session of the Texas Legislature seem to have a direct bearing on Houston's gay citizens. As usual the folks in Austin are all headed different directions at once so while one proposed law seeks to limit the diversity of lifestyles the other attempts to bring about understanding between the divergent peoples who make up the empire we call Texas.

The notorious Sen. Walter "Mad Dog" Mengden of Houston wishes to regulate sexually oriented conduct in all bars, lounges, restaurants or similar establishments where alcohol is served for on-premise consumption. Mengden suggests penalizing liquor license holders, i.e. bar owners, for what he considers obscene acts by patrons and employees of these businesses. The good Senator includes a complete list of his own prejudices as criteria to be enforced by bar owners on their customers. Included in the list are persons attired in or entertaining in drag. Also listed is a section which appears to be aimed at opposite sex dancing but is so vague that it could be interpreted to apply to same sex dancing — are you listening disco folks?

Enforcement of this section of the Alcoholic Beverage Code falls to the ABC. Two years ago, during the Levi case and the Stand Up Now period, there were unproven charges that some employees of the Alcoholic Beverage Commission were working in collusion with the HPD to lift the license of the clubs owner. Nothing came of the charges but it was enough to leave a distrust among some gays as to the impartial enforcement of the liquor laws by the ABC. According to the Austin based Texas Human Rights Advocates, lobbying arm of the Texas Gay Task Force, Mengden's bill would open up new opportunities for harassment of gay/lesbian bars.

Meanwhile, this session Rep. Reby Cary of Fort Worth distinguished himself by introducing a proposal to establish a state Commission on Human Rights, HB 1052, as well as prevent/offer redress of discrimination in employment, public accommodations, credit transactions and real property transactions. Despite an intense lobbying effort by the Texas Human Rights Advocates, bill sponsors felt that including sexual or affectional preference would insure defeat so the bill was sent to the House State Affairs Committee without inclusion of the gay issue. Marital status was inserted.

Continued Next Page



# Newsfront

## DATELINE: AUSTIN Cont'd from Page 3

The bill, which is on schedule and has been heard by the House State Affairs Committee and is now in the subcommittee on Civil Remedies, includes funding for implementing the act. According to THRA sources, funding may be deleted in an effort to pass the bill. As a result, the measure, if it passes, is likely to be only a symbolic act, putting the questionable prestige of the Texas Legislature behind non-discrimination.

The Mengden bill SB 558 was expected to be buried in an unfavorable subcommittee but, as things often happen in Austin, it was referred to an inappropriate committee. THRA sources report the Senate State Affairs Committee is more likely to move the repressive measure to the floor than they had expected.

## Ron Waters' Spring Celebration



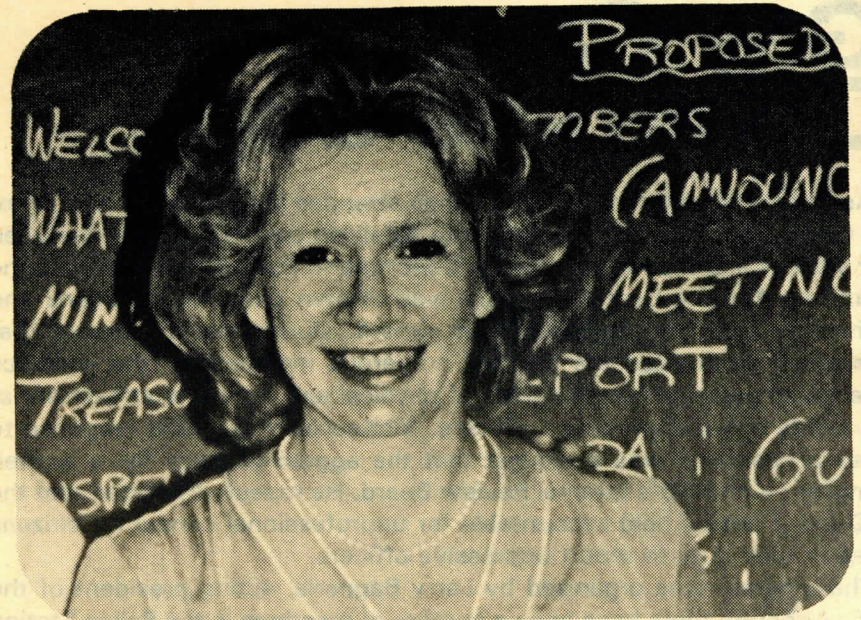
The Ron Waters' Celebration of Spring cocktail party was held by the Ron Waters' Precinct 340 Legal Defense Committee April 9 at the Rainbow Lodge, super-chic hangout of Houston's super-chic set. Although the affair was ostensibly designed to raise funds to retire the debt Representative Waters incurred when he led the battle to save Precinct 340 from dissolution by Commissioners Court, the real purpose behind the event was to let the people see and touch their representative. The irony of celebrating a victory for poor black voters in one of the most trendy and expensive watering holes in Texas seemed to be lost on the guests.

The County Commissioner in whose jurisdiction the matter fell and who initiated the attempt to dismantle precinct 340, and, incidentally, pit two powerful black democrats against one another, is Republican Bob Eckels. Just weeks ago, Eckels escaped prosecution on conflict of interest charges because of a technicality which voided the Grand Jury's indictment.

In the past year the county government has seen Eckels barely escape prosecution, has lost a federal court battle which found the county liable for discriminatory practices by its administrators, has seen charges of subornation of perjury crop up in the District Attorney's office, has been placed under a court order to relief inhumane conditions in the county jail and has just generally been an embarrassment to every resident of this city and county. Perhaps, Waters should try for a seat on that august body.

At any rate, the Celebration of Spring sure beat Waters' Conehead Party last year at the Texas Opry House.

## K. ROSS TRIES FOR COUNCIL



Kathryn Ross, recently announced candidate for Frank Mann's seat on the Houston City Council was out on the eastern edge of the Montrose attempting to drum up votes recently. Ross, looking youthfully radiant and fit for the rigors of campaigning, was in the Montrose Activity Center to attend a meeting of the Gay Political Caucus which featured an appearance by the Assistant Chief of Police. Ross has expressed reservations about the of the HPD.

This will mark the third consecutive attempt by Ross to gain a seat on the city's ruling body. In the last municipal election Mann defeated Ross despite an endorsement by the GPC. Houston gays agree on her impeccable honesty and generally regard her as a friend of the community.

## Houston-area Group Begins Radio Report

Since the first of April "Gay World Report", a weekly 20 minute journal covering national and international gay and feminist news has aired each Sunday at 10 pm. It occupies the early portion of the Wilde'n'Stein Radio Show on KPFT.

The program is produced by the Houston based National Gay Broadcasting Service, an outgrowth of the Texas Bay Area Gays External Affairs Division. In addition to producing Gay World Report, NGBS will also develop special documentaries and a shorter five minute news program. All NGBS material is produced in the style of professional broadcast journalism and is designed for both gay and non-gay consumption.

KPFT of Houston, is the first station to feature the service. It is a seven year old, listener sponsored, non-commercial radio station and a member of both the Pacifica and National Public Radio networks. The station has long been a vocal champion of the gay cause.

## Old Plantation Stages Benefits

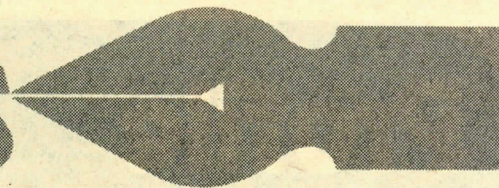
During the months of March and April, the Old Plantation Discos of Houston and Dallas are holding events to benefit the lobbying effort currently being mounted in Austin by the Texas Gay Task Force and the Texas Human Rights Advocates. Sunday April 22, Houston's Old Plantation will stage the Miss Metro Houston Contest for female impersonators and a portion of the proceeds will go to the lobbying effort. Last month in Dallas an OP "D-Dance" benefit raised \$1500.

The legislative lobby is attempting to lay the groundwork for repeal of Section 21.06 of the Texas Penal Code, commonly referred to as the sodomy statute. The belief is that when this particular statute is removed from the books, the aura of illegality which is often seen to surround gay people will be significantly reduced.

Houston's Gay Political Caucus voted not to participate in the OP event when Board member Alice Shrader expressed reservations. According to Shrader, the institution of the drag show is inherently "insulting to women." Agreeing with Shrader were Grady of the UH Gay Resource Services and enough male members to carry the vote.



# Editorials



## City Desk

### Gay Year 2

Last issue Upfront celebrated its first birthday and in the exuberance of the moment, we decided to give Houston's gay community the very best birthday present we could imagine. We hope you liked the photo album of Houston's first GAY year that resulted. If you saved your copy you will always have a record of the year our gay city-within-a-city came of age and its disparate parts began to work together.

Now we turn our attention to the second year. There will not be so many "first gay person to ....." claims heard this year. We have opened the door and are in the process of entering the field, no longer as discrete or closeted sexual deviants but as citizens who happen to be gay. We have gay people openly interacting with the city administration and the state. We mobilize voters and swing elections. We control significant economic power and have demonstrated a willingness to use it.

Houstonians have grown accustomed to gays demanding the right to be heard and to receive fair treatment. During this year they will become accustomed to their gay neighbors as we make ourselves continually more open. That will only happen if we take an active part in some aspect of the gay lifestyle. Hold hands with your lover on Westheimer, sport your pink triangle, never accept less than you deserve. Be proud and feel secure in the fellowship of the gay community.

Right now there are groups of people who are joining in the effort to mount a multi-dimensional examination of gayness in Houston. Their goal is to help bring the gay lifestyles out of the shadows. Everyone is asked to contribute as much or as little as that person feels is appropriate and available. Whether time, money or elbow grease all contributions will enhance our lives and those of the thousands of gay men and women in this city who feel trapped in a sexual lifestyle not of their choosing.

Gay Pride week is not until the end of June but the GPW we have then is dependent upon what is done now. The next meeting is Thursday, April 19 at the MAC, 7:30 pm. Take an active part in Houston's Gay Year 2.

## Operation Documentation

Operation Documentation is the multi-community program to provide physical evidence of the abusive and oppressive nature of the Houston Police Department for the United States Civil Rights Commission hearings on police excesses slated for Houston in June. Upfront has supported this effort since its inception as can be clearly seen by just a cursory examination of back issues. Recently there has been virtually no mention of Operation Documentation in these pages. Despite repeated requests, both in person and over the telephone, for information so that it could be disseminated to the community, Upfront has received none.

Operation Documentation is a worthwhile attempt to alleviate a real problem affecting this community and this city. Upfront supports Operation Documentation and hopes that if anyone has any information to give or has any questions to ask, they contact the Houston Gay Political Caucus 713-526-2668.

Editor

## UPFRONT

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## Vantage Point

### Facing into the Wind

When I was only a child, my old gray haired grandmother would often look at me and say "Boy, listen to me because I'm going to tell you something important." When I heard that line, I knew at once what she was about to say. "Sometimes you have to face into the wind."

