

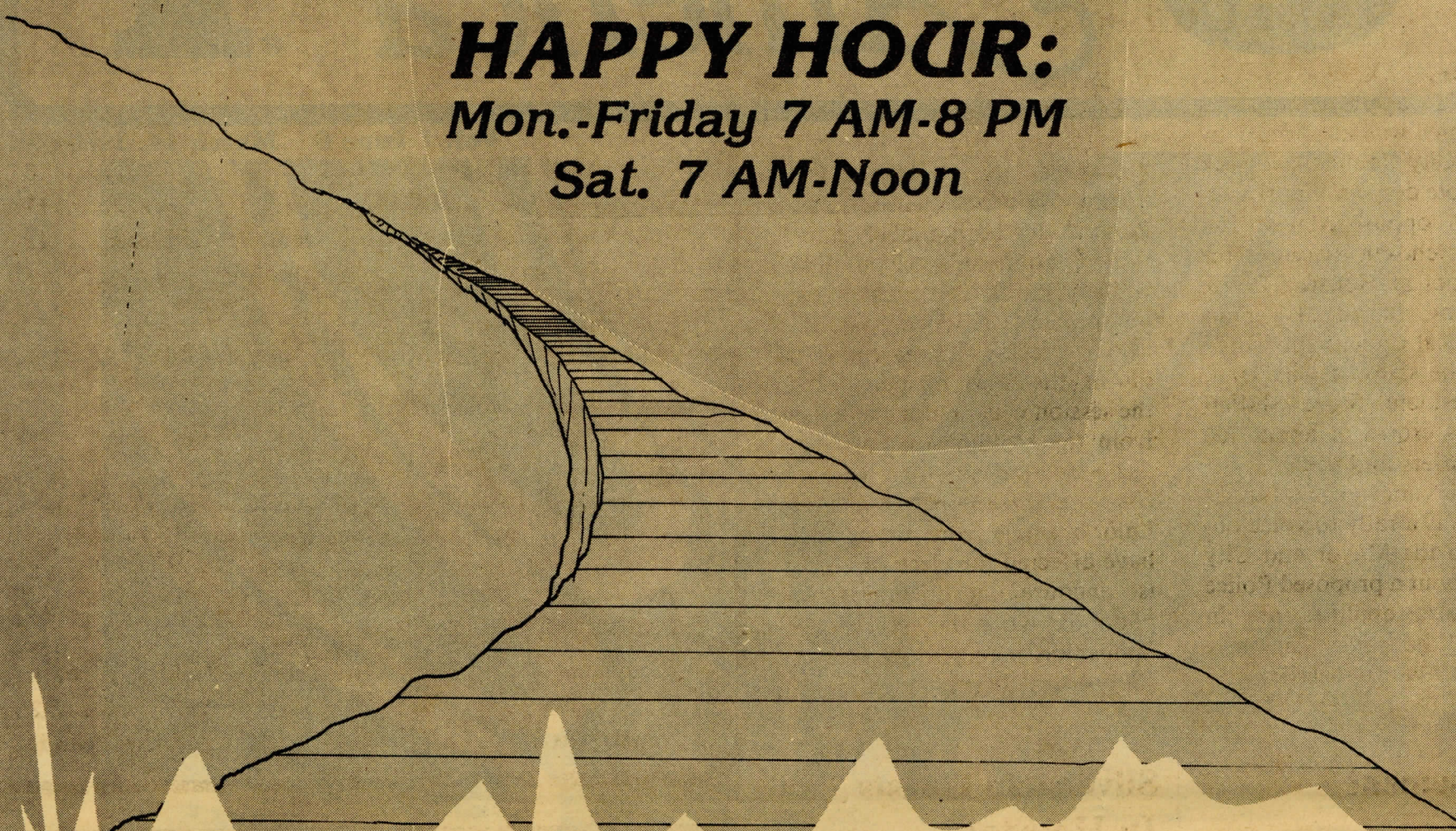
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Newsfront

New Houston Police Chief Confirmed

Houston, TX — B. K. Johnson's appointment as Police Chief was confirmed by Houston City Council last week in a 9-5 vote despite minority attempts to oppose Mayor Jim McConn's chosen successor for the top spot at Houston Police Department. In an 11th hour Gay Political Caucus sponsored rally on the steps of City Hall, GPC President Steve Shiflett spoke to a crowd of about 100 gay supporters and press.

"This is not an anti-police rally—this is a rally to voice objections to the Mayor and City Council about a proposed Police Chief whose qualities are in question," he said. The rally was called five days earlier at a meeting of the new GPC Board

of Directors.

Dissenting votes came from the three black Council members, Ben Reyes and Eleanor Tinsley. Tinsley and Lance Lalor both publicly questioned Johnson's capabilities while Lalor offered the most outspoken criticism of all. Mayor McConn called the vote during the morning portion of the session while Lalor was away from the building on business. Lalor said the vote was expected for the afternoon, however Lalor's single vote would not have affected the election. GPC is encouraging members to phone or write the six Council opposition members to express support for their position.

Endorsement Night

Houston, TX—The Gay Political Caucus will have candidate endorsement night for most races of concern to the gay community on Wednesday, March 26, 1980 at 7:30 p.m. at 4600 Main Street. *This meeting will take the place of the regularly scheduled meeting on March 19.*

The Board of the Caucus has targeted the County Chair of the Democratic Party race, the District Attorney's race, as well as the Legislative District 79 and Senate District 15 races.

Steven H. Shiflett, GPC President, said, "The gay community must create as much interest in and around the defeat of District Attorney Johnny Holmes as we did for the defeat of Frank Mann. This office has as much to do with police brutality coverups and negligent prosecution on selective law enforcement as the Houston Police Department itself does. If we want to insure equal protection and end harassment, we must defeat Johnny Holmes."

Silverstein Guests In Houston

Houston, TX—Dr. Charles Silverstein, author of *The Joy of Gay Sex*, will be in Houston on Sunday, March 16, and Monday, March 17, as a guest of the Montrose Counseling Center. Dr. Silverstein is a noted psychologist and founder of the Institute of Human Identity in New York City and is the founding editor of the *Journal of Homosexuality*. He has also authored another book entitled *Family Matter* which was written for the families and parents of gays. On Sunday, March 16, Dr. Silverstein will be at the Brazos River Bottom, 2400 Brazos, from 4:00-8:00 p.m. The entire gay community is invited. On Monday, March 17 at 8:00p.m. Dr. Silverstein will speak at the Shamrock Hilton at a \$50.00 a plate dinner benefiting the Montrose Counseling Center. The Center is a non-profit organization whose focus is on working in the Houston gay community. Any questions concerning Dr. Silverstein's visit or the counseling center may be answered by calling 529-0037.

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Staff Sergeant Pirtle Confronts US Air Force

"Today I come before this hearing as a person, not someone who should be labeled a heterosexual or homosexual. The only thing I admit to the board is the irresponsible way I have handled my actions in the sense of personal gain. What has happened to me in the last couple of months has made me think what the words prejudice, oppression and ignorance really mean."—From a dissertation by Staff Sgt. Skip Pirtle, presented to an Air Force prosecuting board January 23, 1980.

By Jack Stalnaker

Air Force Staff Sergeant Skip Pirtle, like Leonard Matlovich and Vernon Berg, has good reason to be familiar with "prejudice, oppression and ignorance" within the military.

Last October at Holloman Air Force Base in Alamogordo, New Mexico, Pirtle, dissatisfied with the constraining demands of life in the Air Force and the pressure of having to hide his gay lifestyle, decided to reveal his gayness to his superior officers.

"Now that I have admitted my position I feel a great burden has been lifted from my shoulders," he said in one of several meetings with officers. In addition to the fact of his gayness, Pirtle also revealed, without naming names, that many others at Holloman, both officers and enlisted personnel, were gay. At that time he was seeking a "39-12 Section H" (honorable) discharge from the Air Force, as a solution to the conflicts between his personal and professional involvements.

With advice and support from close friends, Pirtle arrived at another difficult decision—to remain in the Air Force until the natural termination of his enlistment in May of 1980. He refused to sign a written statement concerning the facts of his gay orientation. In spite of this the Air Force wanted to give him an "administrative discharge."

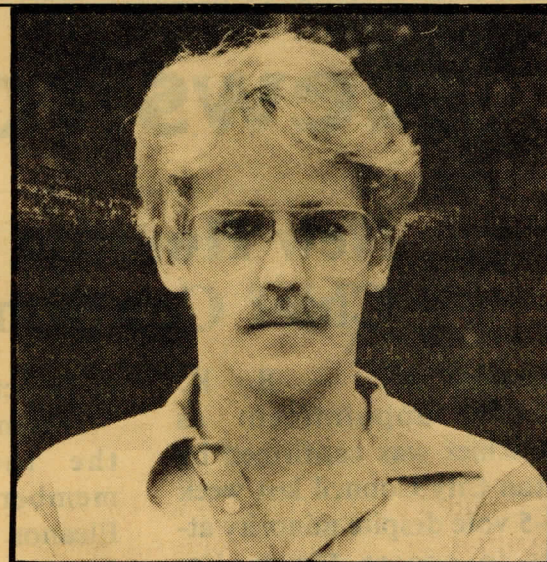


PHOTO BY JACK STALNAKER

Among "specific reasons" for Pirtle's discharge were:

- (1) "During your current enlistment, you have admitted and/or professed to be a homosexual and to having homosexual tendencies."
- (2) "During your current enlistment, you have habitually associated with persons known to you to be homosexuals."

On January 23, 1980, Pirtle faced an administrative discharge board in a hearing which lasted from 8 A.M. until 5:30 P.M. Six witnesses called by the prosecution were questioned as to his "behavior on the job," and were asked if they would object to working with him if he was retained by the military. The responses by these witnesses were mostly positive, but there was an underlying homophobia characterized by one witness's answer when asked if he had ever noticed anything "unusual" about the defendant.

"Yes, he had long fingernails," was the straight-faced answer. The lawyer for the defense rendered the answer even more ridiculous by countering with: "Were they painted red? Was he wearing a dress?"

During the hearing Pirtle chose not to go under oath—he did not want to perjure himself with regard to questions about his lifestyle, and

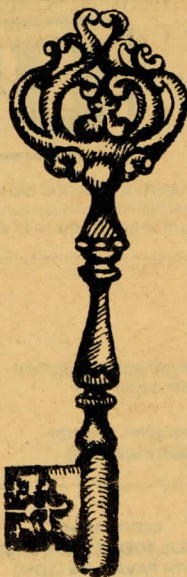
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Gay Pride Week 1980 Planning Launched

By Rue Starr II

"Proud To Be" is the theme for Houston Gay Pride Week 1980 as organizers are hinting at some big name entertainment for the kick-off celebration Friday, June 21. Two of last year's top Gay Political Caucus officers who were left without positions after the recent election have bounced back as GPW Committee leaders. Acting Chair Greer Price was voted in while Larry Bagneris is taking on the task of putting together the Second Annual GPW parade which Price promises "will be the biggest thing we've done in a long time." Bagneris was instrumental in securing last years parade permit from a then hostile City Council and explained that the size of this year's parade will depend on how much money the community is willing to put up for a larger parade permit. New GPC Secretary Jenny Willinger was named co-Chair by the group which numbered over ninety.

UpFront America columnist Mother Ruth Ravas was there with her ideas and several escorts making one of her first public appearances since a car accident in January. Bill Ramsey of the Montrose Activity Center Board promised that the \$1300 left over from last year's GPW account and loaned to MAC to fight foreclosure proceedings in August "will come back soon."

Gay bars and businesses will be decorated outside for the Friday night kick-off as Family and the Tavern Guild are coordinating the first nights city wide observance.

The Third Annual "Thank You Miss Ima Hogg For Memorial Park Picnic" is planned for Saturday after the tentatively scheduled Police vs. Gays softball game. Sunday has been named Texas Day and the site this year will shift to Stewart Beach in Galveston.

The GPC is reserving Monday for their activities, as Tuesday was left open for latecomers. Metropolitan Community Church Pastor Charles Larson is coordinator for all interested religious groups in an observance of the National Day of Remembrance on Wednesday. Gay Young people are planning Thursday's agenda as Friday honors the contributions of the Gay Hispanic Caucus and others as Minorities Day.

