

PARKER TO ANNOUNCE CANDIDACY AT FUND-RAISER ON MARCH 4

The Houston Gay & Lesbian Political Caucus PAC will hold a fundraiser in honor of City Council Member Annise Parker on March 4, 1999, from 6:00 until 8:00 p.m. at the Blue Agave restaurant. At the fundraiser, Parker is expected to provide additional insight about her campaign plans for re-election to City Council At-Large Position No. 1, a seat that she now holds. "Councilwoman Parker first announced her initial run for Position 1 at the PAC's February 1997 membership meeting," according to Carl Smith, President of the HGLPC PAC. "We hope that Caucus members, as well as other members of the community, turn out on March 4 to hear Councilwoman Parker's plans for the November city elections and to cheer her on to victory in the likely event that she decides to wage a campaign for re-election," Smith added. Smith noted that the event has already been a success because the PAC has received 30 "very generous" checks from PAC members who have agreed to underwrite the event. Tickets for the event can be purchased at the door for a \$15 donation.

The Blue Agave is located at 1340 West Gray at the intersection of West Gray and Waugh. In addition to honoring Councilwoman Parker, the PAC is holding the March 4 fundraiser to begin raising the money it needs to support PAC-endorsed candidates in the upcoming City of Houston, Houston Independent School District, and Houston Community College elections. The PAC encourages everyone to show their support of the PAC by becoming an underwriter for this event. For more information about the fundraiser, contact Carl Smith at (713) 862-8129 or Terence O'Neill at (713) 529-8125.

C'MON DOWN !

Houston Gay & Lesbian Political Caucus Meeting
March 3, 7:30 PM
Houston Gay and Lesbian Community Center
803 Hawthorne

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Mike Stubblefield	Pos. 9

(Also Newsletter Editor)

Houston Gay & Lesbian Leadership Training Institute

Activists Agree On Long Term Plan For Community Empowerment, By Grant Martin

On January 24, 1999, thirty-two community leaders completed the Houston Gay & Lesbian Leadership Training Institute course. The 3-1/2 day training focused on the skills necessary for ethical and effective political organizing in our community. Participants were selected after a two-month outreach process designed to bring new talent into the leadership ranks of the community.

"One of the most exciting things to me was the realization that no one in the room knew more than half of the other people in the room at the start of the training," said Caucus member Grant Martin, who organized the Institute.

The graduates agreed in concept on a long-term plan to identify 100,000 gay & lesbian and pro-gay & lesbian voters in the City of Houston. At a follow-up meeting on February 7, the group decided to run a test door-to-door voter canvass to provide a model for community organizations to use in building the voter list.

A primary focus of the training was the need to talk with voters one-on-one, in order to dispel the negative stereotypes about gay people held by voters both within and outside of the community. The recent crushing defeat in Hawaii is a salient example of the fact that television advertisements and direct mail alone are simply not sufficient substitutes for one-on-one voter communication.

The Caucus, Stonewall Democrats, the local HRC chapter, and Annise Parker's 1999 re-election campaign have expressed an interest in participating in the voter identification effort. Other groups are welcome.

Caucus president Carl S. Smith, Caucus board chair Terence O'Neill and former Caucus president Sue Lovell participated in the training. Houston City Council Member (and former Caucus president) Annise Parker, and former Caucus presidents Terri Richardson and Lane Lewis, have participated in earlier versions of the training.



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PHYLLIS RANDOLPH FRYE

**Attorney and Counselor, and
Licensed Professional Engineer**

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M.S. Mechanical Engineering, Texas A&M University 1971
Licensed Professional Engineer (Texas) 1975
Master Business Administration, University of Houston 1981
Doctor of Jurisprudence, University of Houston 1981
Licensed Attorney (Texas) 1981

Areas of Legal Practice:

--- Criminal Defense ---
--- Transgender Issues and Documents ---
--- Divorce and Family Issues ---
--- Wills, Power of Atty, "Living" Wills ---
Although licensed since 1981, I have not taken additional testing,
therefore the State Bar requires that I state that I am
"Not Certified by Board of Legal Specialization"

Areas of Engineering Practice

--- Civil/Structural/Environmental ---

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The Editors Desk

by Mike Stubblefield, Editor

By the time this issue goes to press, we (the Board of Trustees and Officers) will be in Galveston having our annual retreat. That is where we set goals for the coming year and decide on strategies for better utilizing our resources to mobilize our community. It is so good to see new faces who have not served their community in our capacity before. I am personally looking excitedly forward to working with all of them.