At first I really failed to see that this grain of wisdom which she imparted so solemnly was particularly monumental. Little did I know that the doddering old woman was, in her own peculiar way, trying to prepare me to face the facts of life — not the sexual facts, but the ethics of everyday living.

Life for her had been a hardship on what was then a harsh northern frontier. She expected much the same for her grandchildren but I doubt that she could ever have imagined that I would encounter the experiences which I have intercepted on my own magical mystery tour through the gay movement. I somehow can not see dear Granny ever expecting me to be chosen to serve as Co-Chair of two national gay rights organizations, at the same time. And no one could have known that I would leave them under the cloud which resulted when I attempted to act as an effective leader. Could she have expected me to be allowed to serve as first president of the Houston Gay Political Caucus or publisher of a newspaper dedicated to securing freedom of sexual and affectional choice for all people? I doubt it.

She could not have imagined what was in store for her scrawny little grandson but she gave him advice that has been invaluable throughout his life-journey. You see, I finally realized what the wonderful old woman was talking about. It was not the North Wind at all. She was telling me to have principles and to stand up for them when the time comes.

In the past three years the time to face into the wind has come repeatedly. It has come in the Board Rooms of Harris County and those of the national gay movement; it has come when I was an officer of the GPC and since I have been publishing this magapaper, and it came recently in a meeting of the Gay Political Caucus.

The General Caucus voted NOT to participate in a benefit show at a local disco because the event featured female impersonators. A Board member, who I admire and respect and whose extensive accomplishments I sincerely appreciate, characterized the performances as an "insult to women." Following the emotional discussion, the caucus, myself included, voted by a slim margin to withdraw from the event.

At first I was satisfied that justice had been done and those mincing, insulting drag queens had been put in their places — but when I had had a chance to think about the matter, I realized that we had made a mistake. I wonder if those who so quickly expressed their disapproval of transvestism had ever given a thought to who the first gay people were? No, I do not mean who was first to have same-sex relations; I mean who was the first to stand on the street and say "I am gay. So what?"

It was the drag queens!

I have no quarrel with the Caucus or any member of the Board. I simply feel we made a major statement of GPC policy without adequate time for consideration. Afterall, for years it has been the established custom of gay organizations everywhere to gain financing by presenting drag shows. The GPC has financed much of the progress this community has made in gay areas with the sweat of drag queens; and the chiffon and sequins set was always glad to help out.

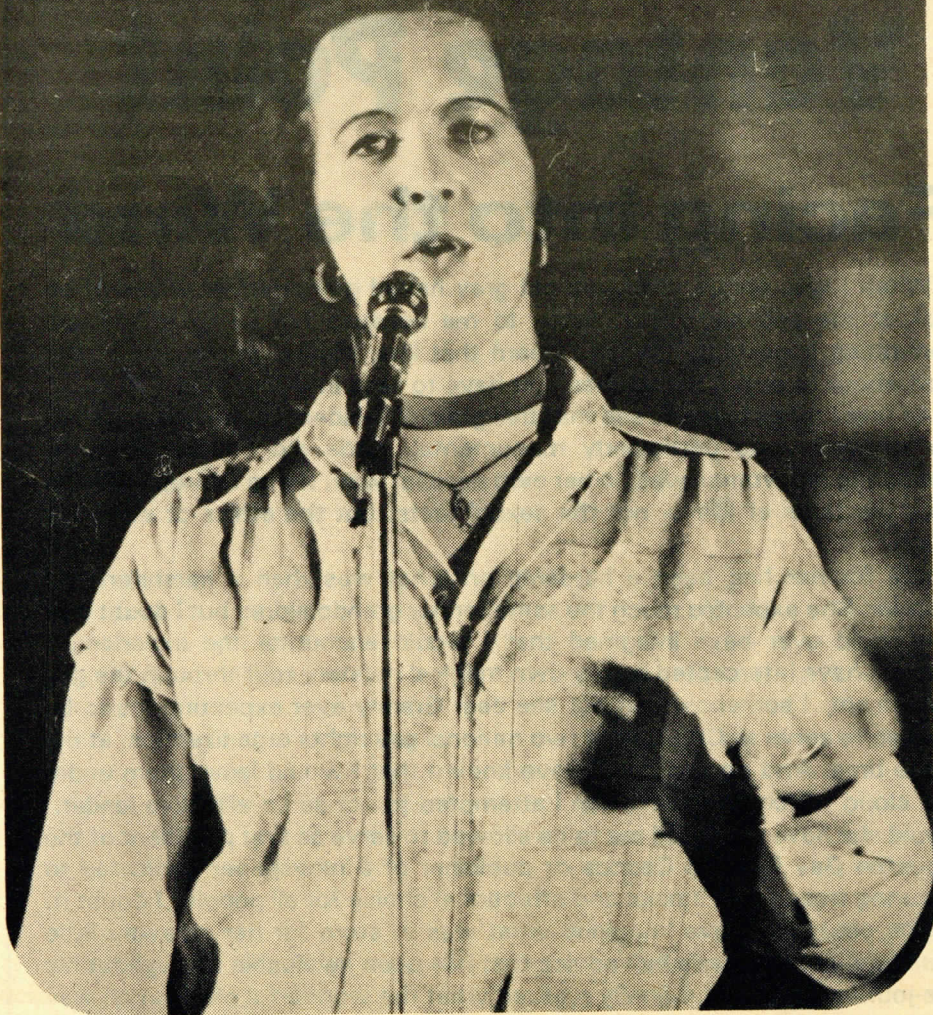
I do not think female impersonators deserved this slap at their own particular variant of the gay lifestyle. It is an established fact that many gay men have difficulty accepting the drag queen. We often hear that gays would not be bothered if they did not flaunt "it." Well, I say if you've got it, flaunt it. We, as members of an often oppressed minority, have no right or reason to further oppress a small group within our own subculture.

Whether or not the GPC wishes to participate in a particular event is up to the voting members of the caucus but I question the caucus' wisdom in choosing this particular non-issue as a basis on which to reject the proffered benefit. I suggest the GPC reconsider the matter and while their considering it, perhaps they can come up with a benefit that will encourage the many and diverse gay women in our community to participate.

Gary J. Van Ooteghem



# Profile



## Transperson

There is a member of Houston's gay community who commands a presence everywhere she goes. Her bearing, which has been compared to former Congresswoman Barbara Jordan's, suggests that she knows exactly who she is and where she is going. Not only is she often the only woman at a professional function, she is almost always the only transgenderist in the gathering.

Her name is Phyllis. The shoulder length black hair and soft, warm voice have become fixtures at every rally and meeting the gay and feminist communities cangenerate. Whether decrying sexism within gay society at Town Meeting, marching for Niki Van Hightower was removed as Houston's Women's Advocate or volunteering to work at the National Women's Conference in 1977, the 31 year old San Antonio native cuts a path directly to the heart of many issues. When Phyllis speaks, gay people and feminists have learned to trust her words.

An energetic disciple of Christ, she says she was "born as a Christian in August, 1972", gay pride and feminism, she does not see any of them as inimical to any one of the others. She has appeared frequently before both gay and straight audiences alike, spreading her own gospel of light as she goes. Despite the occasional hostility some of her fellow transpeople encounter, Phyllis has never been confronted with such a situation.

"I like to think my Lord is watching over me. That's why I can pass (as a woman) so well... No one ever suggests that I'm anything other than a woman."

Phyllis, currently enrolled as a first year law student at the University of Houston where she was knowingly admitted as an open transperson, is a 1970 civil engineering graduate of Texas A&M University and is a registered engineer and operates The Filtrish Company, specializing in civil and bioengineering, and design of industrial hygiene systems, in partnership with her spouse. In 1966 she was awarded one of only 100 Army ROTC college scholarships in a nationwide competition. Following graduation she entered the army where she earned the rank of First Lieutenant before receiving an honorable discharge when the service learned of her sexual orientation.

Phyllis has lived as a woman for almost 3 years. Among the organizations in which Phyllis is active are the League of Women Voters, National Organization of Women, National Association of Women Business Owners and the Women's Law Association of UH.

Below is the slightly abbreviated text of the statement she read to the recent rally regarding police brutality.

As a transperson, I am inherently out of the closet with respect to those who knew me before. Being a university graduate and a professional in my vocation, I go to alumni meetings and professional societies "just like all of the normal people." But...

"Why do you flaunt IT? Why do you push IT? Why do you throw IT up in people's faces? You should be ashamed of IT. You must repent of IT before you can claim Jesus! You are okay with me, but they cannot handle IT." These are only a few of the typical comments that I have had asked of me or have been told as I try to merely live, work and breathe in the PRESCRIBED manner.

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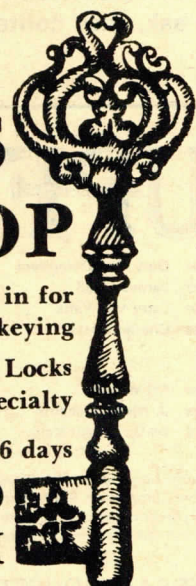
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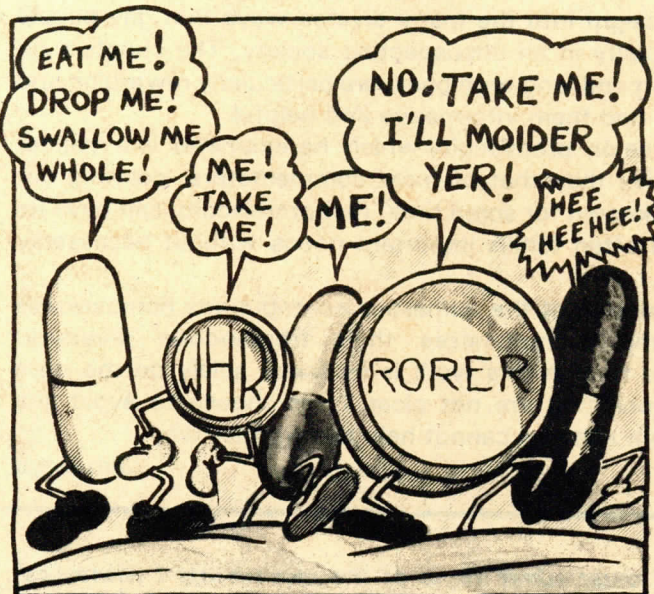
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# Drugs... Twice As Much Can Kill!



These days many people use different drugs besides alcohol to achieve a variety of moods. One hears people talking about *uppers* and *downers* and how many of the little pink or blue or white pills they took last night and what it did to them. Every now and then we hear of a death because someone over-dosed or *O.D'D* in street jargon.

Most people have very little idea of how drugs work and are usually only concerned with the *high* achieved by taking drugs. Very few people are aware of how drugs act in the body and how just a little bit more can be fatal.