On Saturday Gay Resource Services at the University of Houston is hosting a day of workshops, discussions and lectures for Education Day. A Saturday night concert including the Montrose Voices, the Montrose Marching Band and Feminist entertainers will also be coordinated by GRS with the help of Out and Out Productions.

John Schillinger was placed in charge of fundraising. Commercial artist Dennis Dunwoody is heading up the publicity people while UpFront America photographer Roz Vecchio will be working with him as media coordinator.

Family's Andy Mills donated the rental fee for the former Family Center facility to the GPW Committee for the three hour meeting. The next meeting will be Sunday March 23 at 2:30 p.m. at the MAC building and is open to all persons interested in helping building Gay Pride '80.

Vantage Point Project 1980

Project 1980 is the name of a special, one year project the purpose of which is to raise funds for Houston's gay community center, the Montrose Activity Center. It has been designed specifically for Houston, but the concept could be implemented in any city where a reasonably sized gay community exists. Several things need to be recognized first, however: The need for and importance of a community center, an ability to persevere with a plan of action until it has been completed, the cooperation and support of the community; and the development of a good advertising and public relations campaign. Other cities wishing to employ a similar plan may wish to modify part or all of it to meet their individual needs.

The Concept: To raise funds from within the gay community in a regular, recurring manner and to *invest* those funds back into the community through the development of a gay community center for *long-term* benefit. In Houston's case, Project 1980 will initially focus on a weekly fund raiser held each Thursday at a local disco from which 100% of the door is designated for MAC. Other dance bars will eventually be asked to do likewise. In theory, both the project and the bars should do well. The bar will do well just from the increase in drink sales on an otherwise slow evening.

The Funding: Project 1980 has targeted \$100,000 as its goal for 1980. Approximately 65% to 75% of this amount *can* be raised in the time remaining this year if Houston's gay community can get itself psyched up and rolling. While other sources are being developed and considered, for the time being this appears to be the most expedient and easy to manage given this community's massive involvement in so many other areas.

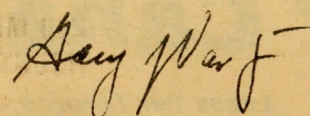
The Use of Funds: All the funds raised will be designated to the building and maintenance fund where it is most urgently needed. Occasional shortages in debt service funds may require a small portion to be used for that purpose, too.

Besides the obvious direct benefit to MAC, Project 1980 has developed a formula that returns two additional benefits back to the community while still using these *same* funds. The first additional benefit will be to assist new arrivals to Houston who often arrive with nothing more than a few personal belongings and little or no money. Under Houston's Project 1980 plan, these funds may be used to furnish temporary employment for these people until they can get on their feet.

The second additional benefit can be applied to other organizations and their particular funding needs. Not only will MAC be a place that is available for them to use as their own needs dictate, but during our renovation period they, too, can earn extra money for their organizations. The Montrose Marching Band is an example. They need a large sum of money for their upcoming trip to Los Angeles where they will march in LA's Gay Pride Day Parade. Project 1980 has made an offer to contribute money to the Band in exchange for the Band's assistance with MAC's renovation. This will be done at a prescribed rate per hour per person as soon as funds are available.

So what does all this say and mean? Well, it means we have much to do and little time to waste. Houston's Project 1980 has developed a unique plan enabling you to party and be financially supportive at the same time.

Ladies and gentlemen, these goals are within our reach. Whether we achieve them or not is up to you.



Publisher

Medifax

By Jim Lloyd

FF: The Danger Zone

Many people, both male and female homosexuals and heterosexuals, derive considerable sexual satisfaction from having their anuses penetrated by a penis or foreign object. In recent years the practice of inserting a fist into the anus has become increasingly popular among certain segments of the gay male population. All of these practices pose certain hazards that frequently require medical attention.

The major hazard of insertion of a penis into an anus is the transmission of syphilis, gonorrhea, hepatitis, herpes genitalia and non-specific infections of the urinary tract. Many male homosexuals are anal carriers of sexually transmitted diseases but aren't aware of it because not everyone has symptoms. If carried out in a relaxed manner with proper lubrication, penetration of the anus by a penis does not generally pose a threat to the lower bowel, but if done incautiously it may be harmful.

The insertion of foreign objects such as coke bottles, dildoes and the like into the anus can be very harmful. A frequent scene in any

emergency room is the individual with a foreign object that slipped away stuck inside of them requiring medical intervention to remove it.

An even greater hazard with the insertion of foreign objects but increasingly so with insertion of a fist is the danger of tearing the inside of the lower bowel resulting in bleeding which can be fatal. Tearing of the lining of the lower bowel by finger nails can also lead to serious infections. One of the real dangers with this practice is that there are no nerve endings after a certain point in the lower bowel, so if the insertee is not aware of any pain even when great damage has already been done. Bleeding can be going on for some time before the person is aware of it and in some cases it may be too late to prevent massive hemorrhage and death. All too often the parties engaging in this practice are very high on drugs and alcohol which leads them to further risk taken by penetrating the anus too far.

A long term problem which can result from anal intercourse is the loss of bowel control. After fisting this may occur immediately, or it may develop as a person grows older.

Urinating and washing the penis after anal intercourse may reduce the risk of infection but does not guarantee protection. Use of a condom can greatly reduce the risk of infection, but is not always 100 percent effective. A dildo or penis that has been in an anus should never be inserted into a vagina without being washed; failure to wash can lead to a vaginal infection called vaginitis which is very painful.

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Castro Theatre Says Goodbye to Grey Skies

By David Osborne

A large blue banner announcing Joseph Losey's *Don Giovanni* waves at passers-by from the windows of the Castro Theatre in the Castro district of San Francisco. It joins the neighborhood in a celebration of spring as colorful flowers, Japanese kites, and newly re-painted houses emerge from a grey winter.

It's not as though the Castro theatre needed more color to attract the attention of passers-by. The building itself is certainly the prime architectural focus of the entire area. The fifty-foot marquee dominates the block and at night serves as the colorful beacon of Castro itself, announcing in pink and blue neon that street life goes on day and night. For many visitors to the area, it is the Castro marquee that announces arrival to the largest coherent gay community in America.

Built in 1922 for the then phenomenal sum of \$300,000 by local theatre entrepreneurs, the Nasser brothers, the edifice is now considered to be one of the finest examples of movie house architecture in the city. The architect, Timothy L. Pflueger, went on to design many buildings in the Bay area; but the Castro was his first ambitious project. The style of the building is eclectic. Spanish, rococo, baroque art-Nouveau and art-Deco are all to be found within its walls. As a temple to public entertainment, the Castro embodies a lot of what contemporary audiences regard as grand or exotic: a mandala-like ceiling cast in plaster and resembling an Oriental canopy complete with swags, ropes and tassels, gilded screens on each side of the screen illuminated and towering over potted ferns, and art Deco light fixtures soaring like early sci-fi UFO's over the heads of the audience. Classic motif murals executed in scraffito, a wet plaster relief process similar to fresco, decorate the side walls.

From the main floor lobby two large staircases with full-length gilt-edged mirrors ascend to the mezzanine and balcony. The mezzanine itself serves as an

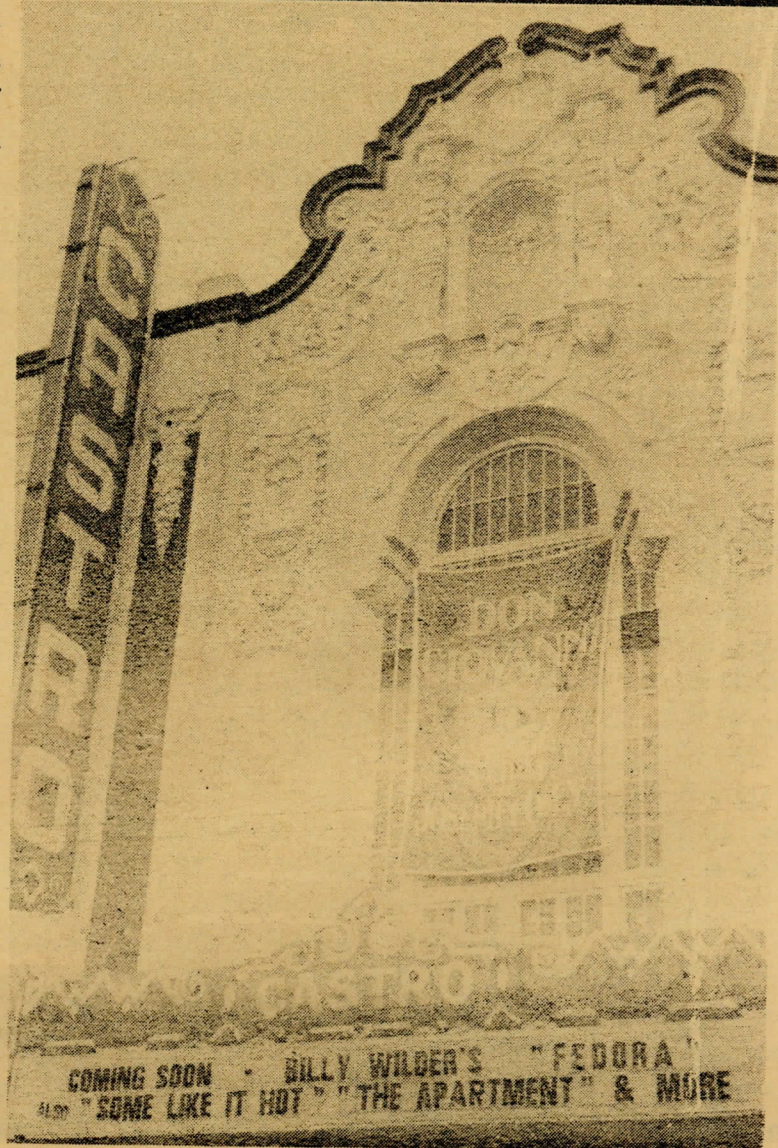
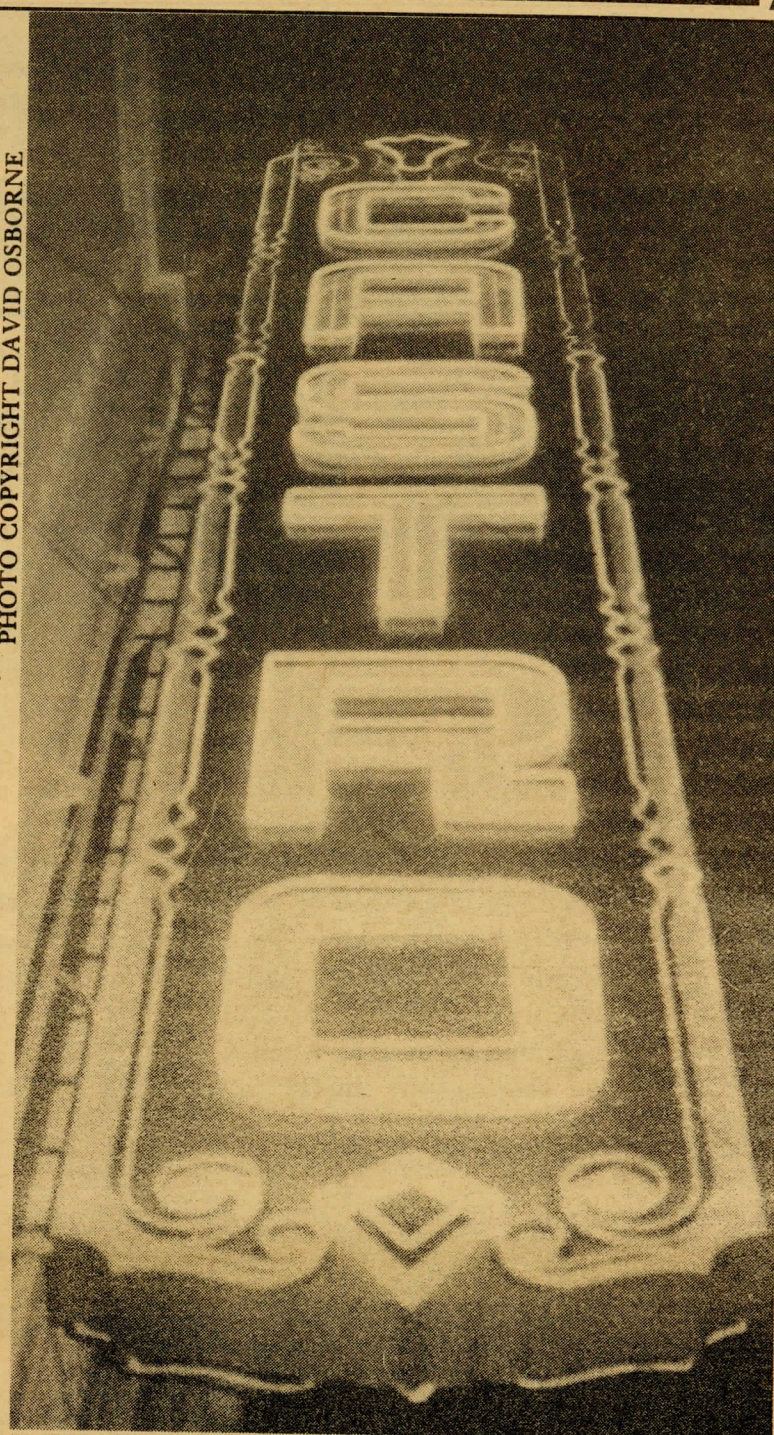
elegant lounge that suggests the charm of the bygone era of the great movie palaces. During the year this space is rented out to community groups for special meetings or parties, or as a reception area for the performers who appear in the theatre itself on occasion (the latest being Pat Bond appearing for the Harvey Milk Memorial Benefit). The Castro also offers the luxury of live organ performances before each feature and has featured on-stage tap dancers and personal appearances by film celebrities.