In 1977, the Caucus was a very young organization. We had very little understanding of how to motivate and move a community to action, but we realized that it had to be done. Ray Hill, Gary Van Ooteghem, Don Hrochovy, Mort Schwab and other trailblazers spent the early years just trying to figure out what it was we (the caucus) could and couldn't do.

Don Hrochovy worked for the Harris County Tax Assessor/Collector's office in the Voter Registration Records Department at the time and a very knowledgeable expert on computers and computer technology of the day. Don proposed a very unusual idea. "If the county can keep records on all voters, then we can keep records on ours."

None of the existing board members or officers knew anything about computers. The year was 1977 and the IBM Personal Computer wouldn't debut on the scene until 1982, some five years hence.

We used borrowed time on the county computer systems which meant the use of punch cards. That was a very time consuming and complicated job for two or three people with approved access to county computers. Ultimately, Don built a computer from a Heathkit that would do some of the things that we needed to do with our list. This reduced the time we had to rely on the county's computer technology.

We managed to use those computers for many years to maintain and utilize our list, something other organizations did not do. In fact, computers would not be used by political organizations until Terry Dolan a conservative Houston gay man sold the technology to the Moral Majority to help elect Ronald Reagan.

Don and a handful of volunteers would work the crowds at Mary's, Club Houston, Midtowne Spa, even the popular arcades in adult book and video stores to identify gay voters and get their names on the list. He would cooperate with Women's organizations, Black and Hispanic groups, trying to build the most comprehensive list possible. Don Hrochovy died in 1986 as the sole owner and controller of two IBM PC computers containing the caucus's list. There was drama even at bedside about how the equipment and the information passed smoothly to the next generation.

Today, Don would be proud. Personal computers have become affordable and easy to operate. Just about anyone can sit down in front of a personal computer and learn to use the mouse and Windows and the various programs available for them. And there is a wealth of software to do just about anything you would want to. If there isn't the software that you want, the programming languages have gotten so simple to use that it would amaze Don.

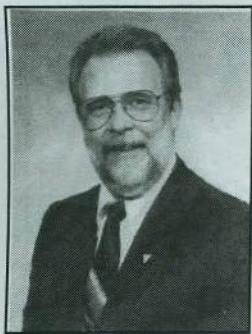


To complete Don Hrochovy's dream, we should follow his belief that the list did not belong to a single organization, but should survive as a whole community database. Our fears justified by the pink triangle Nazi era tracking of gay people to send to labor and death camps are probably beyond imagination in a modern world. Things get bad sometimes, but our enemies are not going to get powerful enough for them to get that bad again. As a matter of fact, the sin that dare not speak its name simply won't shut up anymore.

The fear of having one's name on a list just does not exist with enough concern to justify the secrecy and security that Don Hrochovy took for granted.

My goal this year will be to encourage other organizations in the community to share their lists with us and us with them. Additionally, I personally would like to grow this list to more than 50,000 good names by the end of this year. That is an increase of five times its existing size today. We can do it. It's a lot of work and probably one of the most labor intensive jobs in the caucus. But the work will have a profound effect on the ability of our organization to deliver votes for specific candidates in elections and will ultimately allow us to help elect openly gay and lesbian candidates to public offices across the whole spectrum of political offices in this city and county. It is with this power that we will be able to make a difference for the better living of gay and lesbian people in this area.

Get Involved Today !
713-521-1000



Legalizing Homosexual Behavior

by Ray Hill
An HGLPC Newsletter Exclusive

After Louisiana's appellate courts recently declared laws criminalizing homosexual behavior unconstitutional on privacy grounds, only 11 states still have laws making us illegal. In Texas that law is Sec. 21.06 of the Penal Code, a class "C" misdemeanor punishable by fine only not to exceed \$500.00. No jail time is provided and assuming there is no identification problem, those charged with a violation should be ticketed and released to appear in court at a later date. The two most recent cases are on their way to the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals for a constitutional check similar to that in Louisiana. With a little luck and judicial wisdom we too may become legal soon.