Drugs are very specific in that they affect only certain parts of the body. Some drugs act on the muscles while others affect the nervous system or other organs. There are drugs which stimulate body systems while others depress them.

The amount of a drug taken greatly influences its actions on the body. The amount of a drug which causes a bad reaction is called the TOXIC dose and the amount which kills, the FATAL dose. The minimal dose is the least amount which has an effect and the maximal dose the largest dose that can be taken without bad effects.

To know how drugs act in the body it is necessary to understand the basic way in which the body responds to drugs. Substances are tested in animals to determine the minimum lethal dose or the amount which kills 50% of the animals. The most important thing to understand about dose responses is that they are geometric, not arithmetic. In simple terms this means that twice the dose does not have twice the effect but four times the effect and 4 times the dose has 16 times the effect. Doubling or tripling doses to achieve a greater effect is what frequently results in deaths from over doses.

Why do people increase doses if it is so dangerous? Simply because with many drugs such as the barbituates tolerances develop and people need to increase doses to achieve the same effects as they got when they first started using the drug. Sleeping pills are notorious for this and recently there has been some concern about the pain killer Darvon because people frequently

Continued Page 22

# Mother Knows

I don't know how many times I've heard someone say *I don't have any disease, because it doesn't burn when I pee, and I don't have any discharge*. Well, let's set the record straight, those are not signs of syphilis, those are signs of gonorrhea.

The first sign of syphilis is a lesion. The lesion can be very large -- about the size of a dime, or it can be as small as a pin head. It generally is raised around the outer rim and is slightly hard. The inside portion is rather concave or indented.

Ah! you say if you had something like that you would know. Well, darlings that's not always true. You see, that lesion generally doesn't hurt, itch or burn, it is just there. How easy it is to say *I got myself caught in my zipper* or *I cut it with a fingernail* or *It's just from friction, I was very active last night, you know*. Oh, yes, there are all kinds of excuses.

The problem with this first sign of syphilis is that it only lasts for one to five weeks and then goes away, even without medication. So what happens is that many people use one of those excuses, put some medication on the lesion and, behold, it goes away --- so why worry? Yes the lesion has gone away, but the disease is still there.

Another problem is that you may not notice the lesion. It could be hidden, under the foreskin of your penis, up in your rectum or even in your

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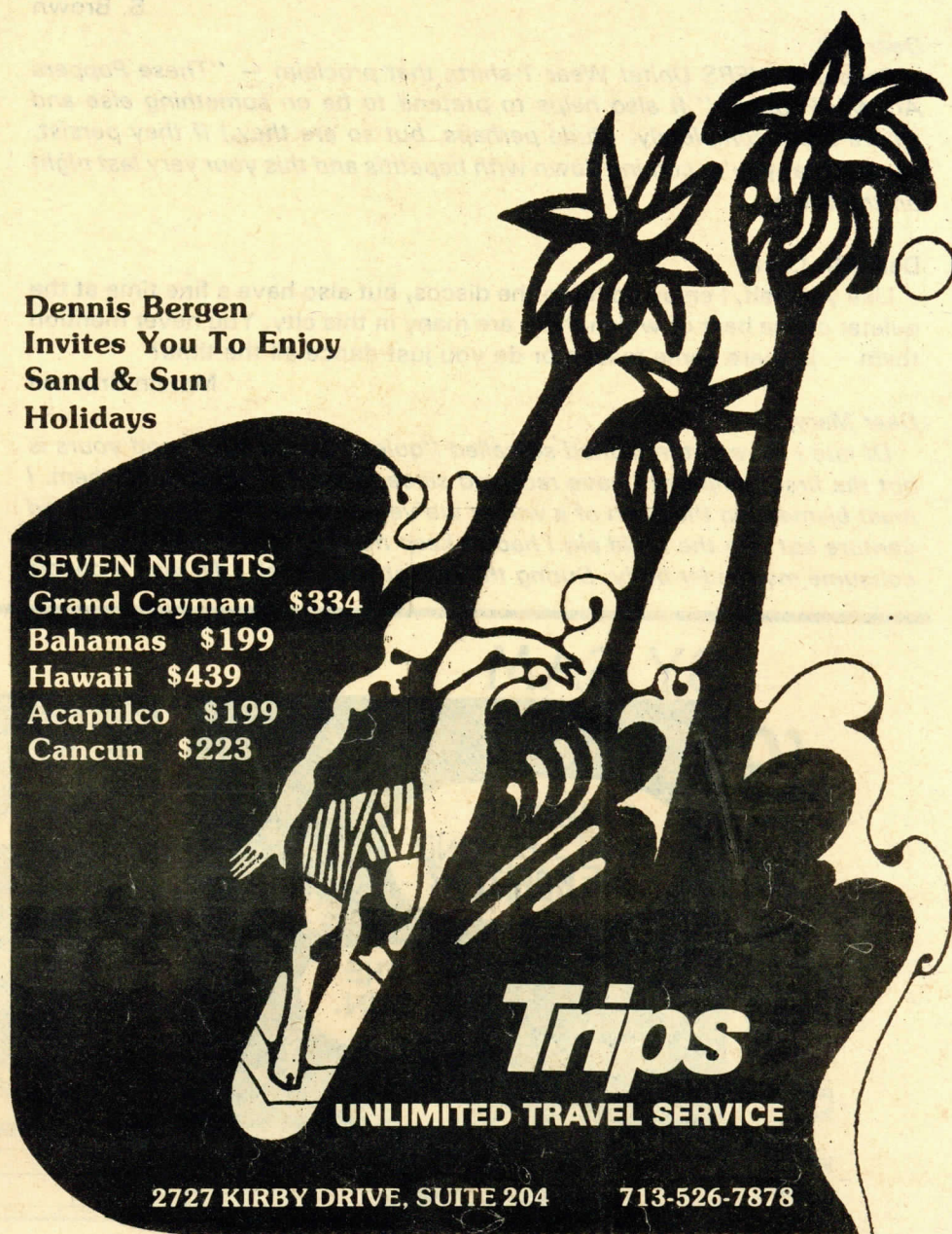
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# Book Review

## THE HOMOSEXUAL MATRIX

C.A. Tripp, Ph.D. Signet Paperback. 1975 \$2.50.

In his monumental examination of gay individuals, *The Homosexual Matrix*, psychologist and sex researcher C.W. Tripp takes a very critical look at psychotherapy and especially at the purported *cure* therapists. He states, "There are no known cures for homosexuality, nor are any likely, since the phenomena which comprise it are not illnesses in the first place". About half way through this highly informative book, Tripp, in a chapter on the politics of homosexuality, states that "sweeping campaigns against homosexuality are fraught with political peril". Reformers get into trouble picking on homosexuals because their campaigns always take them into places they didn't expect to land and, more often than not, those places turn out to be their own back yards.

Had either Ms. Bryant or Senator Briggs ever had time enough to read this scholarly work, they just might have avoided stepping into the quicksand of the Homosexual Matrix. They might have learned the major lesson of *The Homosexual Matrix*, which was ten years in the writing, that homosexuality is so varied, diverse and intricately woven into the fabric of society at large that most people, even homosexuals themselves, have little notion of how pervasive and ever present homosexuality is. The lesbians at

the Women's Conference here in Houston summed it up best with their slogan, *We are Everywhere*.

The early portions of *Matrix* are a very scholarly examination of current ideas regarding the origins of the sexualities: hetero-, homo- and bi-. Sociological, biological and psychological evidence is examined and critically discussed and many pet notions lacking basis in fact are discarded. Although this part of the book is somewhat ponderous for the general reader, the specialist will find here an excellent critical review of modern ideas about sexual development.

Moving on through the work, the reader encounters stimulating chapters on sexual techniques and the social shapes of homosexuality. The author exhibits tremendous insight into the many diverse ways that gay people handle their homosexuality in an unsuspecting society. The chapters on relationships, both short and long term ones, are particularly rewarding and any gay reader should find them informative and helpful.

Included is a discourse on promiscuity which he examines in a manner somewhat more positive than that of most commentators, pointing out what many gays have known for some time, that promiscuity can have its own ego rewards and often fulfills important needs without necessarily being destructive.

He closes with discussion of the numerous contributions homosexuals make to society and reemphasizes their tremendous diversity. Unfortunately, a major flaw in this work is its focus solely on the male homosexual. For reasons that are not clear Tripp choose to avoid any discussion of lesbianism and one cannot help but wonder why.

Jim Lloyd

# Lockeyland

## Mailcall...

Dear Lockeyland,

In your column you once politely blasted the obnoxious popper moochers that lurked in the bars and discos. For a short while they went away but now seem to be back. What, if anything, can we do to rid ourselves of these pests?

S. Brown

Dear S.B.

Popper BUYERS Unite! Wear T-shirts that proclaim — "These Poppers Are My Poppers." It also helps to pretend to be on something else and ignore them completely. (Rude perhaps, but so are they.) If they persist, explain that you're coming down with hepatitis and this your very last night on the town.

Dear Mr. Love,

Like yourself, I enjoy going to the discos, but also have a fine time at the quieter cruise bars of which there are many in this city. You never mention them — is there some reason or do you just dance all the time?

Marvin Bracken

Dear Marv,

Of late I have not inhabited so-called "quieter cruise bars" and yours is not the first complaint I have received since I have not mentioned them. I must blame it on the bitch of a winter we've just been through. When I did venture out into the frigid air, I had to keep moving so frostbite would not consume my tender body. During the recent warmspell I did visit a couple

of "quiet" places and must admit some of the movements I witnessed were quite interesting. Now that April is here I plan to again visit and present factual accounts of all the "warm patios" in the area.

Dear Lockeyland,

I have just returned from a visit to Houston where I was appalled by some of the activities that take place in the Houston dance bars. The lewd gestures performed by almost-nude men are not my idea of what a respectable bar is all about. I'm very surprised all of you don't get arrested!

Jose Lopez

Dear Timid,

I'm surprised too. It's been forever since anyone called them "dance bars" and it's not easy for anyone to arrest you in most of them. If "almost nude men" in public turn you off, it is obvious you are a long way away from 1979. Those "gestures" comprise what we lovingly call the DIRTY HOUSTON DISCO and, among other things, it is great exercise for the leg muscles.

Try not to be too hard on us; we exist in a totally different type world than yours, where the only fruit waiting to be picked happens to be ourselves. Give Houston one more chance. Let me know of your next visit and I'll personally arrange for the DJ of your choice to play the "Cotton-Eyed-Joe."