In 1977 the Castro co-hosted the San Francisco International Film Festival and is expected to play an annual role in that showcase for new films. With a seating capacity of 1600 and a newly installed Dolby sound system, the theatre serves admirably well as a centre for the community's social and political events.

Peter Ujlaki, Publicity Director for the SURF Theatre chain of which the Castro is a member, is aware of the function of the theatre as a community center, a center not solely for movie entertainment but also a focal point of the Castro self-awareness. Respect for the theatre itself as an edifice by the community has been shown in many ways, not the least of them being the restoration work on the interior and the 1977 recognition of the Castro Theatre as a Registered Landmark, the 100th edifice to receive such status in San Francisco.

That new blue banner over the facade is warming to see. The Castro Theatre is alive and well and living in the heart of the community whose name it shares. The elaborate structure reminds us of what Ruskin was trying to impress upon his culture when he noted that buildings "become noble or ignoble in proportion to the amount of energy of that mind which has visibly been employed upon them." The Castro Theatre was indeed erected with a sort of "nobility" in mind and through the changes of over half a century, it has maintained its attitude, its form and its function. For this it has been recognized as the "dowager" of the Castro—long may she reign!

PHOTO COPYRIGHT DAVID OSBORNE



Accomplished Gay Playwright Looks At World From Wheelchair

By Greg Day

Chris Hewitt is a gay poet and playwright. He was born with a brittle bone disease which restricts his movement to a wheel chair. A native of England, Chris was until recently a graduate student and teacher of creative writing at San Francisco State University. He is currently an MFA student at the University of Iowa. His play "Love is Called One in the Saine," was first performed on national public radio in 1974. In "Everyone Writes Poetry," his second play, Chris focuses on the life of a gay man in a wheel chair and his lover. In "Flight of the Cowboy," a book of poetry, Chris explores the human condition in general and the problems and aspirations of gay and disabled people in particular.

Greg Day: What special problems have you faced as both a gay and physically challenged person?

Chris Hewitt: As a disabled person it was very hard to find a university in England that would accept me. I went to Birmingham University because they said they had a special program for disabled students. They had housing for us in the health center, it was a disabled ghetto.

We were living with people who came to the health center because they had pneumonia, and scarlet fever, and God knows what! We had to be in by ten o'clock at night. But I went, and I stuck it out and fought to get into a regular dorm. It took me 18 months to get into a dorm. I wish I could say that I blazed a trail, but it is a chicken and egg proposition. If they don't make buildings accessible, and don't welcome disabled people, they aren't going to go. Since I went to a regular high school and haven't been segregated as a disabled person, I was more able to push for my rights.

I lived on my own for the first time in Berkeley, California, and I managed pretty well, which is important for your self respect. I think that the more dependant you are on other people the less likely you are to ask for what you want. Because, if you have to ask for little things in everyday life, you're not going to ask for a beautiful man, a beautiful relationship, or the right job.

G. D.: Has it been difficult to be accepted as a gay disabled person?

C. H.: I think it's harder in some ways for a gay disabled person to come out because they've got a double kind of barrier to confront. They have to confront the world as a disabled person first. I didn't come out until I lived in Berkeley. In England it was very difficult to be openly gay unless you were gay in a very outrageous way, and you stuck only with other gay people, or were in Gay Liberation Front. In my school you had to be a Gay Marxist to be accepted. I had played the part of being an asexual being, which is what a lot of disabled people do whether they are gay or straight. I allowed people to assume that I was

straight. Though no one ever asked me about my sexuality. No one ever asked if I was involved with anybody, or whether I had sexual desires.

I suppose the gay community because I think it is a safer place for gay people to be, and God knows when you're in Iowa or elsewhere and you are faced with prejudice, you need to stick together, you need someone to say that you are not weird. I don't regret that I'm gay for one minute, it has always seemed perfectly normal to me. I've known since I was nine years old that I was gay. I have never wished that I was straight. I happen to fall in love with men and be attracted to men and that's fine by

me. But I don't think that either straight or gay people should limit themselves by their sexuality. Most straight and gay people seem to never have considered the thought of just being sexual beings, of being turned on by people in general. Of course, at times, I get angry because not fitting in, in physical terms, does bar me from a lot of sexual activity which I would otherwise have.

G. D.: Do you go to gay bars?

C. H.: Yes, here in San Francisco I go to the Twin Peaks, Elephant Walk, Cafe San Marcos, as well as the Cafe Flore. These are primarily talking bars, you can cruise if you want to, there is no hassle. I don't usually go to heavy cruising bars. Their atmosphere seems very pressurized to me. I wish there were more gay bars where people could just talk to each other.

I know that gay men who come on to me, sometimes chicken out because they don't know if I'm sexually normal, if I can perform in a regular way, and haven't got the guts to ask me. Or they think they might be turned off if I took all my clothes off. I'm aware of all that,

and that's difficult. But at the same time, it is also up to the disabled person to make the physically normal person with whom they want to have sex feel comfortable. That's not easy because of their expectations, and I don't claim to have got that together yet either. However, I think that is one of the things that makes it very hard for a disabled person to do the bars, to be sexually active in a regular kind of way. A part of me desires that.

I just can't go out and do that whenever I want. I have to really get myself together to do it, because I don't get picked up that easily. That's partly in my head and partly because I don't fit in to the (gay male) stereotype. If you consider yourself an attractive person with some degree of self-confidence, which I do, even if you don't fit the stereotype, it doesn't stop you, it just makes it a lot harder. There has to be a certain amount of empathy for the other person, a certain amount of warmth, and feeling, and I want that with someone that I go to bed with anyway, whether they are disabled or normal.

I think, oh, I just want to fuck somebody, but when it happens I want it to be something meaningful and beautiful. Even for that one night, I want to care about the person. To me the warmth, intelligence and awareness of that person is very important.

G. D.: Do straight disabled people exhibit the same kind of homophobia as other straight people, or are they more accepting?

C. H.: I don't have many disabled friends, mainly because I have found that most disabled people are very conservative. One of the reasons I think they are this way is that they are used to being in a passive position, and they're used to asking for

what they want.

They are forced to emulate the role of somebody who is very straight, in order to show that they are just like everybody else.

I think the secret to being properly liberated is on one hand to accept your disability and recognize it as a force which effects the way other people relate to you, and at the same time to realize that a large part of yourself is exactly the same as everybody else. I find that a lot of disabled people only relate to each other and to themselves as disabled,

Poem from "Flight of the Cowboy"

By Christopher Hewitt

Cowboys have Dodge trucks
tear up the roads to the saloon
in Mariposa
where chiquita leans.
I'm at the counter
trying to sound East coast
but I'm a bad liar.
the bartender says
"My father went
to London once."

Chiquita and cowboy.
I hate his beauty
love the muscles hard from cutting
steer in saddle-worn sunsets.

I want to fuck him dead.

The girl will watch in horror
know my suicide
what I saved her from.

Driving home,
cowboys howl behind me,
"Pussy! Pussy! Queer!"

One
eterned laughing
waves his gun
blasts it off
winks at me.

Gay Playwright

and I think that's also true of gays. I feel it is dangerous to get so wrapped up in the identity of a specific sexuality or a physical appearance, and it is all too easy to fall into that.

G. D.: How is it dangerous?

C. H.: I think it is limiting, and that it ultimately leads to frustration and unhappiness unless you realize that you have as much right to what you want as anyone else, and that you don't have to be any more grateful, or think the world is a greater place because you are being given what everyone else gets more easily. If you are disabled, for example, you have the right to demand a satisfactory relationship with another person. You have the right, just as much as anyone else, to reject those people who don't make you happy. This has happened to me. I have tended to accept situations which don't make me happy just because I'm so grateful that somebody is attracted to me. Sometimes I think you are conditioned to take shit because you are disabled.

One of the hardest things if you are disabled is to think of yourself as attractive, because you are very different, and because of mass media and your average Castro, all american gym-trained boy. Since you don't fit into that, it's only too easy to think that in some way you're inferior. I think that's true whether you're gay or straight, but maybe it's a little more obvious in the gay scene. Something that sets me apart as well is that I'm an artist. Whether or not I was disabled I would also be in a minority anyway.

What gay and disabled and other minority people have in common is that your average white middle class person is afraid of them because they are different. It is fear and ignorance that we are the victims of. If you are disabled, you tend to get patronized, talked down to by physically normal people who will get a kick out of doing something good for you. Gays don't get patronized, we get despised, because people think we are sick and abnormal.

In the Bay area we are lulled into a false sense of security as gay people because we think it's very accepted, it's normal. There are often far more gays than straights. It is easy to sit on your ass in San Francisco and say "Isn't it wonderful being gay? But get outside, over the Berkeley Hills, and you're in trouble! In Iowa I had several very bad experiences with being gay, not with being disabled. This is one of the reasons I want to write in my poetry about being gay and about being disabled. But I don't want to just spout off at the mouth with nonpolitical dogma, I want to say something that in some way can educate the straight sensibility.

Physically Challenged Organize

Houston, TX—A new organization is forming to deal with issues of concern to handicapped gays. The first meeting will be held at the Montrose Activity Center Friday, March 31 at 7 PM.

Those in need of transportation or more information should call Bruce at 529-2111 after 7 PM. Volunteers interested in helping with transportation for that meeting should call the same number.

All That Jazz

Houston, TX—Add Lib, Houston's popular all women jazz ensemble, will be in Kansas City later this Spring for the 3rd Annual Women's Jazz Festival. Mum's, a downtown night spot for jazz fans, is sponsoring a "Fly-by-Night Benefit" for the group this Sunday Night, March 16 to assist with travel expenses. The Montrose Marching Band will be performing in concert with their Twirling Corps next weekend at the Houston Festival. The Band is scheduled for the Sam Houston Park stage on Saturday March 22nd at 5:00 p.m.

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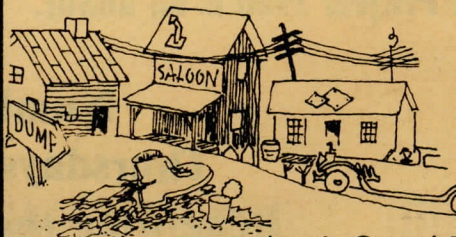
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Air Force Confrontation

Continued from page 4

he did not want to incriminate acquaintances.

At the end of the hearing, Pirtle presented to the board his dissertation—a long statement prepared with assistance from his lover. In essence this statement reveals Pirtle's dissatisfaction with military policy, specifically the irrational attitudes toward homosexuals; and he questions the military's ability to grant him a "fair, honest and unbiased hearing."