There is however a continuing danger of anti-gay, selective enforcement of other laws that may become a problem. An example is the Michael Williams case. Michael was at the time of the alleged offense a 16 year old gay boy. He was below the age of consent (17 in Texas, as low as 14 in New Mexico, 16 in Louisiana and 15 in Oklahoma). He was joined in what can best be described as a "circle jerk" by a 14 year old boy in the woods near Channelview. It is statutorily important that both kids were below the age of consent and less than 3 years separated their ages.

The mother of the 14 year old found out and reported the incident to the police but no action was taken until Michael passed the age of consent. He was then arrested and charged with sexual assault of a minor. The case languished in court for almost another year before being resolved with a deferred adjudication plea for one year probation supervision and no final conviction if the probation is successfully discharged. It was not successfully discharged as Michael was accused of several minor technical violations and sentenced to eight years in Texas prison.

He should never have been charged with the offense as he was below the age of consent when the incident happened. He should never been charged as he and his partner were less than three years apart in age. He should have been advised that his plea was a bad legal move. His technical probation violations would normally not have resulted in a final con-

Continued on page 8

The 1999 Legislative Session What to Expect

by Dale Carpenter

Aside from barbecue and Tex-Mex food, the most blessed thing about living in Texas is that the legislature meets once every two years and then only for four months at a time. This severely restricts the amount of mischief our elected representatives can do. It is also a primary reason why none of the bills affecting gay men and women (pro or con) is likely to be brought up for a vote — much less be passed on to Governor Bush for his signature. Herewith a summary of where we stand on some of those bills:

(1) **The anti-gay adoption bills.** The most talked-about bills (at least in the gay press) affecting gays in this session are two proposals to restrict the ability of gays to adopt children and to act as foster parents. The bills would authorize — indeed, require — the state to investigate prospective parents to determine their sexual orientation. As things stand now, the bills are dead on arrival. The leadership in both parties does not want them to come up for a vote.

However, though the bills have obvious practical deficiencies (requiring expensive and intrusive investigations and needlessly restricting the already-tight pool of adoptive parents), they would almost certainly pass the house and senate if brought up for a vote. That's a testament to how politically touchy the mix of gays and children is. The challenge, then, for the gay civil rights movement is to be sure they are never brought to the floor for a vote. The best hope of doing that is to monitor the bills and quietly inform legislators on the key committees of their defects, but otherwise to keep the bills off the radar screen. The last thing we want is to have a lot of media attention brought to these bills which would generate constituent calls and pressure to revive them.

Unfortunately, the oldest gay lobby group in Austin, the Lesbian/Gay Rights Lobby of Texas (LGRL), is following exactly the wrong strategy to keep the anti-gay adoption bills dead. In an apparent effort to raise its profile and raise money for itself, LGRL is aggressively promoting the bills in the media as a threat to gays. The bi-annual LGRL-sponsored march on Austin is actually dedicated to defeating these bills that are already widely considered dead. Ironically, LGRL's march offers Warren Chisum and his homophobic buddies their best chance to revive their anti-gay efforts by bringing public attention to them. The mainstream press, so far, is paying no attention to the LGRL march or the bills. But stay tuned . . .

(2) **The hate crimes bill.** This legislation would enhance penalties against those who commit crimes based on animus against the victim's race, religion, sexual orientation and a host of other

things. It has been introduced in the last three legislative sessions, making less progress last time than ever before. Although opposed by some in the gay community, it has widespread support among most gay organizations, including LGRL and the newest gay lobby group in Austin, the Log Cabin Republicans of Texas.

In an ordinary year, this bill would also have no chance of making it to the floor for a vote. But the horrific murders of James Byrd in Jasper, Texas and Matthew Shepard in Wyoming have brought unprecedented media attention to the issue of hate crimes. Because we want to see this bill passed, our strategy should be to draw as much media attention to the bill as possible. It actually has a chance of passing if it ever comes to the floor for a vote.

Log Cabin's new lobbyist in Austin is planning a lobby day to support this bill, among others. Unfortunately, there is no large march on Austin planned to promote the need for it.