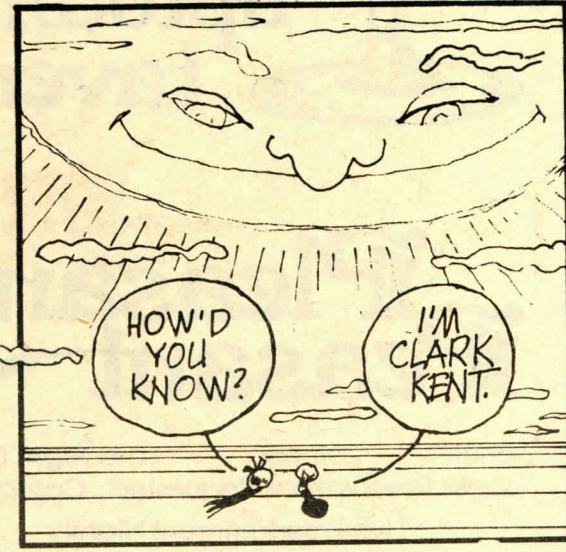
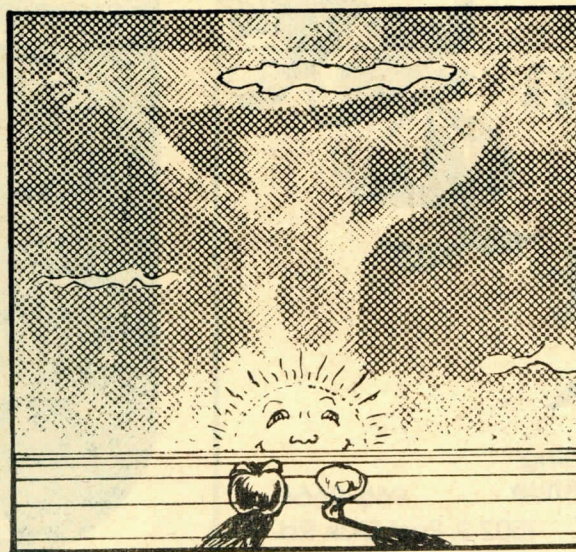
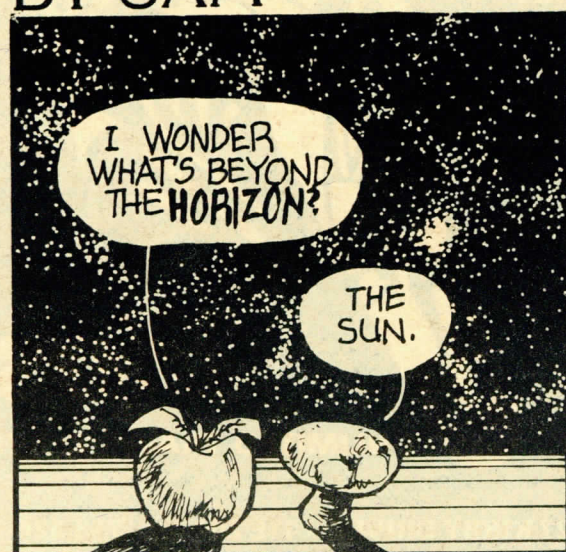
Dear Houston,

Upfront, Houston and the nation bid farewell last month to one of the clever contributors to this publication, Mr. Gene Oliver, known in many circles as the "Queen of Dish." Gene is living proof that fairy tales do indeed come true and is now happily honeymooning in Amsterdam. He is already missed, but has promised to keep in touch with Upfront for infrequent articles from abroad.

J. Lockey Love

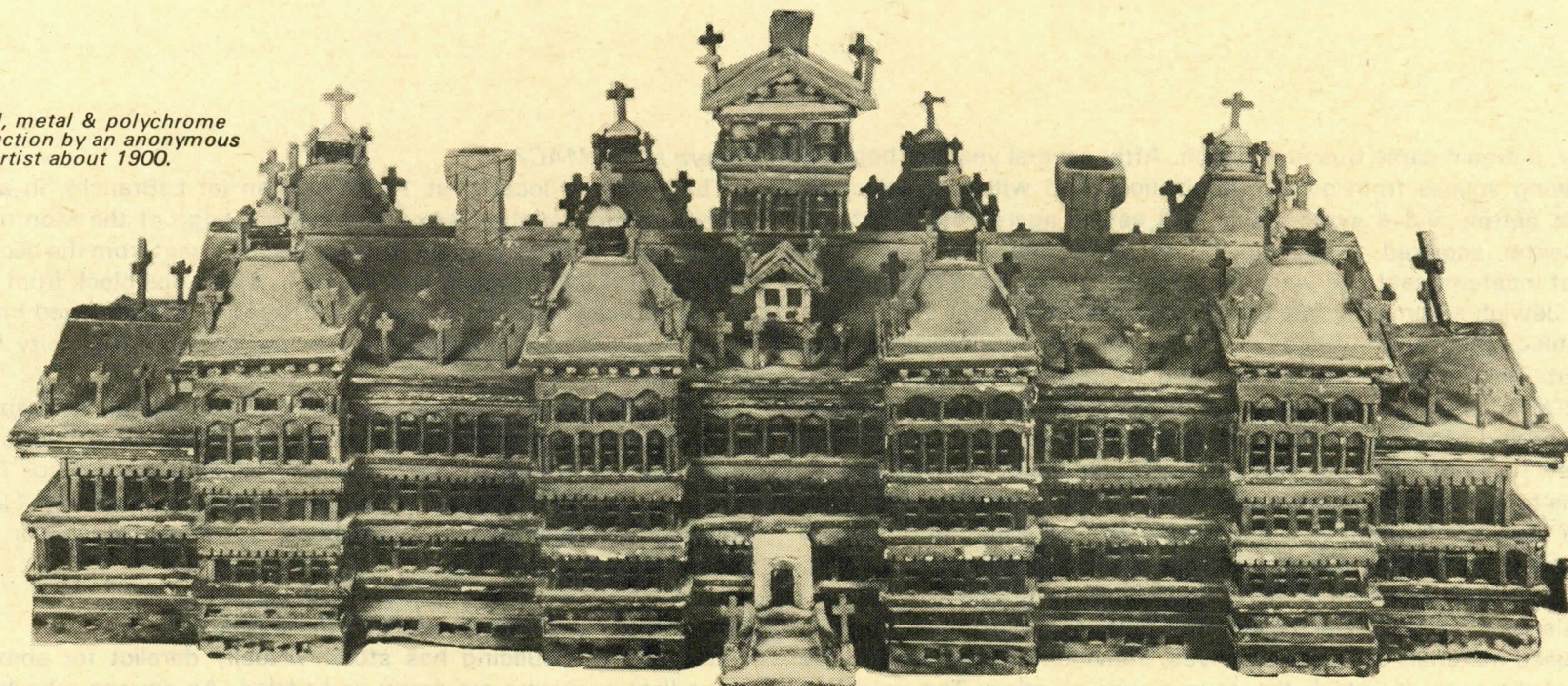
Whatnots

BY SAM



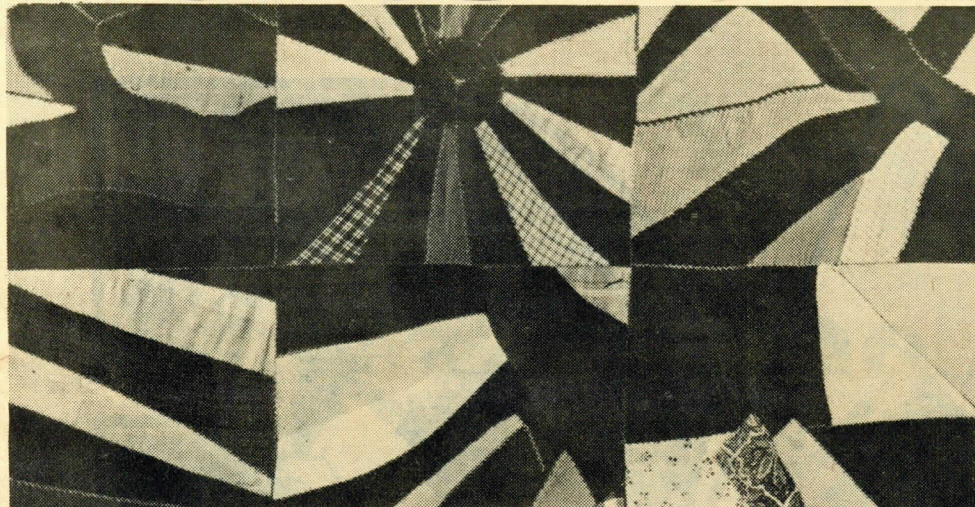


A wood, metal & polychrome construction by an anonymous black artist about 1900.



## naive art in texas

Crazy Quilt design executed in wool by Pauline Seitz Jung about 1890 — Detail.



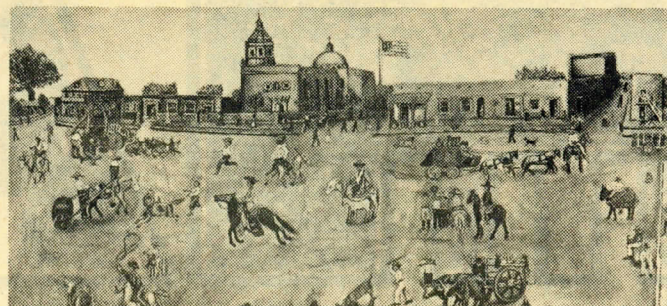
An exhibition which shows the work of the nonacademic painters and craftsmen who settled in frontier Texas in the early years of the nineteenth century went on view April 13 at The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. A *Survey of Texas Naive Artists* was organized by Cecilia Steinfeldt, Curator of History at the San Antonio Museum Association and specialist in Texana and the regional history of the Southwest. It is supported by grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Texas Commission on the Arts and Humanities and will be shown through May 27 in the Museum's Andrews Gallery.

The exhibition presents work in a variety of media—quilts, pottery, toys, wood carvings, household items, musical instruments, furniture, and paintings—dating from Texas's early days as a republic through the first part of the twentieth century. Among the pieces in the show are some hobo boxes, made by hobos from old packing crates; several examples of handwrought ironwork from Castroville; examples of furniture, including a pedestal table and a corner cupboard; a group of paintings by Rudolph Mueller, an artist of German origin; and several farm scenes by Louis Hoppe which recreate in extreme detail the appearance of farms at that time.

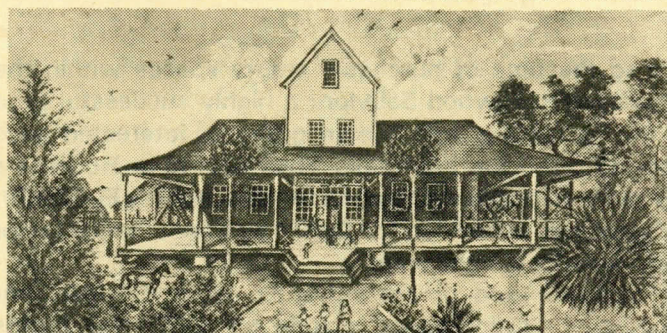
Early settlers had little opportunity to enjoy the cultural attractions of the large Eastern cities and therefore had to create their own art from materials available to them, an SAMA spokesman said. Quite often their art was crafted in the items they required for their homes and families. Many of the artists were well educated, but also included are those with little formal training whose creations were influenced by the wild country in which they settled.