The dissertation further states: "My feelings are that this hearing is a total mockery of justice. The violation of laws I am accused of were written over 30 years ago. These laws are antiquated and need to be updated."

At no point in the dissertation does Pirtle actually proclaim his homosexuality—his conviction is that his sexuality should *not* be an issue, despite the original revelation that started the sequence of events leading to the discharge hearing.

The board voted to retain Staff Sergeant Pirtle—according to Pirtle this is the first time an Air Force discharge board has voted in favor of the defendant in a case such as this. However, he was found guilty of "admitting and/or professing" to be homosexual for the purpose of securing "an early separation from the Air Force." But the board referred to his initial revelation about his gay lifestyle as "untruthful statements."

The board recommended rehabilitation under an Air Force program, but this was not enforced.

Pirtle, somewhat shaken by the events of the past few months, but with a raised gay consciousness, hopes his experiences will help change the traditional homophobic attitudes of the military.

"This is a chance for people to understand. I think gays have to be among the most oppressed groups of people, and I want to break down barriers."

Hepatitis Hotline

Houston, TX—A support service for patients with hepatitis, has been established according to David Bonuelos, Chairperson of the Medical Committee, Houston Gay People's Caucus, Inc. The service is "to provide peer and emotional support for people with types A and B hepatitis," he said. Dietary assistance in conjunction with physician's orders is offered, as is errand running for those who are homebound. Perhaps most important is that concerned volunteers will offer companionship and conversation for those with this disease which is often associated with depression.

Bonuelos said that the results have been "fantastic." More volunteers are needed and must have had hepatitis to qualify. Contact David Bonuelos or Hotline Coordinator Jim Briggs at 777-2287 or the GPC office at 526-2668.

Leland Speaks

Houston, TX—According to **Activist Quarterly**, U.S. Representative Mickey Leland will be the featured speaker at the Houston American Civil Liberties Annual Membership Meeting March 15 at LaBodega Restaurant, 2402 Mandell. Leland has been a consistent supporter of gay rights.

Leland, 34, freshman representative from Houston's District 18, will describe the state of civil liberties issues as he sees them from the nation's capitol.

The doors of LaBodega will be open for the meeting at 6:30 p.m. Light meals and drinks will be available before and after the meeting. The meeting will begin at 7:30 p.m. with board elections, and Leland's speech will climax the meeting at 8:00.

A democrat and member of the Texas Legislature representing District 88 from 1972-1979, Leland was elected to the U.S. House in May.

PROJECT 1980

A community-wide effort to raise funds for Houston's gay community center. Numbers Disco, in cooperation with Project 1980, has made available its facility each Thursday evening for our use. 100% of the door receipts will go towards this project. For more information, turn to page 5 of this issue and discover what the concept of Project 1980 is all about.

Numbers Disco
Thursdays during March
Benefiting the Gay Community

Shiflett Outlines Plan For Unity

By Craig P. Rowland

Newly re-elected Houston Gay Political Caucus President Steve Shiflett, talked to UpFront America about the aftermath of the campaign and the GPC election which took place three weeks ago. He is concerned that the threat of "factionalism" within the caucus between the "winners" and the "losers" and their respective supporters could adversely affect the purpose of GPC (to promote and protect lesbian and gay rights).

He said that "those people who lost in the election, or who opposed those of us who won, need to be cognizant of the fact that they're every bit as much a part of GPC as anyone else, regardless of who has won. I think a defeatist attitude is non-productive," he explained.

Shiflett outlined plans for avoiding the problems associated with factionalism. "Lee Harrington (GPC Vice President) and I are going to make outreach to various people on a personal level so that these people can re-establish a basic trust with us and understand that we are sensitive to their concerns."

"There are only so many of us fighting for the goals that we're fighting for and we need everyone's help," he continued. "That's not to say I can work with everybody. That's no human nature. There are some personality conflicts that do exist. And I'm not going to say that I promise to work with all of those who opposed me." He plans to organize a "sharing" session with those in disagreement with him to help resolve the differences and determine who can work productively with each other in the future. He emphasized that "it's not my intention to use the majority vote that I received to victimize the minority vote opinion."

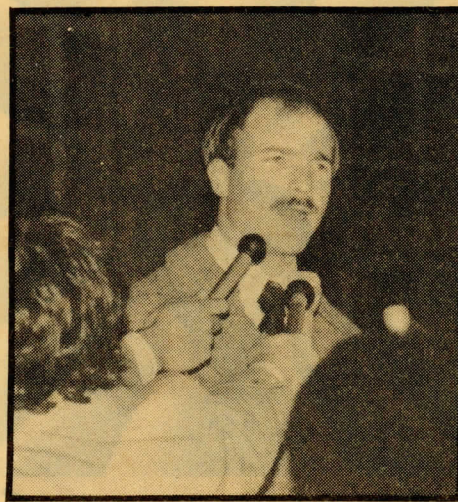


PHOTO BY J. HARDY WILLIAMS

Hard feelings exist on both sides, he explained, but, he said, "It's not helping anybody by letting those hard feelings permeate the community."

If attempts to resolve differences are not made by everyone, he is worried that people involved could fall victim to a concept invented by David Goodstein called, "Toilet."

Definition:

"In gay organizations non-action results due to an inability

to reach agreement in goals. Many hours are wasted nit picking or discussing irrelevant issues. Consequently, the people most able to facilitate the organization in getting the job done, get bored and become willing to leave. What happens is that "victims" or "losers" are allowed to set the tone for the rest of us. In a non-gay situation or among friends this would never happen."

Goodstein related this definition specifically to gay groups because, according to Shiflett, he is aware of the willingness of gay people to sometimes accept second class images of themselves.

One way he intends to follow through with his goal of unification within GPC is to appoint some of those people who opposed him to Committee Coordinator positions. "I think there are some people who were on the other side who are qualified and can work with me and I with them," he said.

Shiflett summarized his concerns regarding factionalism: "Simply put, we're going to have to renegotiate agreements among us and acknowledge our differences, experience them and move forward together. Some people who will read this might not want to believe it.

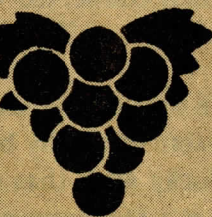
Continued on page 17

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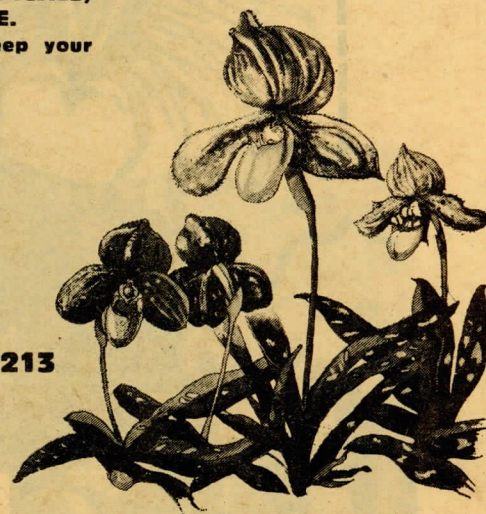
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The Dinner

By Rue Starr II

The International Women's Day opening of **The Dinner Party** last weekend on the U of H Campus at Clear Lake City was heralded with a volley of related art gallery openings, women's music concerts, seminars and symposiums. A film documentary about the cooperative creation of the massive triangular composition is premiering in Houston tonight at the Greenway III. Next weekend the Chocolate Bayou Theatre will be performing the writings of the masterful matriarch of **The Dinner Party** project, Judy Chicago.

Why is almost everybody getting in on the act? **The Dinner Party** broke all attendance records last Spring in its premier three-month showing at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art to become the most popular exhibit in the museum's history. Critic Charlotte Moser calls the showing the most adventuresome move ever in the Houston art world. Timid museum curators in other parts of the country, confused about the controversy concerning the dominant butterfly and vaginal themes in Chicago's exclusive line of dinnerware, cancelled two important engagements. This sentenced the 1,038 women, brilliantly reincarnated by the multi-media efforts of the world's leading feminist artist, to a humiliating six months in Bay Area mothballs.

Why is this "symbolic history of women in Western Civilization sitting safely outside the Houston city limits? The 40 year old Chicago has been working on the fringes of the established art world since she was first discovered by **Time** magazine in 1963. A male art critic writes in **Newsweek** that **The Dinner Party** . . . is not the expression of profound sensibility."

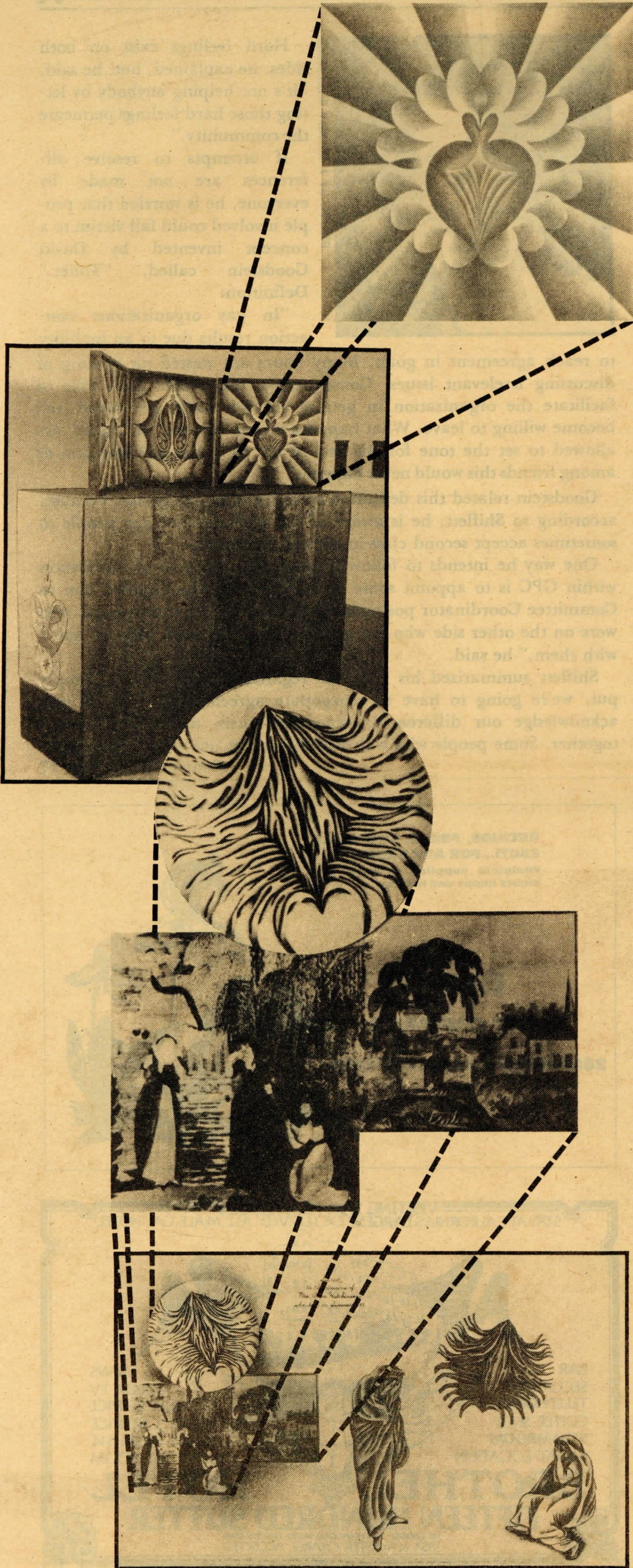
Mary Ross Taylor of the Texas Arts and Cultural Organization (TACO) and owner of The Bookstore in the Village, was evidently more concerned with exposing the labors of the hundreds of women and men who worked with the Chicago project than she was with "profound sensibility."

Mary Ross contacted **The Dinner Party** project coordinator Diane Gelon in Santa Monica, CA. Gelon, who studied art at UCLA for nine years before turning herself to **The Dinner Party**, spoke with **UpFront America**. "I asked Mary Ross if she had a museum, she said 'no.' I asked her if she had a gallery, she said 'no.' I said 'fine—make it work.'" With as much inspired determination as Caroline Herschel, the German astronomer who is honored at **The Dinner Party** as the first woman to discover a comet, Mary Ross began searching for a Texas home for Judy's unusual feast.