(3) Other pro-gay bills. Bills that would prohibit discrimination in employment and education, and would repeal the sodomy law have also been introduced by urban Democrats. As in years past, these bills have almost no chance of making it to a vote on the floor of the house or the senate.

The bi-annual proposal to repeal the sodomy law, introduced by Montrose's own Debra Danburg, has gotten more attention than usual this year because of the recent arrests of two Houston men on charges that they committed sodomy in the privacy of a home. Although Log Cabin plans to devote some time this year to lobbying legislators about the need to repeal this big-government intrusion on the privacy of all Texans, little has been done to lobby them in the past about it. Thus, we are in for several sessions of education and struggle on the issue.

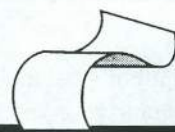
As you can see, the session ahead is likely to result in the usual stalemate on gay issues, with neither side gaining any real ground. Until we have a real two-party civil rights strategy firmly in place in this state, that is about the best we can hope for.

HGLPC Needs List

Spring is just around the corner and now is a perfect time to start spring cleaning earlier than normal.

The Houston Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus is looking for the following Items. If you have them around and would not mind donating them to the office, please call 713-521-1000 and someone will be glad to help make the necessary arrangements.

- **Plain Paper Fax Machine.**
- **Any Windows 95/98 compatible computer equipment.**
- **High Volume 24 pin Dot Matrix Printer** (*better than 600 cps please*).
- **Working High Volume copier** (*20+ pages per minute*).
- **Multi-Line Telephone System.**
- **Copy Paper** (*8.5x11, 8.5x14 and 11x17*).
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- **Cheshire Label Machine.**



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Equality Begins at Home

First Ever National Week Of Action for GLBT Equality Takes Shape

WASHINGTON, DC — In the 30th anniversary year of the Stonewall rebellion -the birth of the modern gay rights movement - thousands of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people will launch an unprecedented national week of action for equality. Equality Begins at Home, slated for the week of March 20 - 27, is a major initiative to push state lawmakers to support a platform of equality.

Texas events are being organized by the Lesbian Gay Rights Lobby of Texas. This national week of actions is coordinated nationally by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force and organized by the Federation of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Statewide Political Organizations.

As part of its coordinating efforts, the Task Force provided Federation member groups \$5,000 each to support their Equality Begins at Home organizing efforts and hired a national coordinator for the event. Dozens of national organizations have signed on in support of this week of action.

From Montana to Maine, gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people will come out and speak up in simultaneous events nationwide, most of which will take place at state capitols. These actions will, among other things, build support for laws that counter hate violence, ban employment discrimination, provide for safe schools for all students, ensure the right to adopt and become foster parents, and address health issues including HIV/AIDS.

LGRL is urging Texans to assemble on Sunday, March 21, 1999, for the "March on Austin-March for Our Families." Participants will oppose the attempts of Rep. Warren Chisum (R-Pampa) and Rep. Robert Talton (R-Pasadena) to ban gays and lesbians from adopting or providing foster care-even to their own relatives.

Requiring an intrusive investigation into the sexuality of any prospective parent, HB 382 and HB 415 together would prevent gays and lesbians from adopting children or providing foster care, even to their own relatives. HB 415 would further mandate that children already under the care of gay, lesbian, or bisexual foster parents be removed from their families.

"Clearly, Reps. Chisum and Talton do not have the interests of Texas children at heart," says LGRL Executive Director Dianne Hardy-Garcia. "These proposals are an example of the cruelest form of discrimination."

Schedule of Texas Events

Saturday, March 20, 1999

Youth Rally for Non-Discrimination in Education

Join youth from across the state at the capitol to create aware-

ness of the discrimination that many youth still experience in our society. Not enough is done to protect students from discrimination based on ethnicity, gender, color, national origin, sexual orientation and religion. Come show support for a change. The Rally will begin at 1 p.m. on the south steps of the Capitol.

Sunday, March 21, 1999

March For Our Families

March with thousands of people to the state capitol. Bring your signs and banners, your grandparents, parents, sisters, brothers, cousins, nieces, nephews, children, grandchildren, friends, and your organizations! Let's show them our families! The march will begin at Palmer Auditorium at 12:30 p.m. Immediately following the march, gather at the south steps of the Capitol to hear political leaders and elected officials speak out against the ban.