Naive or so-called folk art has held a special attraction for twentieth-century viewers, since it so often represents either pared-down forms or simplified concepts that parallel twentieth-century taste, said MFA Associate Director David B. Warren. While naive art from the Eastern part of the United States has become extremely well known, the material in this exhibition is all new and extremely fresh, which lends an extra degree of excitement to the show.

The works included in the exhibition come from the collection of San Antonio's Witte Memorial Museum and from private owners and public collections throughout the state.



William G.M. Samuel's oil on canvas interpretation of the "West Side Main Plaza, San Antonio, Texas", painted about 1849.



"Jon: Leyendecker's Farm-haus bei Frelsburg", opaque & transparent watercolors painted on paper by Louis Hoppe.

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Last July, a dream came true in Houston. After several years of begging and borrowing spaces from other organizations and with the aid of an anonymous patron and a sympathetic real estate agent, the Montrose Activity Center acquired a building of its own. The two-story brick structure of indeterminate age was located in what had been the heart of Houston's Jewish community but was now the western limit of the city's sprawling black ghetto. The forces which had attacked its neighbors had also been at work on the ancient edifice and, despite cosmetic changes to the facade at mid-century, the parade of commercial enterprises through the first floor and of residential tenants through the second had taken its toll. The new home of the Montrose Activity Center plainly showed its age.

Never-the-less, Houston's gay community saw in the old building on Holman an opportunity; here was the rallying spot, the neutral ground to which all could come and which all could use. At last the gays had a home, a tangible piece of evidence that said "Gays are here to stay."

Houston's Gay Political Caucus was the first tenant to move in. GPC members used materials donated by private individuals in the community and painted the room in which the caucus was meeting. The color, an unusual shade of gold, was dictated by mixing the various cans of paint made available. GPC volunteers also renovated office space adjacent to the Caucus Room for use as permanent caucus offices. The Montrose Activity Center was in business.

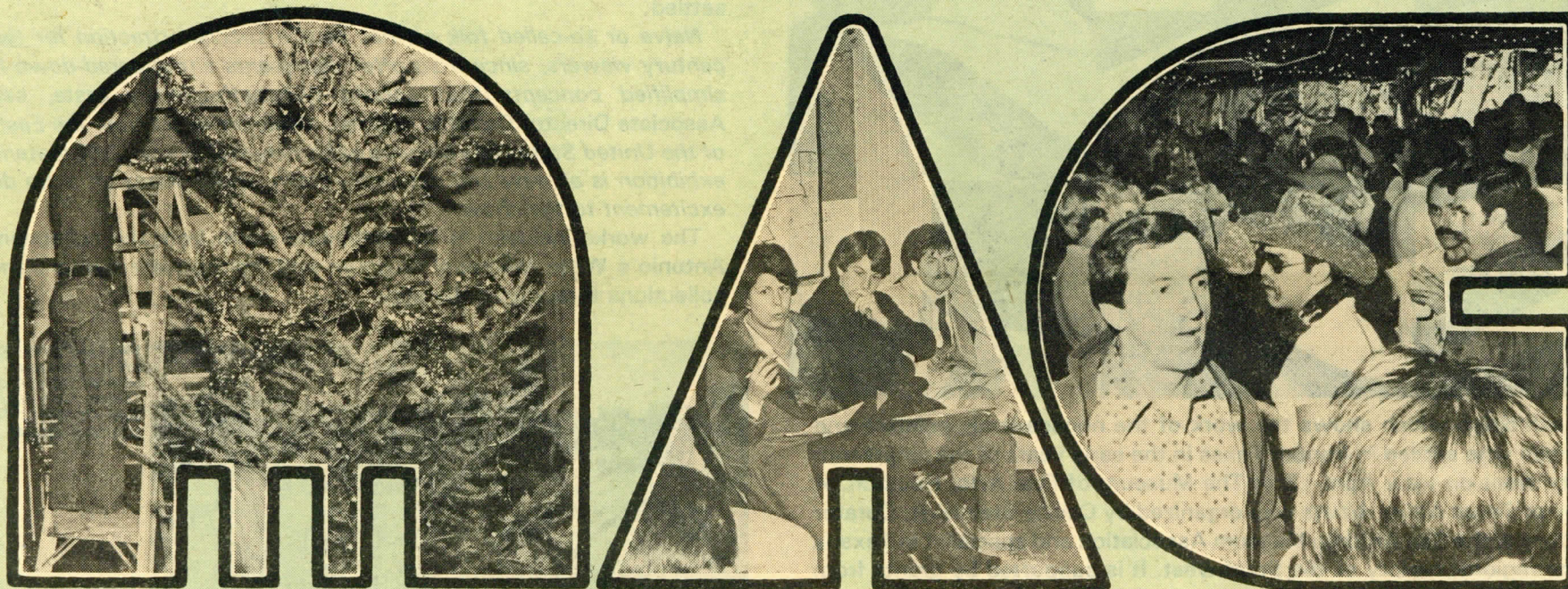
#### *Where is the MAC?*

The center is located at 1423 Holman (at LaBranch), in an upwardly mobile section of the city on the eastern edge of the Montrose and the southern edge of downtown. It is across the street from the acclaimed High School for the Performing and Visual Arts and one block from the campus of the Houston Technical Institute. Since the MAC moved into the area, several dilapidated housing units in the immediate vicinity have begun renovation.

The center itself is a two-story brick building with approximately 9,000 square feet of space on each floor. The ground floor contains five large meeting rooms of varying sizes including the Caucus Room and a larger space for theatre. The upper floor was originally 12 four-room apartments which will be converted to office space for community organizations.

#### *What are the immediate needs of the Center?*

Because the building has stood virtually derelict for some time, the immediate problems are many and varied. As anyone who has seen the puddle of water near the entrance which has accompanied each of our recent rainy spells knows, a new roof is the first priority. There will be a need for electrical, plumbing and renovation work of all kinds and the Board is actively soliciting volunteers to do the work or patrons to sponsor it.



A year or so prior to the time of purchase, empty spaces within the building had been used for Hollywood Babylon, a highly successful fund raising party. With this in mind a well known group of interested gays began to raise money to retire the mortgage. Thus was born Houston's famed *Tea For 2000* series of Sunday afternoon tea dances. *Tea For 2000*, *Supertea* and now *Sweat-tea*, scheduled for April 15, have a major factor keeping the Montrose Activity Center open.

Organizations which have used or are currently using the MAC for meetings, special events, or office space include the GPC, Gay Rights Coordinating Council, Gay Pride Week 1979, Integrity Houston, Executive and Professional Association, Gay Chicano Caucus, Montrose Players, classes in signing for the deaf, an A Capella Chorus, Montrose Marching Band, the now largely defunct Human Rights March on Washington, and, of course, Upfront which leases office space in the former residential area on the second floor. Despite the large number of people using the center, many persons still have questions about the MAC. In an effort to answer these questions, Upfront contacted the Board of Directors. Following is the complete story on the Montrose Activity Center.

#### *What is the MAC?*

The Montrose Activity Center is a non-profit corporation whose sole purpose for existence is to provide a facility for use by gay groups and organizations at minimal cost. The building has space available for meetings, offices and social functions.

#### *Who runs MAC?*

A Board of Directors currently composed of four local business people has charge of MAC. The Board is in the process of expanding to nine members and is organizing committees to carry out needed functions. Interested persons with resources of any kind — whether temporal or material — are encouraged to participate.

#### *What is the function of the Board?*

The Board spearheads fund-raising, directs renovation and improvements to the building, and accounts for collection and expenditure of funds.

#### *Who collects the profits from MAC?*

The gay community reaps all the benefits derived from the MAC. As a non-profit organization, MAC's object is to provide for its own overhead and expenditures. Because of the present condition of the building, any surplus accrued will be far in the future. Should a surplus ever accumulate, it will be used solely for the purpose of carrying out the objectives of the Center. Federal law prohibits any present or past member of the board from receiving any financial benefits and to do so would endanger the Center's status as a non-profit organization.

#### *Who can use the MAC?*

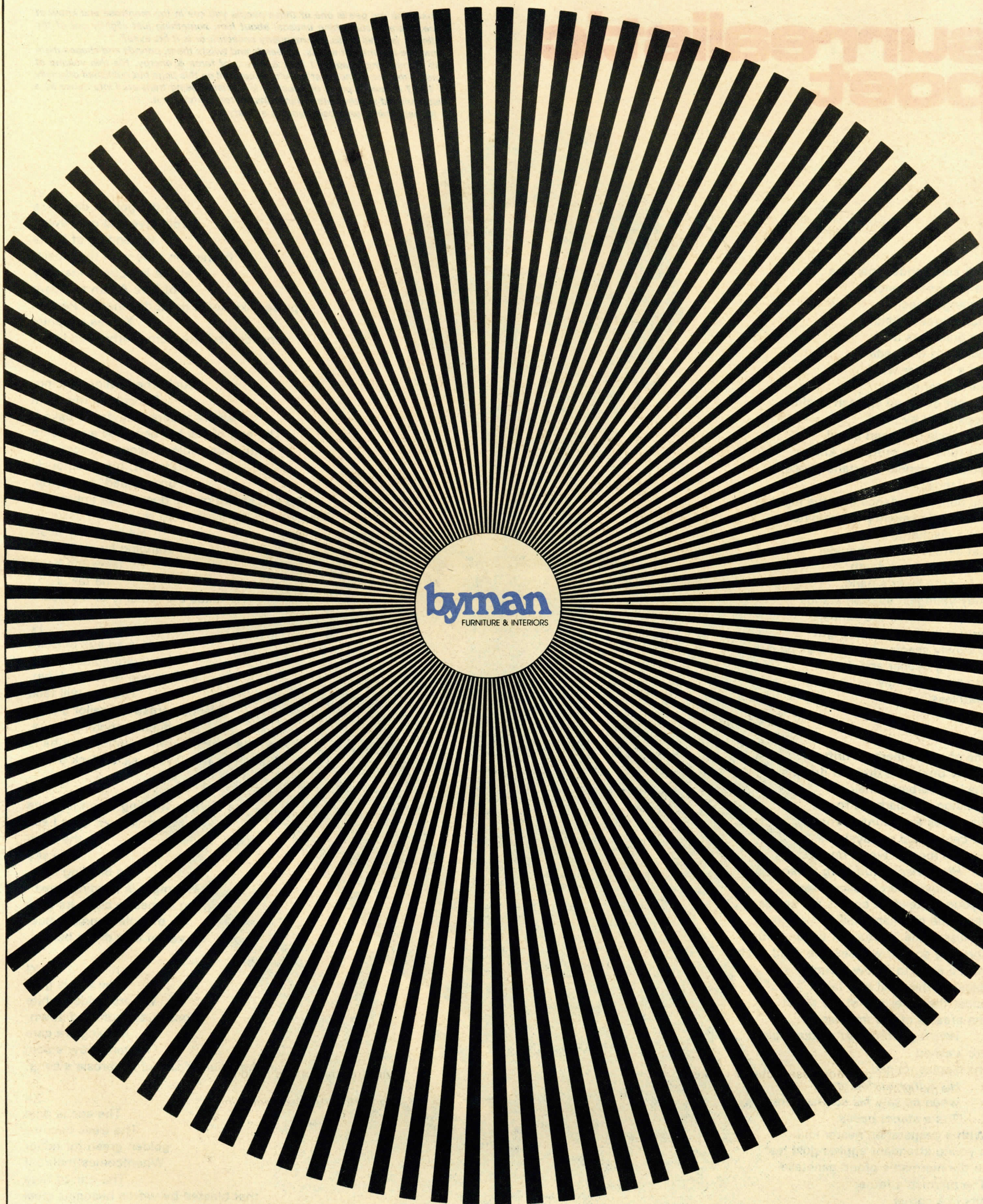
Anyone can use the Center with the approval of the Board, though it should be noted that use is at the sole discretion of the Board, who will determine the qualifications and appropriateness of any person or organization applying for use of the building.