Houston's art museums had more excuses than excitement for "the first feminist epic artwork," so self-proclaimed "instigator" Mary Ross joined with Chicago in her 20 year battle with the mainstream art world. The answer to the cosmic question lay in the shadow of NASA at the Satellite Theatre in UHCLC's Developmental Arts Building. Successful co-conspirator on the acquisition project was Dr. Calvin Cannon, UHCLC's graying Dean of Human Sciences and Humanities. Dr. Cannon, one of the few men connected with any phase of the project, became the benevolent martyr of **The Dinner Party's** Houston landing.

Chicago says: "I feel like that's a statement that the (Houston) women were not about to let the system totally block **The Dinner Party**. Dr. Cannon wasn't quite so lucky with that system. University Chancellor Alfred Neuman is calling it a reassignment. Former Dean Cannon says he "feels fired." When **The Dinner Party** opened to the press on the eve of International Women's Day, Dr. Cannon's official title was director of special university events.

Reminiscent of the moonscape in "2001" where scientists swarmed around the excavated monolith, local media slowly examined the 39 strikingly individual place settings with all forms of electronic and photographic equipment from every possible angle. Black ceiling, walls and floor coupled with careful lighting caused each 14-inch porcelain plate to come alive with refracted color. Primitive percussion rhythms from a dance company rehearsing in the next room filtered in



er Party—

periodically and set the tone for plate number one, the Primordial Goddess—the female creator who conceived the universe. Observers discussed the awesome detail of each of the three 48 foot sides with muted voices as a haunting reverence prevailed. Dr. Cannon did not appear demoted as he played host to the obviously stimulated crowd of media previewers—the first of many thousands expected through the exhibit in the next two months. The appearance of coordinator Diane Gelon had taken on a decidedly Texas air since the chic gallery opening of other Chicago art two nights before in Montrose. Her new tan cowboy hat was a contrast to Dr. Cannon's invisible navy blue suit. They discussed the men outside with the big noisy machines who were erecting huge red **The Dinner Party** signs along the winding roads of the woodsy rural campus.

An official statement concerning Cannon's dismissal reads "Unfortunately, the calendar year began with certain administrative procedures . . . not being followed. There was no personal malfeasance or impropriety however." After Cannon's public rebuttal to the charge of mishandling **Dinner Party** funds, 45 of the 51 faculty members in the School of Human Sciences and Humanities issued a letter of support. Chancellor Neuman is hoping the deposed dean's pet project will put his university on the map while the school newspaper asks "Is it pornography or is it art?"

The plates are crawling with female sexuality, vulviform shapes, eggs, and Chicago's personal symbol of the feminine, butterflies. The vaginal images become more overt and the plates begin to expand in dimension as we near the 20th century, a symbol of women's journey toward freedom.

Chicago works on the premise that art has the power to shape beliefs. Her intent is to "convey women's history through art in a way that will make both women's experience and women's art more significant.

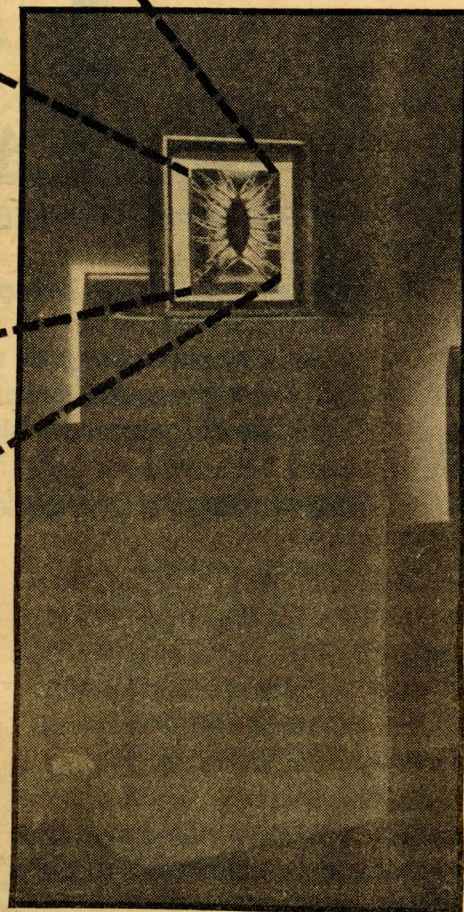
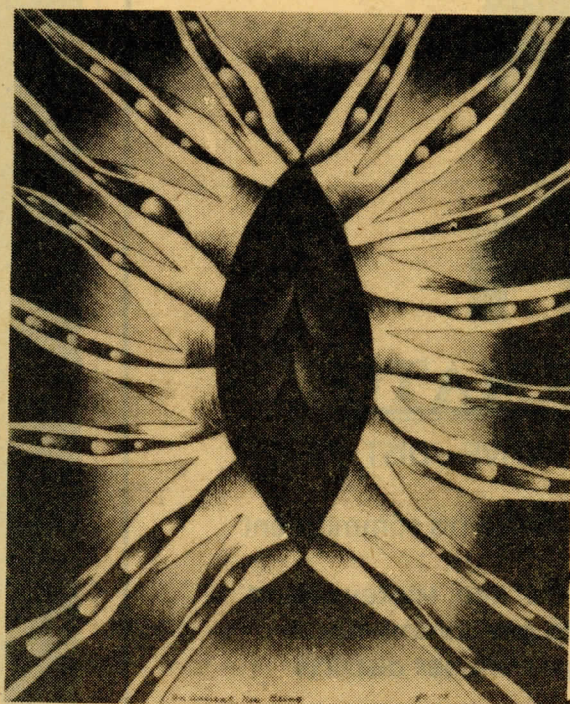
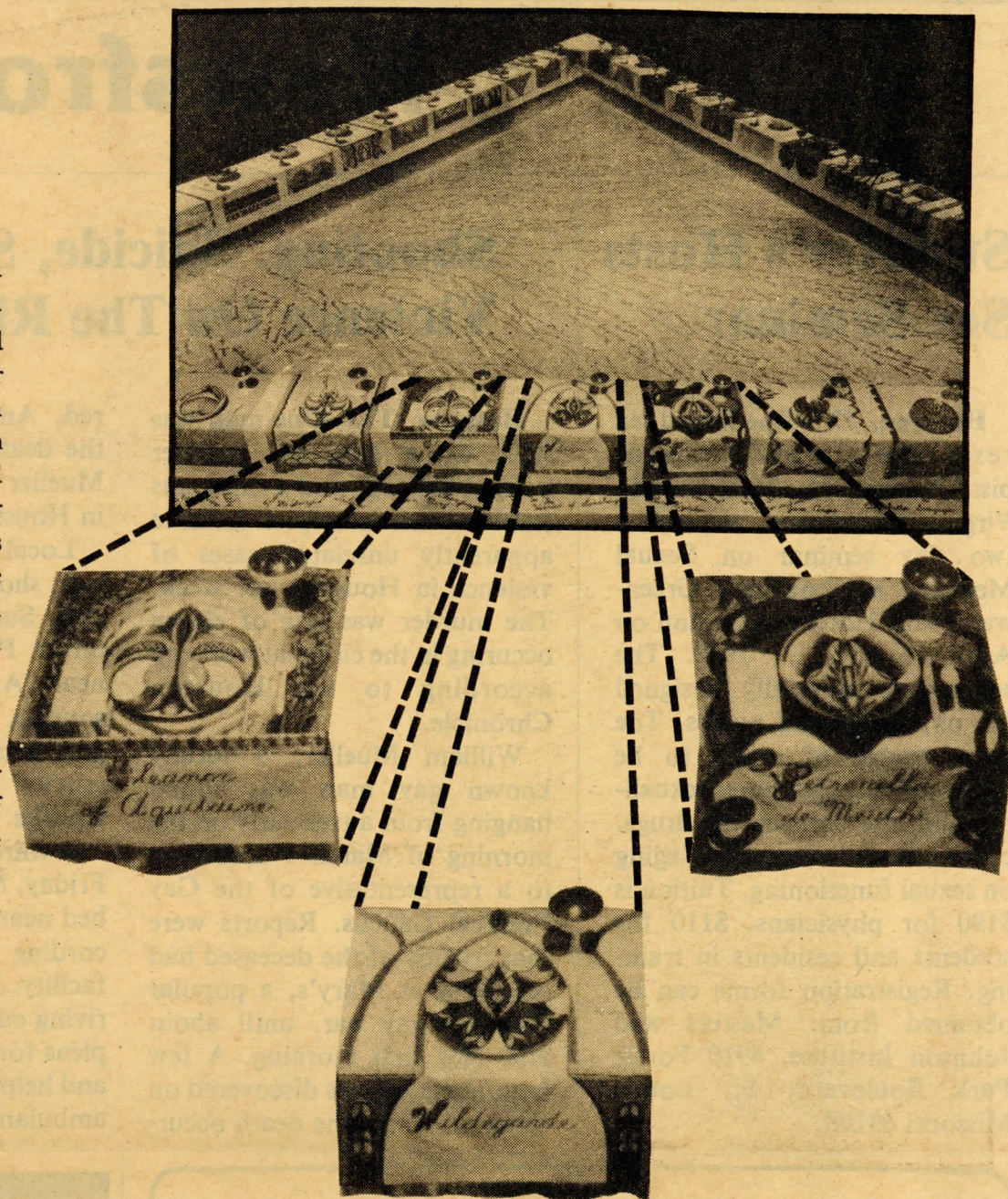
"Women have never had a Last Supper," says the artist who conceived this electrifying exhibition. So the thirteen plates at the famous all-male event were expanded twice again to make an inverted triangle, the unbroken continuity of which perpetuates Chicago's strong beliefs in the true nature of existence. And in Judy Chicago's world the blatant vaginal images are to be cherished today as the reproductive powers of ancient women were revered by the men who didn't realize they themselves were involved in the procreation process.

Her theory maintains that the vagina has been blacklisted by the male dominated society of the past 3,500 years as part of a conspiracy to cover up the importance of women in civilization. Chicago forces her audience to realize that far from being anything vulgar, the vagina is the gateway through which every person enters human existence. There is no reason why a work of art cannot be both beautiful and have a social or political significance.

The inverted triangle was a symbol of the power of women in ancient times, long before Hitler applied the now infamous pink triangles to the arms of concentration camp homosexuals during WW II. Worn today as a symbol of gay oppression, the triangle reminds one of the closeness of the two struggles, in history and especially today. The feminist ideology, glorified by Chicago's work, proclaims that "both men and women will be gentle and strong and that no person will be subject to another's will."

"Anybody who's interested in human freedom should be interested in this project," said Dr. Cannon. Asked about gay themes including at least two of the dinner guests (Sappho and American writer Natalie Barney) Cannon says candidly, "This show is not the product of a lesbian imagination. But if it were I would not become unhinged."

Chicago used the traditional women's crafts of china painting and needlework with deliberate irony to make her dramatic statement. **The Dinner Party—A Symbol of Our Heritage** is her documentation of the five years work. The book was her second after an early autobiography,



PHOTOS COURTESY OF
HADLER-RODRIGUEZ GALLERIES, LTD

Newsfront

Stouffer's Hosts Sex Seminar

Houston, TX—The famed sex researchers and therapists, William H. Masters and Virginia E. Johnson, will hold a two day seminar on Sexual Medicine at Stouffer's Greenway Plaza Hotel in Houston on April 16 and 17, 1980. The seminar is especially designed for physicians and nurses. The broad range of topics to be discussed includes homosexuality, and the impact of drugs, cancer, chronic illness and aging on sexual functioning. Tuition is \$190 for physicians, \$110 for students and residents in training. Registration forms can be obtained from: Masters and Johnson Institute, 4910 Forest Park Boulevard, St. Louis, Missouri 63108.

Shooting, Suicide, Stabbing: Violence On The Rise

Houston, TX—One man was slain by a gunman, another hanged himself, and a third was stabbed with an icepick in three apparently unrelated cases of violence in Houston last week. The murder was one of eleven occurring in the city that weekend according to the Houston Chronicle.