Monday, March 22, 1999

Lobby Day

Visit your legislators to discuss the adoption and foster care bills. Meet in the capitol building cafeteria at 7:30 a.m. for a brief organizational meeting. LGRL representatives will be on hand to assist you in contacting your senators and representatives.

The NGLTF Houston Creating Change Committee is working with Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) Houston to coordinate bus transportation from Houston for the events. The estimated cost of transportation (roundtrip) is \$15 per individual. To help reduce this cost and to provide transportation scholarships, the Task Force and PFLAG are having a fundraising event at Stages Repertory Theater March 6.

The benefit performance of "Kinder Transport", is at 8 p.m., Saturday March 6. Ticket cost is \$30. Underwriters will receive two tickets to the play and will be invited to a reception preceding the performance. Underwriting cost is \$75. Tickets are available by calling (713) 524-6349.

KPFT 90.1 FM radio station is the official Houston radio station for Equality Begins At Home. The Houston Voice is a media sponsor as well.

"Equality Begins at Home is not an end point but a beginning point. We are going to make our statewide organizations stronger, mobilize more people, register more voters, and demand greater accountability from our state legislators and policy makers," stated Kerry Lobel, National Gay and Lesbian Task Force executive director. "It is this organizing at the state level that will ultimately counter the hostility and gridlock we have come to know from our nation's capital," she added.

Never before in the history of the gay rights movement has there

been a coordinated political campaign of actions in all 50 states as well as the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. Equality Begins at Home represents a new phase of the movement - a focus on state organizing and legislatures. The vast majority of debates and decisions about gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender equality occur in state legislatures. Equality Begins at Home will bolster the infrastructure of the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender movement within the states - where the heart of the struggle for equality lies - and lead to greater success in the overall struggle for equality.

For Houston organizing information and merchandise, call 713-861-8238 or e-mail cbbagby@msn.com. See <http://www.equalitybeginsathome.org> for event schedule and general information. See <http://www.nglhf.org> for general information about the Task Force.



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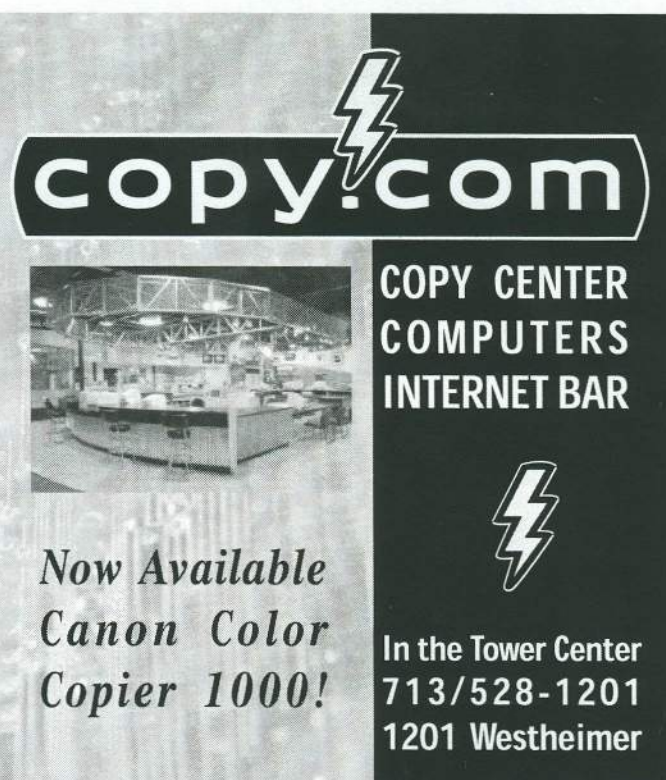
Caucus Liberty Club Members pledge to contribute \$ 10.00 or more each month providing a solid financial foundation for the Organization. Liberty Club Members understand the importance of planning ahead to meet the challenges in the intense fight for the rights and dignity of gay and lesbian people.

Liberty Club members receive special recognition in the monthly Caucus Newsletter and invitations to special receptions.