#### *Are my contributions to MAC tax deductible?*

YES! As a tax-exempt organization, your contribution to MAC of money, materials or supplies is tax-deductible under section 501(C)3 of the Internal Revenue Code. The Internal Revenue Service has at its disposal a complete list of tax-exempt organizations and can certify MAC as a qualified entity.

*Any additional questions will receive a prompt reply if directed to the MAC Board, P.O. Box 13726, Houston, Texas 77019.*





1401 South Post Oak Road Houston, Texas 713-961-1813



# surrealistic poet

malcomb mc gee is one of those people you see in the montrose and know at once, there is something unusual about him, something just slightly out of the ordinary. is it his dress, his mannerly speech... or is it his eyes?

mc gee is a man of words. He bends and twists them, pounds and shapes them into shimmering images of light & love... of force & energy. His thin volume of verse, *ambrosia dancing at mary's*, excerpted on this page but published originally in 1977 by wings press of houston, is currently being translated into dance by a distinguished southwestern dance instructor. watch for it.

its happening, ambrosia dancing at mary's.

I  
Slick and slender spartans  
are taught to dance  
a strange apache  
upon a grassy field.  
The grass has died  
and sheds its seeds  
into a curcular wind.  
Like winter roses  
the milt of naked spartan virginity  
drops petal by petal  
in a trickle of frozen blood  
that runs from crotch to knee.  
Slick and slender spartans dance,  
and dance,  
and dance the dance into the night.  
The night's severity degenerates  
into a discharge of rain  
that settles on the shoulder  
softly as a quiet death  
or favorite lover's hand.  
They youngest spartan stands  
ready to receive the dance,  
carry it to the absurd length  
of slowly seeping his blood as he dances  
thrusting deeper and deeper  
into his seemingly  
deathless  
lover.

V  
The ghost of merman drifts  
slowly down the drain of dreams,  
sits in a barbar's chair  
standing in a barbaric room.  
His scales are counted, marked  
for ceremonial removal.

*His mother was a dophin.*

*His father a stud from Oklahoma.*

With a love nearer desperation,  
a young attendant counts the scales  
along the merman's tail.  
He kisses the juncture of tail and trunk  
knowing soon it will become dead flesh  
with a soon to follow stench.  
Because they will also fall  
under the silver axe of the priest  
the breasts of the merman

*Which are those of a young girl*  
are washed  
the nipples rouged.

*His father turned green*

*when he saw his son had breasts.*

*Tits a starlet needs.*

With a desperation nearer love  
a young attendant applies gold leaf  
to the merman's proud genetalia.  
The merman's father  
sits in a corner  
wearing a read leather loin cloth  
and gold bead necklace

*Don't fuck the fish in Oklahoma.*

VI  
In the golden darkness  
I void love and only await  
the ending of lights  
flashing in time with the music.  
Yet the infectious memory  
of love Adam to Adam  
pulses like some great degenerate Persian  
Xerxes in denim  
accepting tribute from pretty-eyed boys.

VIII  
Sunburned sailor dancing.  
Dancing in my room  
where sailors may dance naked.  
The end of the bar becomes a monolith  
with unbearable religious implications,  
mugs left, blasphemously  
unattended, on its top.  
The placement of the door is not important.  
The color of the sunburned skin of the sailor is.  
He takes my heart  
standing by me naked.  
He takes my heart  
he takes . . .  
He takes the remains of my heart.

IX  
It is an age of gold.  
We are golden white  
tossed and tumbled down.  
The sun will fade  
dance across my sailor's back  
dipping tripping round.  
Noting the course with a gentleman's hand  
I laugh as he plays in sailor Jack's hair.

X  
The night is winding down my love  
when in your eyes I see  
the stars  
the sky  
the blinding light.  
The night is winding down.  
Morning comes to claim its case  
of violet, somber hue.  
Its veil of lace drops behind.

XI  
The age is gold  
We are golden white  
tossed and tumbled down.  
Nothing we care  
for tomorrow's pain  
in the sweet death of Ambrosia's song.

XII  
The age is gold  
The trees become  
golden green for honor  
When!comes!the!iron!  
The iron of rage  
that blasted by words becomes steel  
to lock us in days of madness.  
Ambrosia sings  
tapping a tamborine.



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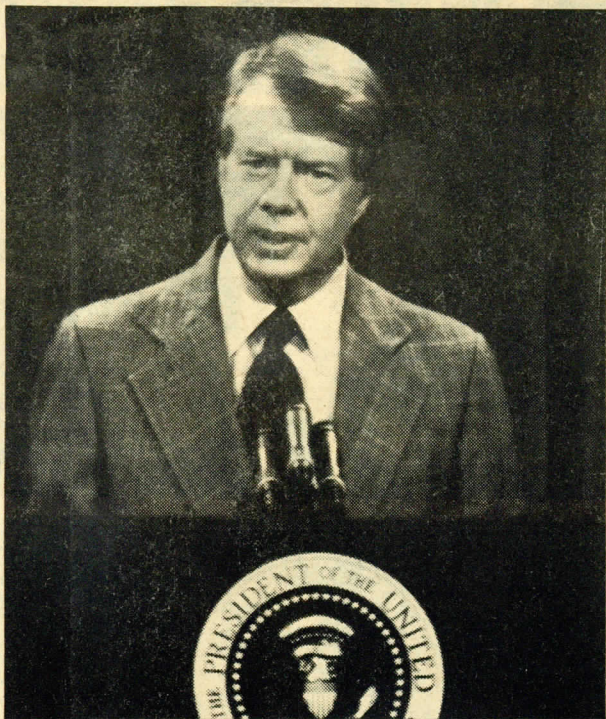


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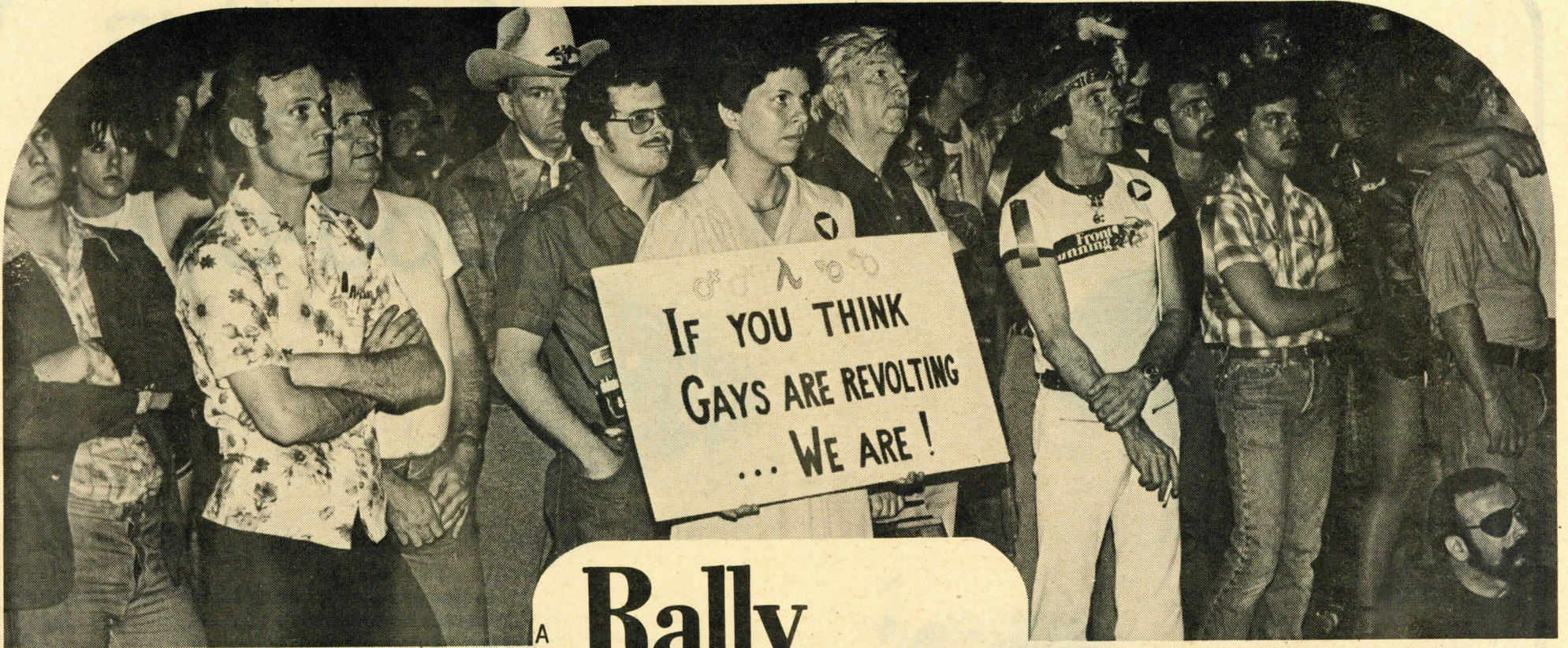
... Nowhere is this more clear than in the laws against possession of marijuana in private for personal use.

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“Therefore, I support legislation amending Federal law to eliminate all Federal criminal penalties for the possession of up to 1 ounce of marijuana.”