William Mueller, a locally known gay man was found hanging from a tree early on the morning of March 5 according to a representative of the Gay Political Caucus. Reports were that friends of the deceased had seen him at Mary's, a popular Houston gay bar, until about 3:00 AM that morning. A few hours later he was discovered on Yoakum where the death occur-

red. An autopsy revealed that the death was indeed a suicide. Mueller resided at 1528 Sul Ross in Houston.

Local gay man Donie Rourke was shot to death about 3:00 AM, Sunday, March 9 near the Silver Phoenix bar on Mason near Avondale according to sources. It was reported that a gun was fired from a pickup truck, striking and killing Rourke.

A third incident was not fatal. Friday, March 7 a man was stabbed near the Midtowne Spa, according to an employee of the facility. He explained that an arriving customer heard the man's pleas for help after the stabbing and helped him into the Spa. An ambulance and police arrived

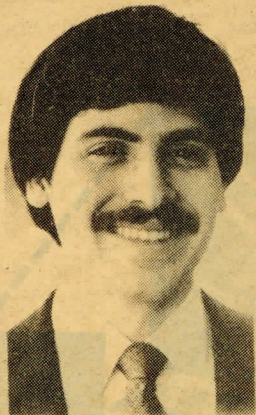
soon after being called as did the Montrose Patrol. The employee said that the victim was taken to Hermann Hospital for treatment.

Further information on each of the three incidents was not available at press time.

Learn Sign Language

Houston, TX—A sign language class for beginners will be offered beginning March 13 at the Montrose Activity Center (1423 Holman at LaBranch), every Thursday from 7-8 PM. The course is sponsored by the Astro Rainbow Alliance of the Deaf and will be taught by Wayne Clearman and Roy Collins. There will be a \$5.00 fee.

For more information call Wayne at 522-6632 after 6 PM.



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Bookfront

The New Couple: Women and Gay Men,
By Rebecca Nahas and Myra Turley.
Seaview Books, New York, 1979, \$9.95.

By Jim Lloyd

The new consciousness created by the combined forces of the women and gay rights movements has produced an atmosphere in society that allows both heterosexual women and homosexual men to break out of stereotypical roles and explore new dimensions in relationships and sexuality. Many liberated women are realizing that interactions with straight men often leave important emotional needs and unfulfilled shared understanding that it is simply time to move on to other things ties, frank openness about everything and strong feelings of commitment (Chief) said: "My actions will speak louder than my words." said, "GPC per se will have to manifest its support for repeal of 21:06 in England that would accept me. I went to Birmingham University accessible, and don't welcome disabled people, ships that gay men and straight women find themselves in. Made up of numerous case studies, it is another step in revealing the tremendous diversity of sexual experiences people are capable of.

The most frequent relationships between gay men and straight women are labeled "traditional couples" and were all too often the type found in the past. These relationships involve a woman in love with a gay man. The man cannot accept his homosexuality and uses the relationship to try to deal with his feelings of inadequacy or as a cover with family and society. Often these people get married and suffer for years, staying together because of children. A loud and clear message of this study is that these relationships are to be avoided; they are universally disastrous and usually result in the woman getting very hurt, especially if she was unaware of the man's homosexuality. Often the women chose to ignore the man's homosexuality or fantasize that they can change it. There is a certain kind of very vulnerable woman who is drawn to ignore the man's homosexuality or fantasize that they can change it.

As more women move into the job market and into the professions and as more gay men become open about their homosexuality in the work place there are more opportunities for gay men and straight women to meet and form close friendships based on mutual and shared interests. These are called "marginal relationships" and everybody is above board about what is going on and no one has any unreasonable expectations. The woman knows the man is gay and has no illusions about having sex with him. However, these friendships often become some of the most rewarding and important ones people have. Many straight women, especially those who are brighter and talented find that gay men empathize with them and appreciate their specialness in ways straight men never do. In fact these women are often more than the average straight man's ego can handle. Gay men on the other hand love and appreciate chic, beautiful and talented women and enjoy working and playing with them. The relationships are characterized by deep ties, very frank openness about everything and strong feelings of commitment to the other person.

The ultimate in relationships between homosexual men and heterosexual women are "new couple" relationships which often grow out of marginal ones. In these situations the man is very comfortably gay and the woman knows it yet they are very turned on by each other and have very beautiful sex with each other even while both are still having sex with other men. In all of the cases described these affairs are seen as important and intense experiences leading to great personal growth in the people involved. When they end, as they always eventually do, there are no feelings of bitterness or regret but usually a mutually shared understanding that it is simply time to move on to other things. Frequently the people remain close friends.

This is an important book in that it opens to our view new dimensions in our ideas about relationships and further challenges the traditional ideas that there are only certain kinds of permanent, monogamous relationships that are proper. It should be read by anyone interested in human experience or by those working as counselors.

States of Desire: Travels in Gay America,
by Edmund White, E. P. Dutton, New
York, 1980, \$12.95, 336 pages.

By E. J. Owens

During 1978 Edmund White, author of two novels and co-author of **The Joy of Gay Sex**, journeyed through gay and predominantly male urban America to describe what it was like to be gay in America as the seventies drew to a close. **States of Desire**, the result of that physical and mental journey, includes quick stops in about fifteen American cities, interviews with the men and women he meets there, White's thoughts on the issues raised by these meetings, and pages from his personal and political autobiography. The limits of time and money prevented White from visiting the heartland, the small towns from which many of us escape. Instead, his visits brought him to the large urban settings

Good-looking men and interesting characters are not the true subjects of the book. In San Francisco, the city where "gay fantasies come true," White wonders whether these indeed are the dreams we wanted fulfilled and if we knew how they would "unsuit us for the business of daily life." For White, the "business of daily life" for gays ought to be more than earning a living, developing roots, or looking for sex. It should be, he reminds the reader, a conscious political stance that opposes the tyranny of the status quo.

As White travels East, the reader discovers that his "interest in gay life, how gay men live" is really an interest in how gays live or refuse to live politically. The only characters who emerge from the masks of aliases are involved in the struggle for gay rights. Because of the book's concentration on gay men, White's description of two lesbians involved in struggles to retain gay rights ordinances in St. Paul and Minneapolis comes as a surprise.

Unlike the film "Word is Out" which respected and valued the variety of the lives of the gay men and lesbians it depicted, **States of Desire** suffers from a conflict between White's training as a novelist and his efforts as a journalist. While most characters he describes have some particular feature (usually their good looks) to command them to our attention, these same characters emerge as "types." The book is conspicuously lacking in dates, settings lose focus, and a vagueness settles over the entire work. There is little feel for the quality and style of how we live our different lives.

As White nears the end of his journey in Boston, he finds a major political subject in the case of a thirty-five year old pedophile. Fascinated yet frightened by the man, White tries to distance himself by keeping the man nameless. Yet the subject, visceral and emotionally charged, refuses to be kept at a distance. White's sympathetic treatment is meant to challenge our understanding of the taboo directed at men who love boys.

Whether we are attracted to young boys or not, White insists that pedophilia is an issue we must resolve because it is a direct assault on the mores of a traditional society that seeks to limit our actions. White contends that the boy is not always the victim, "A great deal has been written about the havoc pederasty may or may not wreak on the young, but little has been said about the disorder it introduces into the life of the lover of boys." Nowhere are White's politics of confrontation and direct challenge more clearly seen. Accommodation and gradual change hold little interest for him. His test case fails to distinguish between those political battles that can be won and those, mired in morality and emotions, that should not be fought.

States of Desire is a very personal book and never pretends to be objective. Edmund White writes with such a sure touch, an ability to summarize, and a clear eye for the detail that can tell a story. He argues convincingly that what must separate us from straight society is how firmly we stand in opposition to social organizations that limit our freedoms and how intelligently we examine the issues that affect our lives. Where **States of Desire** disappoints is in forgetting that our social connections, the daily patterns of our lives, the subjects of the novelist, are no less authentic than our efforts to change the political environment.

Shiflett Pursues GPC Unification

Continued from page 11

All I can say is what B. K. Johnson (newly appointed Houston Police Chief) said: "My actions will speak louder than my words."

Shiflett was asked what the immediate and future tasks of the Caucus will be, once committee appointments are made and ruffled feelings are smoothed as best as possible.

"I think now that the election's over, GPC's going to have to focus and fine-tune its goals and its objectives. The way to do that is to go to the Caucus for approval of those priorities and objectives, with a calendar of events or a budget or some kind of fixed plan that's mutually agreed upon. That was the purpose of the budgeting process last fall which we are now ready to present to the caucus. It includes all the political processes, the electioneering, the screenings, the fundraising, special events, Gay Pride Week—that sort of thing."

"We'll endorse the political races and then we have to start getting out the vote," he said. One of the races is that for District Attorney. Fred Daly has announced his candidacy for that position currently held by Johnny Holmes (R) whom Shiflett described as being "incestuously related to the police dept." According to Shiflett, Holmes has been a reason directly related to the police harassment and selective enforcement problem that has been experienced over the years (which, he said, is one of the reasons GPC was formed).

Shiflett said he is committed to supporting the Gay Pride Week planning process. "I attended their meeting Sunday and was very pleased with their turnout (about 90)." Regarding last year's celebration he said, "The gay community definitely emerged as a community with many different facets. New groups sprung up, and membership lists of existing organizations grew."

Shiflett spoke about federal politics as they relate to GPC. "We are going to be acknowledged as a power broker in Presidential politics. On the federal level we have a lot of things that could be done for gay rights that could assist us on the local level such as the revision of the INS laws, the draft possibility, health care, and an Executive order banning discrimination in federal hiring."

Locally, about Texas statute 21:06 which bans homosexual acts, he said, "GPC per se will have to manifest its support for repeal of 21:06 through assisting with fundraisers of the Texas Human Rights Lobby and screening candidates that we turn the vote out on, especially their stands on the repeal of 21:06 and in the legislature."

Shiflett said "The feminist caucus is now forming. 'It's wonderful to have the women getting involved in GPC,' he said. Another group that is forming within GPC is the conservative caucus. In addition to a coordinator sitting in at Board meetings from each of these sub-groups, Shiflett said that other minorities such as the Hispanic Caucus should be represented in the same way."

"I think it looks very bright for us," he said, regarding the future of GPC. "My attitude is you've got to have your valley to have your peaks. We're on the verge of something big if we acknowledge that and go forward together."

I think the one word that would summarize everything we've talked about is communication."

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John Simpson



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SALES AND RENTAL

Dear Mom

(Self described as the "gay Irma Bombeck," writer Christopher Solomon promises in this new, regular column to tap the humor in everything. His vehicle is "Kip," a young and vulnerable gay lad about town who, in letters to his mother, tells all. Enjoy. Ed.)

By Christopher Solomon

Dear Mom,

Guess what? I'm in love. Now I know what's going on behind that perky, frosted bubble cut that makes you look just like Harriet Nelson (oh why don't I look like Ricky?). You're thinking, "Sure my baby's in love—again." Well, this time it's for real. All those others were just practice. Meaningless affairs. His name is Davio. He's Italian. In every way. He's mine, and it's forever. Really Mom, everything about this relationship is special. Even the way we met. It was February 14th, Valentine's Day. And more importantly the night that the movie "Cruising" was to open. I was at a meeting of the *Committee to Halt Films in Which Pacino Dances Badly and Other Anti-Homosexual Art Forms*. I've become terribly political since I left Miami. Daddy would have been so proud. Ever since he was the first in the neighborhood to paint that little man at the end of the driveway beige, I knew that I would have to take stock of myself one day and try and make America a true home of the free and the brave. Well anyway, I was asked to head the *Sub-Committee Against Homophobic Paperback Novellas by Early 20th Century Writers born West of the Mississippi*. Only trouble was, there aren't any. So I was spending the time telling this very nice woman the best place to get her eyebrows waxed and she was telling me to go screw myself when I saw him. It was just like in that pretty Jane Oliver song

about enchanted evenings across a crowded room that you said was a lot better when Florence Henderson sang it at the Melody Top Summer Theatre and that you wished to hell that skinny Jewish broads from these boots, an Izod shirt under a Ralph Lauren western top and a Car-

There he was. All 5'6" of stallion dressed in Calvin Klein jeans, Lucchese boots, an Isod shirt under a Ralph Lauren western top, and a Cartier tank watch with a worn out band which means that he's had it a long time and didn't buy one just because it was trendy. He was drinking chablis out of a plastic cup which he clicked against his teeth in time to "Enough Is Enough" by Donna Summer and what's her name. That showed me that he had a natural sense of syncopated rhythm. I assumed then that he was Puerto Rican. The woman with the abominable snowbrows stormed away after dumping her herb tea on my shoe. Don't you just adore the way they're finally giving men the option to wear pretty colors in footwear? These were maroon flats. \$125.00 at Neiman's. Pricey, but a definite investment item. Oh, I'm glad I had a mother who knew how to shop.