Liberty Club members are also included in special receptions with elected and public officials. Call 713-521-1000 for more information.

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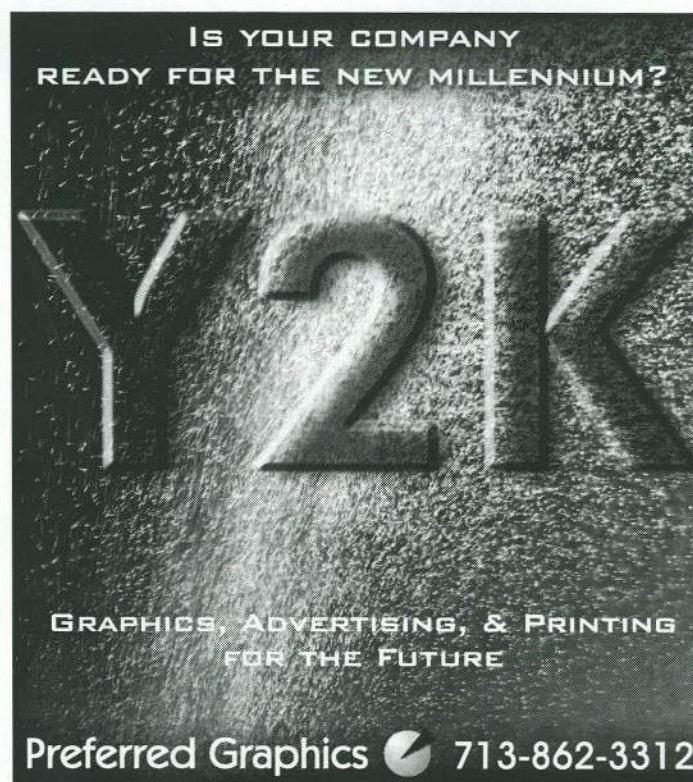


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Continued from page 4

viction had the religious nuts not applied pressure to visiting Judge Jon Hughes.

Judge Hughes reports that in counseling session Michael "almost admitted to being a predatory pederast." I suspect Michael neither uses nor understands terms like "predatory pederast" and even I do not understand the legal definition of "almost admitted." The Judge is also concerned about the "difference in their ages" (less than 3 years) but does not seem too concerned in the more than 30 years difference between his and his wife's ages (she is also a judge).

There are some serious problems in the anti-sexual attitudes of the religious right wing controlled Republican Party organization in Harris County. That party is losing support nationally because of the witch hunt and impeachment effort in Washington, but even gay Republicans seem resigned to the judgmental nature of Republican politics locally. Beware lest you become legal and prosecuted anyway.

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(Also Newsletter Editor)



Caucus PAC Fundraiser Big Success!

The Houston Gay & Lesbian Political Caucus PAC's first fundraiser of the year was a great success, according to PAC President Carl Smith. The PAC held the fundraiser on March 4 in honor of Councilmember Annise Parker in a private room at the Blue Agave restaurant. "The fundraiser netted the PAC nearly \$4,000, which exceeded our goal," Smith noted. "We thank the 30-plus underwriters of the event for making the evening such a great financial success, and we especially thank Annise Parker who helped us turn out such a great crowd," Smith added. The highlight of the evening was Smith's presentation of a \$1,000 check from the PAC to Councilmember Parker's reelection campaign. Parker confirmed at the fundraiser that she intends to wage a campaign for reelection to At-Large Position No. 1 of Houston City Council, a position she has held since January 1998. Smith noted that the PAC intends to continue raising money and working for Parker, as well as other candidates who are endorsed this year by the PAC. Most of Parker's staff attended the event, including Cicely Wynne, a former Caucus board member and longtime community activist, and Terence O'Neill, the current Chair of the Board of the Caucus and one of the

Continued on page 8

Come to Our Next Meeting!

Houston Gay & Lesbian Political Caucus
April 7, 7:30 PM
Houston Gay and Lesbian Community Center
803 Hawthorne

The Caucus News is published monthly by the Houston Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus, Post Office Box 66664, Houston, Texas 77266-6664 and is solely responsible for its content. Editor: Mike Stubblefield. Submissions for articles may be made by contacting the Caucus Office at 713-521-1000. Deadline for all material is the 15th of the month for the following issue.