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Message to Congress, 8/2/77





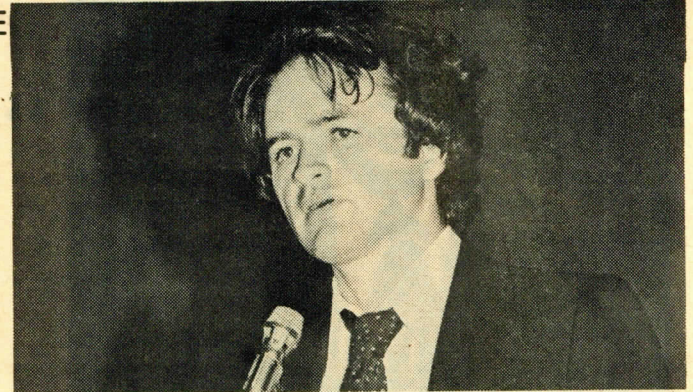
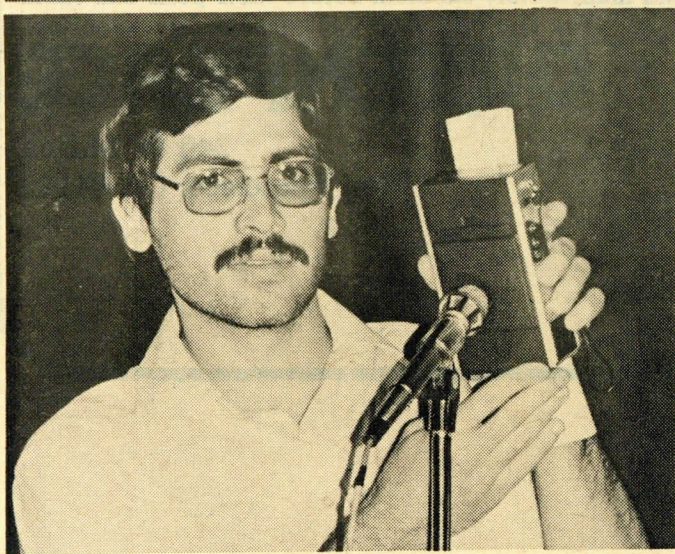
## Rally at City Hall

It was billed as an event in which local gays would "join with other citizens concerned about police harassment and abuse" in an effort to emphasize in the minds of federal investigators visiting our city, the importance & hope many Houstonians attach to the prospect of intervention by national officials. According to rally officials "federal intervention will save Houston from Chief Caldwell's lack of response to our complaints."

AN ESTIMATED 1000 demonstrators (A) listened intently as a long line of political and social opinion leaders encouraged them in their efforts to bring the HPD and Chief Caldwell into a responsive mode. Although the rally was promoted in other minority community media, most marchers (G) appeared to be gay. A relatively large number of women were present indicating to some observers, a growing awareness of militancy among local women as the civil liberties situation here continues to deteriorate.

PETER ARMATO (B) Mickey Leland's campaign aide and West Side election coordinator for 1978, played a taped statement from the Congressman. Leland, who has been instrumental in placing local gay leaders on the list of witnesses scheduled to testify before the Civil Rights Commission, pledged continued support to all efforts to reform the HPD. MARY THELMA (C), known popularly as Disco Grandma, then approached the mike and with an assist from rally organizer RAY HILL, proceeded to electrify the delighted crowd with a stinging denunciation of oppressive police policies that affect gay citizens.

Among the dignitaries present were MARY SCHLETT (D), former State Democratic Committeewoman for Senatorial District 15 (Heights, Montrose & Fourth Ward) and DAVID JONES (E), president of the Montrose Democratic Club. Both Jones and Schlett complimented the protesters for their dedication and exceptional behavior. Gil Marin (F), treasurer of the Gay Chicano Caucus represented the GCC and read a statement to the appreciative crowd.





# Religion

## Georgetown U. Nixes Gay Group

Georgetown University Administrators in Washington, DC have overturned the Student Senate and the Student Activities Commission in rejecting a bid by a gay student group for recognition and funding as a student organization called Gay People of Georgetown.

Associate Dean of Student Affairs William Schuerman explained the ruling in an official statement saying: *Georgetown University is a private university with a history and tradition which is specifically Catholic. . . Such an endorsement would be inappropriate for a Catholic University.*

## California MCC Church Burns

The Metropolitan Community Church in Santa Ana, California was torched in February destroying the historic 1896 stone landmark. It is the eighth MCC building to burn since the denomination was founded a decade ago.

Fire officials said the blaze was definitely arson and declared the building a total loss, setting damages at just under \$200,000. It was uninsured. A fund has been set up to help rebuild the church. Donations may be sent to: MCC Building Fund, P.O. Box 1755, Santa Ana, California, 92702 and are tax deductible.

# Frontlines

Upfront,

Your publication never ceases to please me with it's quality in many, many areas. Just thought you might appreciate a suggestion for yet another.

It strikes me as one excellent contribution you could make to the Houston Gay Community by deliberately cultivating a positive, progressive sense of humor.

This might be done through the cultivation of local caricature artists, writers, possible even creative photographers who could capture on film the irony, coincidence, of a given setting.

Of course, you might originally have to rely on outside sources. But it strikes me that if every gay publication and their readers put energy into such work we might be able to move a space or two beyond the near vacuum of positive gay humor.

George M. Wetzel

Following the recent gay leadership conference in Philadelphia which endorsed a National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights, John Crocker, gay student leader at the University of Houston, received the following letter. Crocker has made the letter public to alert the gay public to the kinds of tactics which may be used by some elements to disrupt the demonstration in October.

Dear John

I'm the yahoo with the Polish Peeping Tom shirt who spoke for a march in 1984. I'm in the process of trying to organize & coordinate a stop the march movement by students. In Washington we're very concerned about what media coverage might do to the future of the movement, especially if it's decadent like we're expecting. I'd like to know what kind of connections or contacts you have with people in your region and how much \$upport we could count on. The only way to stop this thing is to raise a hell of a lot of student opposition and I'd like your help in slinging some mud. Any ideas for dirty tricks would be welcomed.

John Lupinski

*Upfront takes this opportunity to reiterate its unqualified support for the National March on Washington. If you would like to help on either a local or national level, contact Coordinating Committee Member Ray Hill at 713-453-1143 or 713-523-6969.*

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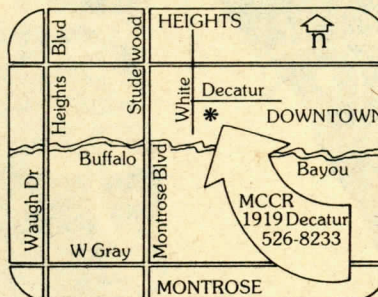
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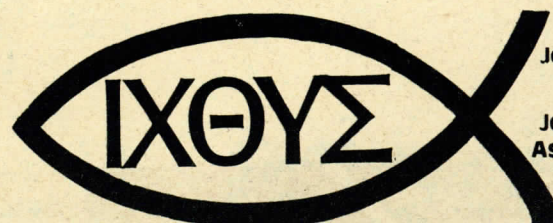
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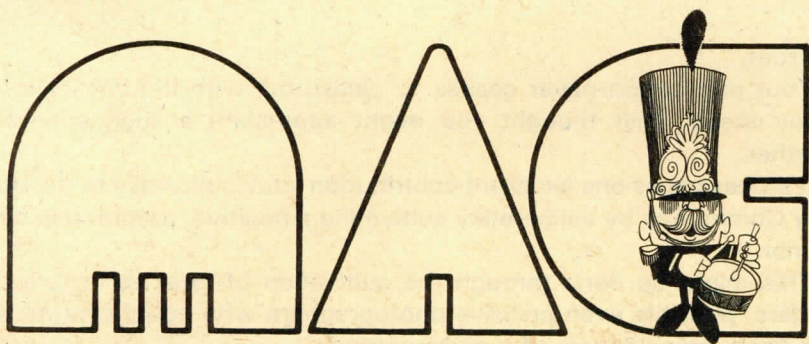
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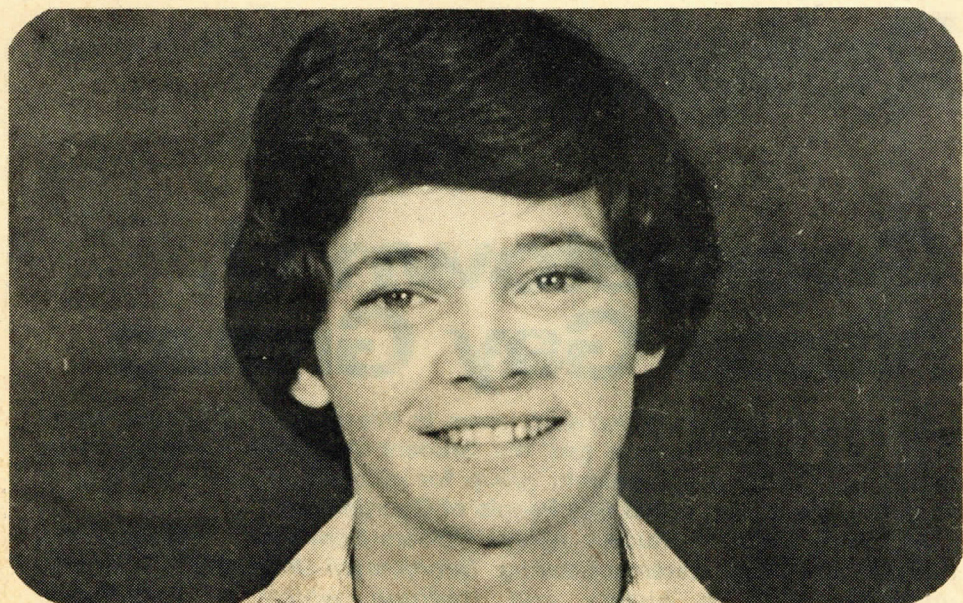
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## Health Instructor Plans Classes at Spa

When he was young James Paris Stevens never actually dreamed of working in a steambath, much less a gay one. But then army brats never really know what to expect next out of life, just expect it to be exciting.

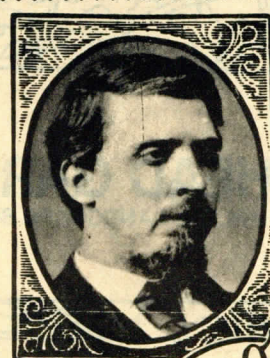
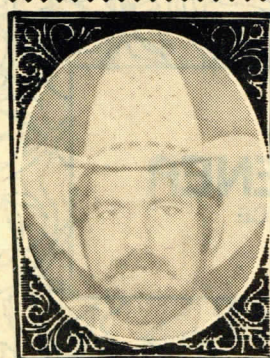
You can believe that Stevens is excited about his new position as health and nutrition counselor for the Midtowne Spa. Beginning Monday, April 16, he will be registering participants in Midtowne Spa's new Spring Training program. Between the hours of 4pm and Midnight Stevens will be available to offer advice on a number of subjects affecting your body. The program, free to members, will include counseling sessions, personalized instruction on how to achieve the body you want.

The slender Stevens, an accomplished gymnast as well as physical education major at Texas A&M, summed up the purpose behind the program this way, "I don't really care if you get big, bulging muscles. It's up to the you to choose the way you look. All I intend to do is tell you how to get what you want. I'm just here to help you achieve your own goals."