So there I am, up to my ankles in rose hips when he walks over and says in a voice like thunder, "Wet enough for you?" Needless to say I almost split a seam. His humor was divine—just what the moment called for. After an icebreaker like that, it would be impossible to remain strangers for long. Then, it turns out that he was heading up the *Sub-committee to Boycott Discriminatory Musical Numbers in Rosemary Clooney Movies of the Early 1950's*. Well, I was floored. I mean you practically raised me on Rosemary Clooney. I knew it wouldn't be long before I'd be singing, "Come-on-a My House, I'm Gonna Give You Candy," to this stud.

He was all fired up and his eyes were blazing. They had just decided to picket any TV station that dares to show "White Christmas" without first announcing that the song "Sisters" performed by Bing Crosby and Danny Kaye only represents a small segment of the homosexual popula-

Continued on page 21

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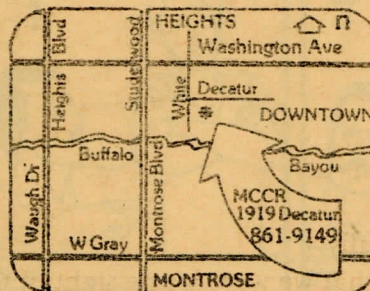
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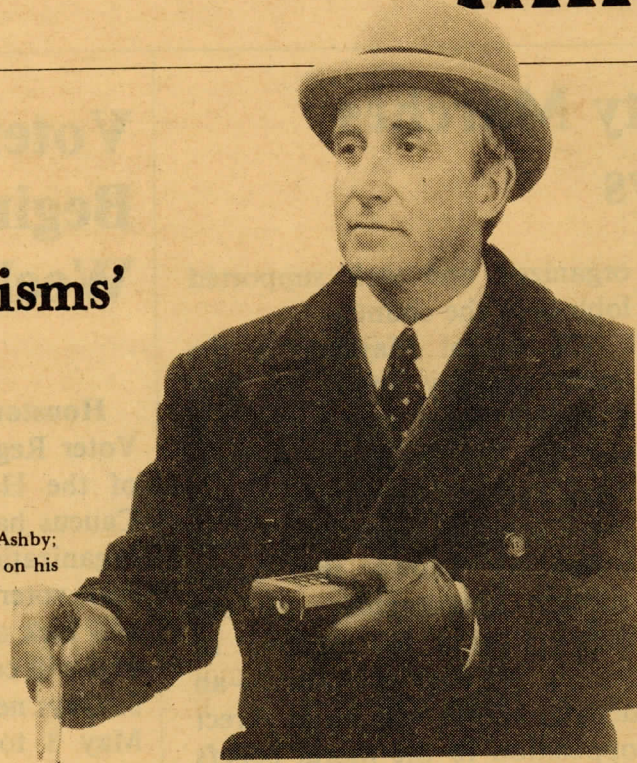
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Filmfront

Sellers Sheds 'Clouseauisms' In 'Being There'

BEING THERE directed by Hal Ashby; screenplay by Jerzy Kosinski (based on his novel); photography by Caleb Deschanel; music by John Mandel; released by United Artists; running time, approximately 135 minutes; rated PG.



By Brent Northup

Once upon a time there lived a gentle, simple man named Chance who worked as a rich man's gardener. No one knew who raised Chance; he appeared to have spent his entire life alone with his plants.

Chance could neither read nor write; all that he knew he gleaned from one of the television's that dotted the estate.

Then one day his master died. Chance stepped out of his roses and into the world's thorns for the first time. Quite by accident, he was adopted by Benjamin Rand, an influential billionaire who frequently advised the President.

Chance's innocent talk of growing plants was interpreted by his new friends as brilliant economic wisdom, housed in metaphors. "The winter will end soon," said Chance. "The economy will quickly recover," thought the President.

Chance, who understood nothing of his new world, soon became the most respected leader in the country. He lived happily, powerfully—yet very naively—forever after.

This modern parable will remind readers of Twain's "A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court"; moviegoers will recall Herzog's *Kasper Hauser*. Hal Ashby's film *Being There* recounts this parable softly, yet profoundly.

The story revolves around the tender innocence of Chance. Peter Sellers, a highly skilled actor whose Clouseauisms have disguised his considerable talent, portrays Chance so poignantly that most viewers will be quite fond of nice-guy Chance by the film's end. Sellers' performance may well cancel Dustin Hoffman's reservation on the Oscar for best actor.

The rest of Ashby's cast and crew are equally effective, although they all work in Sellers' shadow. Shirley MacLaine, Melvyn Douglas and Jack Warden each provide *Being There* with additional sensitivity, as does Caleb ("Black Stallion") Deschanel.

The film's only serious shortcoming lies in Ashby's insertion of unneeded sexual innuendoes to spice up the plot; in this movie those jokes cheapen the message.

Being There can be enjoyed on many levels: As a satire on a computerized society which "complexifies" everything; or as a cynical indictment of television's manipulation of the American mind; or as a parody on political power; or as a humorous expose on technological society's inability to communicate with—or even to recognize—a simple man; or just as a heartwarming tale of a naive stranger in a strange bureaucratic land.

On all levels, the movie works beautifully.

Henry David Thoreau once warned us that we were losing sight of the basics of life. *Being There* brings Thoreau's cries of "Simplify, Simplify" purely, tenderly and allegorically to the screen.

The Other Side Of Friedkin's 'Cruising'

By Brad Scofield

Since there are so many of you who will see *Cruising* despite attempts urging you not to (perhaps because of those attempts) and in spite of the devastating reviews from the critics, I decided to provide you with a list of the ten best aspects of the film. After all, a film starring Al Pacino and Paul Sorvino and directed by financially successful William Friedkin (*The French Connection*, *The Exorcist*) couldn't possibly be as bad or evil or dangerous or harmful as seems to be the consensus. Or could it?

Do try to see *Cruising* at a \$1.50 bargain matinee. There are many advantages to the matinee viewing if you must go. You'll enjoy the film all the more because you'll have saved at least \$2 to \$3 for use after the film (more on that in No. 10 below). Also, you'll be adding only a token amount to the coffers of United Artists, thus providing you with a convenient comeback and rationalization for going against the call or a boycott.

1. Perhaps the thing you'll enjoy most is Friedkin's revolutionary neo-Freudian interpretation of the Oedipus Complex. Apparently, in researching his screen adaptation of the novel, Friedkin concluded that every homosexual and/or psychopath has, not a mother, but a father-figure problem. Friedkin doesn't go into what those problems are, just that they exist. You'll be relieved when *Cruising* shows you that sexuality and the human psyche can be so easily explained.

2. If you've read the synopsis of *Cruising* that has been circulating in the bars and reprinted in the media, you'll be pleased to know that the synopsis is inaccurate. According to the synopsis, the film ends with Steve Burns (Al Pacino) receiving a citation for catching the killer. The film doesn't end that way. It doesn't even end. It just stops. (Since Friedkin always makes his films in pairs, does he plan to conclude the nebulous plot in a *Cruising II*?)

3. If you're into titillation, you'll be titillated by numerous simulated sex scenes. Again the advantage of the bargain matinee relates: you'll only spend six quarters for *Cruising* instead of many times that amount at your local peep show to see the same *authentic* sex scenes.

4. Then there's Jack Nitzsche's musical score and lyrics for your enjoyment. The score is mediocre but refreshing. Maybe you'll thrill to some of the S & M lyrics like "When I close my eyes, I see blood."

5. The use of automobiles provides another avenue of thematic & visual enjoyment. Who can forget the beautiful, baby-blue Mercedes convertible that belonged to the peep-show murder victim? And the oh-so-clever shot of Burns entering an S & M bar just after walking past a parked car with New York license plate "FFA 69."

6. If comedy gives you the most enjoyment in a film, *Cruising* will provide you with many outstanding examples of comic relief. Unfortunately for the director, the comedy is unintentional but good for a chuckle nonetheless. You'll roar when Burns and Skip the Scumbag are being interrogated by the detectives. Suddenly a door opens and in walks a huge over-muscled black man dressed very smartly in nothing

Newsfront

Armato Enters Representative Race For District '79 Seat

Houston, TX—Peter Armato, a former congressional aide to U.S. Representative Mickey Leland, announced today his candidacy for State Representative, District 79. Present at the announcement to endorse Armato's candidacy were former Director of the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service and community leader Leonel Castillo, and Houston City Councilmen Ben Reyes and Dale Gorczynski.

Armato said his involvement with community problems and issues, as well as his concern about the future of Houston's inner-city areas, led to his decision to run. "Houston's older neighborhoods have special challenges which go beyond the concerns of growth and inadequate services. District 79 needs a representative who can coordinate programs and solutions with elected officials on the local, state and federal levels. I can be an effective legislator by being active in Houston, Austin—and Washington."

Armato added, "The issues in this race reflect the diversity of District 79's constituency. We have senior and low income citizens on fixed incomes who are trapped in an inflationary spiral, neighborhoods which flood periodically because of outdated flood control plans, classrooms with first rate educators and second rate educational programs, and a public transportation system which has been crippled by government red tape and desperately needs citizen involvement. Regardless of the specific issue, the bottom line here is the diminishing quality of life."

Moral Majority Marches On Texas Gays

Washington, DC—The Moral Majority recently divulged a plan to expand the anti-gay movement outside Washington, D.C. They claim Texas will be one of the "first areas they will set up shop." The self-proclaimed "pro-family, pro-country, anti-gay" group is investigating the use of a Gallup poll to update the "true members in the gay community." The group says it doubts that 10 percent is an accurate count of the gay population (the 10 percent figure is based on the Kinsey report). It seems that Texas is likely to be targeted because we rank among the top three states most active in our fight for equality. For example, the Human Rights Advocates lobby is one of the most

organized and well supported lobbies in the country.

The Moral Majority is the latest anti-gay lobby to join Christian Voice, begun almost a year ago. Its director is the Rev. Jerry Falwell. The lobby stated in a December report that "It is commonly known that some militant homosexuals will use their position as teachers to recruit and convince others—an activity which will be in direct opposition to the moral beliefs of many parents. If this bill (referring to the gay civil rights bill, HR 2074) is passed, it will set a precedent for our society. Imagine giving child molesters and rapists special preference in the law because they, too, have a bizarre sexual preference."

Voter Reg. Begins This Weekend

Houston, TX—Steve Henley, Voter Registration Coordinator of the Houston Gay Political Caucus has announced that the organization has begun a full scale voter registration drive that will kick off Friday, March 14, and will continue through April 3. Gays need to be registered by May 3 to vote in the May 3 Republican and Democratic primary elections. They should have the current white voter registration cards as the yellow ones have expired.

For more information on helping with the drive contact GPC at 526-2668, or Steve Henley at 520-6867.

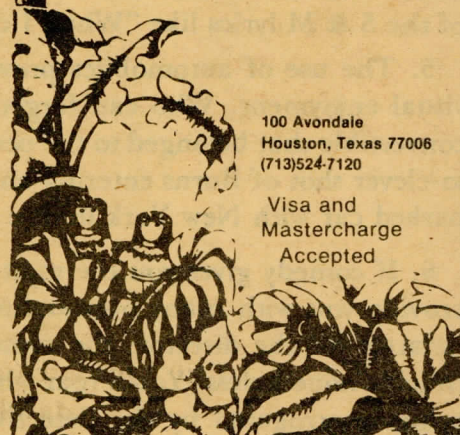
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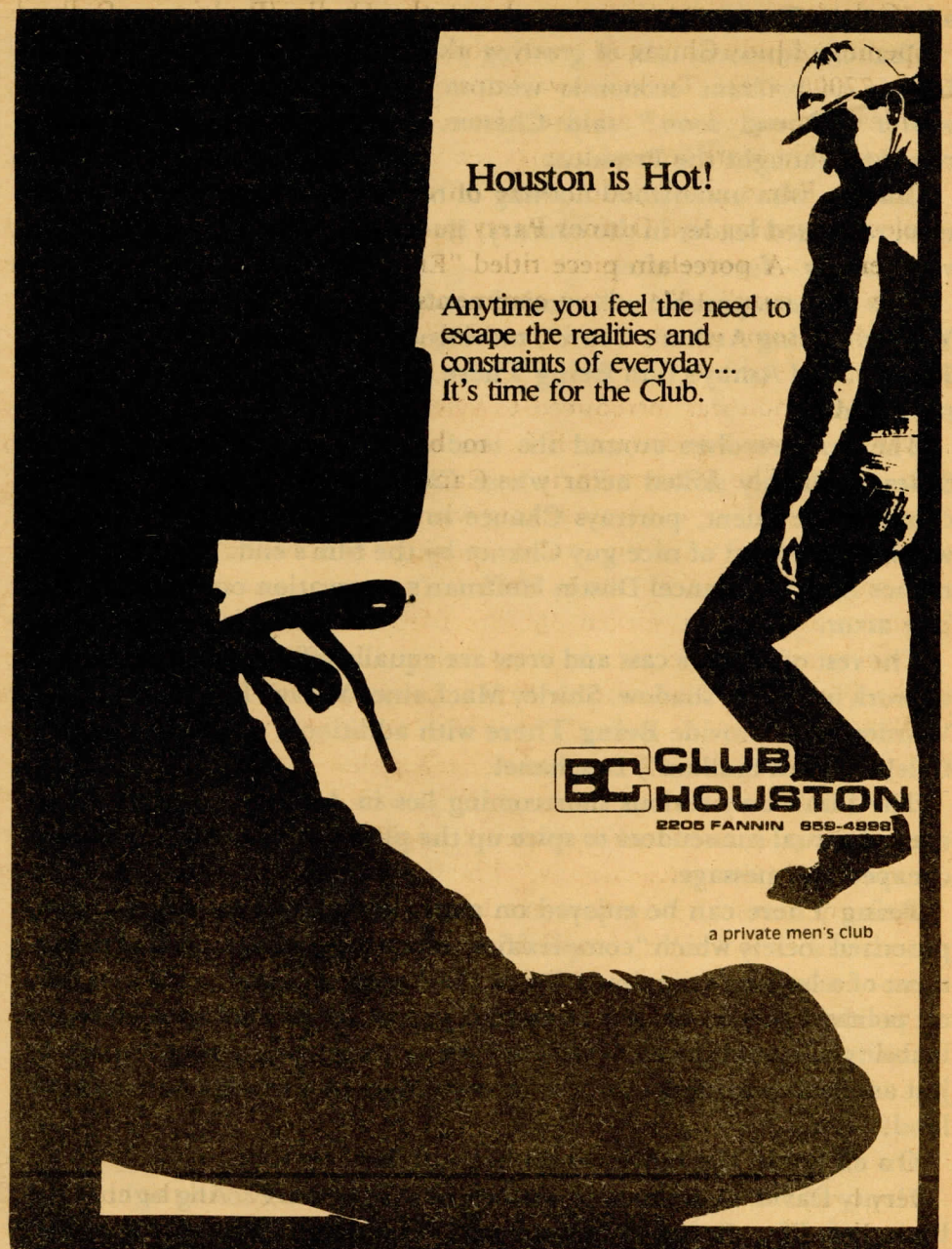


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Judy Chicago

Continued from page 13

Through *The Flower* published in 1974 when she first described her challenging concept. Judy Chicago's new book, *Embroidering Our Heritage* is waiting at the printer and deals more with the 144 feet of intricate needlework on which rest the 39 celebrated plates.

Susan Hill masterminded the needlework effort as each of the 39 women were honored with a runner which displays her name. Each runner was executed using the technique and the symbols of the woman's time. A porcelain knife, fork, spoon and chalice complete each setting. A look behind reveals the equally ornate backside of the runner. The open tiled area framed by *The Dinner Party* bears the names of 999 women from Cleopatra and Joan of Arc to Katherine Hepburn and Eleanor Roosevelt. A team of twenty researchers worked for two years to compile the information about these women.

The Dinner Party studio in Santa Monica California was a workshop where people came to create artwork and learned a craft in the process. Chicago cites medieval guilds and convent workshops as historical predecessors. Over 200 women and men worked cooperatively and voluntarily on *The Dinner Party* for periods of one month to four years, donating in one documented month \$15,000 worth of labor. The turnover was large because no one could afford to volunteer forever. Most of the people who worked on the project felt that the new skills they had acquired while doing the work were worth the value of their labor. Chicago places a theoretical "over \$1,000,000" price tag on her project.

Coordinator Diane Gelon says the flurry of excitement surrounding the exhibit "has already had an impact on the fibre artists here in Houston. It shows that an artist doesn't have to work alone," the art historian explained. "It challenges a lot of the traditional notions about what being an artist is."

Gelon's comments were made at the Hadler/Rodriguez Gallery's opening of Judy Chicago's "early work and preparations" on the edge of the 77006 area. Tucked away upstairs on a quiet tree-lined street, Chicago mingled with admirers from many elements of the Montrose.

Porcelain work and paintings, as well as collage studies from *The Dinner Party* construction were on every wall. Virginia Woolf's obsolete beginning as a *Dinner Party* guest are colorful, provocative, and expensive. A porcelain piece titled "Entering the mystery through the blue rock cunt" 1974, drew comments from the chattering assembly. Two handsome young men in Izod shirts eagerly poured champagne into plastic cups.

Cal Cannon was introduced to Sylvia Spring. She had flown in that evening from Vancouver, B.C. to begin negotiations with Chicago troops for *The Dinner Party* as Cannon had done last Labor Day in San Francisco. A woman working with the Boston Center for the Arts wouldn't arrive until the Friday opening. Besides Boston, the *Dinner Party* is scheduled for the Brooklyn Museum of Art in the Fall. Seven women artists who worked on *The Dinner Party* also flew in for the opening as their select works in several media including narrative quilts, pastel drawings, and ceramic & neon is on display at M.E.'s Gallery on Michigan.

Judy Chicago frankly shared her fears and aspirations with the dazzled gathering of mostly women reporters and photographers minutes after the preview. "I always knew I was going to be famous," says the former Judy Gerowitz casually. "The flashbulbs pop and it's still hard to work and run my studio the next day." Her comments are as unpretentious as her look. An avowed hater of high heels, Chicago doesn't appear to have time for any of the glossier fashion elements. She stresses that the 30 million needleworkers in America do stitches which don't do their talents justice. "I would like to find a way to bring to a wider audience the art which affirms women," she says.

In the book, *The Dinner Party*, Chicago writes of visiting the home of a china painter as she began to study the technique in 1972. "... the very bricks were permeated with her creative energy. All the chairs had needlepoint cushions; all the beds were covered with quilts; all the pillowcases were hand embroidered; all the walls were covered with oil

Dear Mom

Continued from page 18

tion and is not to be considered the norm. Well, I should say not! I don't know a drag queen from here to Kansas City that would wear a costume that tacky. I was impressed, but how was I to know that my respect would turn to adoration? He had other plans but promised to meet me in front of the theatre the next night. I could hardly sleep. But just like Rosey Clooney I counted my blessings instead of sheep and finally Friday was here. Dozens of us were proudly waving our signs. We were a force, an army, a symbol of unity against tasteless Hollywood slobs who would irresponsibly use anyone or anything to make a buck. I saw him get out of the cab and he walked up to me. His fingers slipped into mine as naturally as you slipped into your first mink and he said, "I have the crabs. I bought some Kwell so it's OK. That's why I was late." At last. A considerate lover. A man who will share his life and feelings with me. Someone who will give of himself and ask nothing in return. A man who will let me take care of him and give me a reason not to quit the gym. Be happy for me, mother. I'll write next week.

I love you,
Kip

P.S. I called last Saturday to wish you a happy birthday and Pearl said you'd gone out to see the film *Cruising*. How in the hell could you assume it was a South Seas musical with Julie Andrews and Gordon MacCrae? She'd *never* work with Gordon MacCrae. I called again after you'd gone to bed and Pearl said you staggered in, took a Librium, and mumbled something about throwing away the Crisco and switching to Pam. Hope you're better soon.

paintings; all the plates were covered with flowers that were painted on the plates. This woman had done all that work, trying to fulfill her creative drive—into the confined space of her house which could have hardly held another piece of work." Chicago tells her listeners, "My work is not only with art, it's also to reach out to disenfranchised people, the ones who can't discover the life spirit." She sums up *The Dinner Party* with "It's like the existential moment—you do what you can. I did my best—I wish I hadn't yelled so much!" Laughter finally breaks the serious mood of the institutional dining hall. Judy Chicago realizes that her work is in danger of being eclipsed, if it doesn't find a permanent home soon. "I hope to see that happen in my lifetime," she said. Chicago cites a 65-foot mural called *Modern Woman* by Mary Cassatt which was lost. "Lost! Nobody went to look for it either because it was a set of images of women that were quite challenging," she explains.

The Dinner Party is listed officially among the many major and minor artistic presentations of the big two-weekender Houston Festival. She tells her attentive audience about a series of poetry readings which will take place in Tranquility Park as part of the Festival. Houston's city block commemoration of the first human lunar landing in the Sea of Tranquility impressed Judy Chicago as a perfect place for poetry. "Wouldn't it be wonderful if Art occupied a place in our society where there were poetry readings in Tranquility Park everyday and music for people to listen to all the time?" she asked. Judy Chicago looks away from her gleaming masterpiece of the past five years and beyond her "existential moment." She writes, "The future requires that women, as well as men, shape the world's destiny."

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The Other Side Of Cruising

Continued from page 19

but a cowboy hat and jock strap. He walks over to Burns, slaps him across the room, and walks out again.

7. There is at least one intentionally funny scene when Burns first learns about kerchief advertising. Since he is working undercover and naive to dressing for an S & M bar, he has to ask the store clerk about them. The clerk patiently explains the color codes and the nuances of left or right pocket. When he explains about yellow, Burns' shocked expression and embarrassed exit is genuinely funny. Burns says he intends to go home to decide which one to buy. The clerk's response is, "I'm sure you'll make the right choice." Of course the next bar scene shows Burns sporting a yellow kerchief in the left pocket.

8. You may be pleased to discover that **Cruising** is not anti-gay. It is anti-something, though. Friedkin's script (as viewed, not the one smuggled out of the set last year and reviewed) lacks the artistic focus to even be truly anti-gay. The dialogue, the inconclusive scenes, and the character development are so shallow that it would be hard to make a clear case for the film's being either anti-gay, just anti-S & M, or merely anti-human in general.

9. Then there is the dance sequence where Burns reluctantly accepts an invitation to dance, takes a hit of amyl nitrate, and takes off into a comic frenzy of flailing arms and pumping of fists into the air. The scene is intended to be both a transformation of Burns and an indication of the lust-filled attention he has created throughout the bar by his dancing.

10. The best thing about **Cruising** is appropriately listed last: You'll be thrilled that it isn't any longer than it is. If you catch that bargain matinee, you'll have just enough time to make it to your favorite happy hour, begin to forget about **Cruising**, and do your own cruising.

FULL EQUALITY IN 1980!

In honor of the legendary civil rights pioneer Eleanor Roosevelt and her 30 year intimate correspondence with Lorena Hickok, Melodie Moorehead, M.A. and Barbara Donaghy have formed the Eleanor Roosevelt Appeal/For Full Equality. We recognize our sister! The Full Equality Ordinance is going back on the Dade County ballot for round III. E.R.A./For Full Equality with C.U.R.E. (Congress United For Equal Rights) are collecting signatures from Dade voters. As the protection of all people's rights are secured in Dade, the road is paved for National Legislation. The deadline for collecting 33,333 signatures and \$10,000 to simply have Gay Rights on the ballot is January 25, 1980.



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