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**Profile** Cont'd from Page 6

Another paragraph could be filled with all of the "I-don't-approve-of-what-you-are-doing" statements. But hold up; rest. Just what is the IT that I am doing?

My personal IT that I am doing is the change from being a man to being and living as a woman. So what is wrong with being and living a woman? Nothing! (There was nothing wrong with being a man either except that it did not fit me and 26 years is long enough for a poor fit.)

As IT is being used, as a verbal weapon by the insecure ones of our world and, therefore, their-way-of-life-is-normal IT becomes a fetter or burden or self-guilt-trip.

I hear from my siblings in this Gay community, "My family doesn't know about IT" or "Why make an issue of IT with my friends?"

The IT that we fear will be aimed at us is used to categorize attributes that the accusers do not understand or are unable to define. Therefore, they lump everything into IT. The users of the IT have many different IT's of their own. However, these have been carefully rationalized and ingested as a normal way of life (divorce, gossip, workaholicism, ignoring children, etc.). The whole process of the user's IT being okay but other's IT being taboo is called Double Standard.

If the IT used to judge you or to make you feel unsure refers to the sins of homosexuality, we should inspect these sins. The sins of homosexuality are self-condemnation, fear of reprisal by others, loss of jobs, loss of family, loss of a place to live, being mugged by Honkies, being entrapped by police, or having your church receive bomb threats and waiting for police protection... and waiting... and waiting... and waiting. The sins are the ways we are feared and hated by others, the ways in which we are prejudged. Hate knows no sexuality.

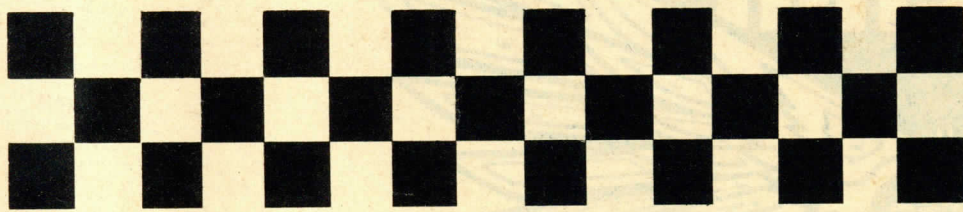
Just what is the IT that You are doing? Is IT that you are in love with (not in lust with) another person? Is IT that you are striving to be a person of honesty, integrity and tenacity? Is IT that you are sharing your riches/poverty, health/sickness, aspirations/depressions? Is IT that you are contributing to society in order to leave the world a better place? Is IT that because you are beginning to love yourself, you are beginning to love your neighbor too? Is IT that you are coming to know that you are a child of a loving God?

If so, then IT is something to be glowing about! Enjoy IT.

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**ACTORS, ACTRESSES, LIGHTING & SOUND TECHNICIANS** — and others interested in becoming involved with our own community theatre in the Montrose/ Heights area should send their names and addresses to Jack Lampert, c/o Montrose Players, MAC Building, 1423 Holman Street, Houston, Texas 77004, or watch this publication for future announcements. The Montrose Players is a division of the Montrose Activity Center.

## Calendar

**GAY PRIDE PLANNING** - come help Houston celebrate Gay Pride. MAC, LaBranch at Holman, 7:30 p.m.

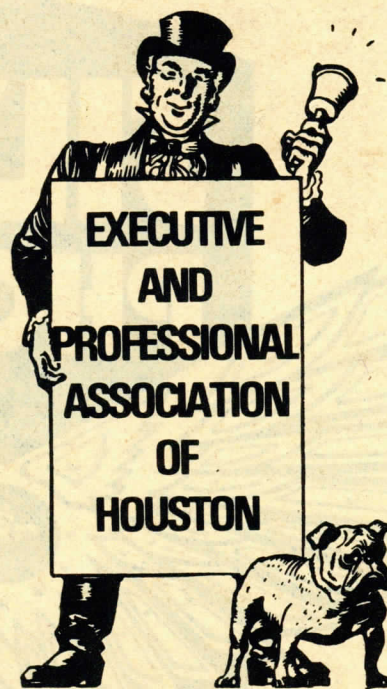
**MAC MARCHING BAND** - Contact Clint Moncrief if you play, twirl, march, crawl well or whatever. Call 626-1168 or write MAC Band, Box 66844, 77006. Prepare now to participate in the Gay Pride Week Parade. Anyone interested may join & help.

**NEARTOWN ASSOCIATION** - meets every fourth Tuesday at 7:30 p.m., Activities Room, Bering Memorial Methodist Church, Mulberry at Hawthorne. For information call 522-1000.

**BAY AREAS GAYS** - meets first & third Thursday each month. Call Larry 481-2892 or 332-1647.

**GAY CHICANO CAUCUS** - meets first Sunday of each month at MAC, 1:30p.m. Business meetings followed by social events.

**INTEGRITY/ HOUSTON** is a fellowship for Gays & friends and a forum for discussion of related topics. It meets the 2nd & 4th Thursday of each month at Wilde-n-Stein, 819 Richmond, at 7:30 p.m. Telephone: 694-1732 or 529-7014. April 26 - Guest Speaker -Mrs. A. Harrison of Families & Friends of Gays ( Parents of Gays)



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**DRUGS** Cont'd from Page 7

increase the dose of these drugs on their own and end up dead. Anyone taking perscription drugs should never increase the dose without consulting their doctor. And you **SHOULD NEVER TAKE MEDICINE GIVEN TO SOMEONE ELSE**- you may be allergic to it or it may be too great a dose for you. Age and body size also determine how big a dose of a drug a person can handle.

A major problem with street drugs is that not only is the dose not always known but the quality of the drug is also not known. There frequently are impurities in street drugs that can have harmful effects.

Another problem with drug abuse is people taking combinations of things with little or no idea what they are doing. For example, taking two downers together may greatly increase the effects of both drugs above what it would be if

they were taken alone. Other drugs have antagonistic or opposite effects on the body and taking combinations of these can be very dangerous. For example combining uppers and downers and then taking alcohol and smoking some grass can be a deadly combination which could result in a very bad trip or in death from an over dose.

Drugs are frequently metabolized by the liver. If the liver is already damaged the drugs may accumulate in the body and eventually reach toxic or poisonous levels. Frequent heavy use of certain drugs can also result in amounts accumulating in the body. If enough toxicity has accumulated from prolonged use, another dose may push a person over the edge...

Jim Lloyd

*These are just some of the general properties of drugs. In the future Mr. Lloyd will consider the specific effects of particular compounds popular within the gay world.*

**MOTHER** Cont'd from page 7

mouth. Remember, I said this lesion does not hurt, itch or burn, so if it is hidden you won't know you have it, see? The really bad part is that you are most infectious when you have this lesion, so if you do not know it is there... That is why it is so important to get blood tests. The test will show whether or not you have syphilis, otherwise, you may not know.

Now the lesion is the first outward sign your body shows of this disease. Remember I said it would only last one to five weeks and then go away.

Well, next time we'll talk about the next signs that your body gives you to let you know you have syphilis. Until then, think twice next time, you think you got your penis caught in your zipper. TTFN

Mother

# J. Ross

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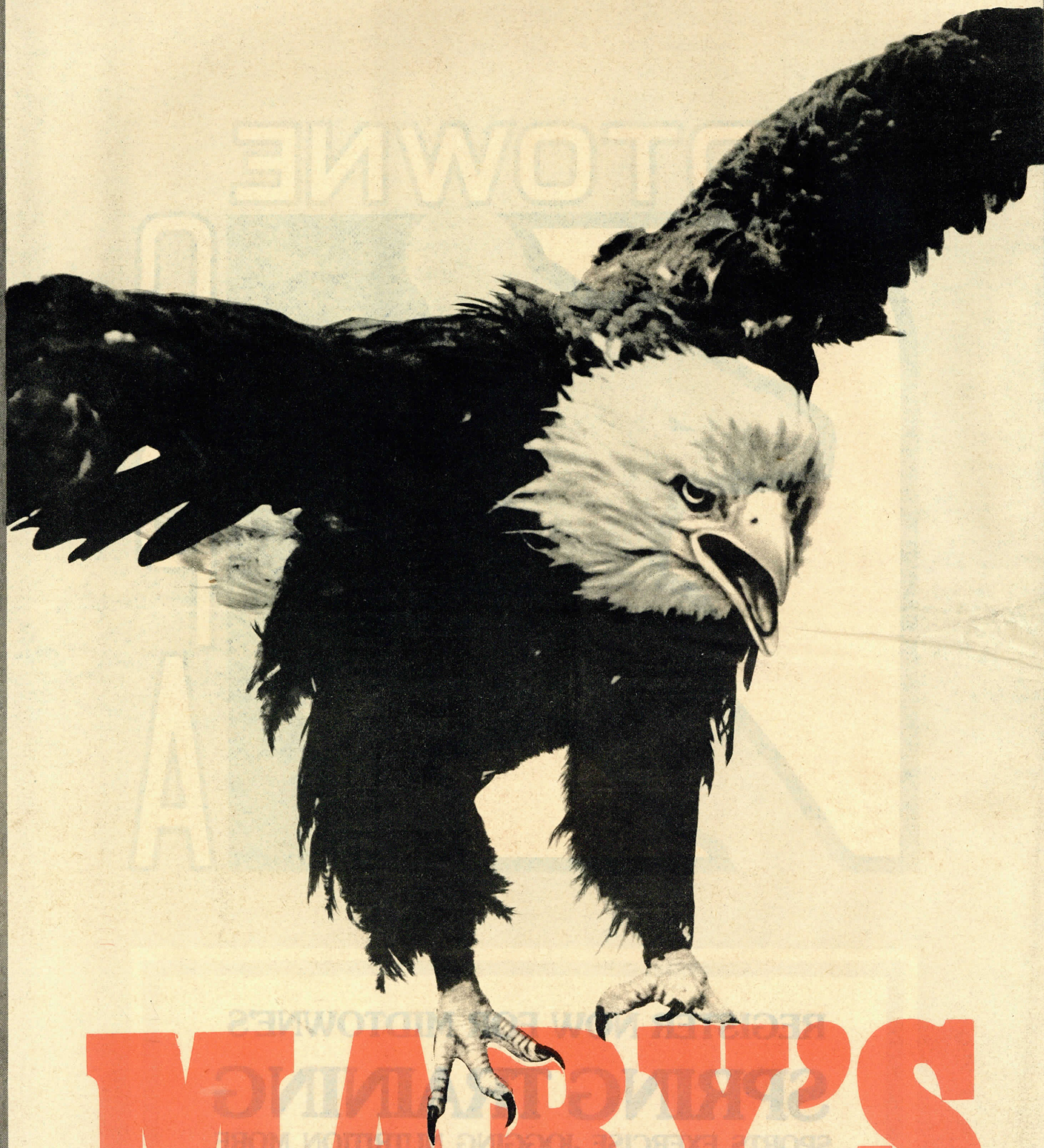
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