Annise Parker Speaks

by Annise D. Parker
Houston City Council Member



Former At-Large Council Member Eleanor Tinsley seemed to appear at every public event all over the city. Her legendary pace set the standard. I have worked hard to meet, listen to and respond to as many people as I can. My office has become deeply involved in as many issues as possible.

Mayor Brown and I have a strong relationship. First-term Council members are rarely given Council committees to chair, but I received the Port of Houston Committee. The mayor also appointed me to represent the city on the Alliance for Interstate 69 and at World Energy Cities Partnership meetings. I also chair the Alley Subcommittee of the Neighborhood Planning and Protection Committee.

I speak up openly for our community. This began on inauguration day when my life partner Kathy Hubbard sat on the stage of the Wortham Theater with the spouses of my colleagues. I also introduced her as my partner during the opening City Council session. During debate on ethics reform, I reminded my fellow committee members that, since the city doesn't acknowledge my relationship, it isn't covered by nepotism rules.

When the mayor issued his executive order, I supplied his staff with background information, sent a memo to my colleagues and spoke to the press. (Please see my website: <http://www.ci.houston.tx.us/citygovt/council/1/>)

What do my colleagues think of the lesbian Council Member? I think they respect me, my work and my staff - and they must have a new understanding of the gay, lesbian and transgendered community.

Neighborhood Issues. Neighborhood issues dominated my first year. I have been involved in issues ranging from the subdivision ordinance and hot sheets motels to the Fourth Ward, billboards, cell towers, Marshall street closing and historic preservation. As chair of the Alley Subcommittee, I was instrumental in passing a newly revised, neighborhood-friendly alley ordinance out of committee.

I am fortunate to have an extremely experienced City Hall staff (perhaps the most experienced) that provides prompt, efficient service.

Admittedly, I have become known as a neighborhood advocate. I also strongly support economic development and don't believe

Houston-style business growth and neighborhood protection have to be enemies. We all realize that good jobs fuel great cities. Sometimes, though, we need to be reminded that people pick Houston as their new home because of good jobs *and* good neighborhoods. In that sense, "Good Neighborhoods Are Good Business."

Hate Crimes. As a member of the Council's Legislative Committee, I worked to make sure hate crimes was included in the city's lobbying package.

In early March, we learned that Sen. Royce West's hate crimes bill was scheduled for a Senate hearing. The bill did not include sexual orientation or criminal penalties for hate crimes. I discussed the bill with city lobbyists and state officeholders and sent background information as well as a personal statement to the committee. I also testified later in Austin about hate crimes.

US Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee and I hosted a well-attended hate crimes forum last year that was reported in the *Chronicle*.

Mayor Brown has been extremely supportive about hate crimes and has held several news conferences about HPD's hate crimes division.

HIV/AIDS. I have been working with the city Health Department and AIDS service providers to improve the city's HIV/AIDS services. This ongoing effort is one of my top priorities.

A Safe Place. One of the most gratifying things about being the city's first openly gay elected official is answering the phone and hearing: "Finally, I feel like I have a safe place at the city to call for help."

We have received numerous calls about hate crimes, stalking, and problems with HPD that might not have made a year ago.

Media. The press has been kind to this first-term Council member. The *Houston Press* praised my efforts to save some of the historic Fourth Ward for its residents, as did the *Forward Times*, a major African-American newspaper. My longtime relationship with *Chronicle* reporters also gives me exceptional press exposure (good so far!). The *Houston Press* also featured me in their "Best of Houston" issue. The most interesting coverage may have been the January issue of *Texas Woman*, which included me in "Women We Remember." The article noted that I and my life partner had just celebrated our anniversary.

Please call my office at 713-247-2014 (Fax: 247-3519) if you need help with any city services or have a suggestion for improving our city. My City Council website is: www.ci.houston.tx.us/citygovt/council/1/

The Editor's Desk

by Mike Stubblefield
Editor, The Caucus News



One thing that seems to always amaze me in this community is how so many people in political groups seem to want to shy away from controversy. That has been a recurring theme since the very early days when I can remember Episcopal Integrity's saying "what you do reflects on me, what I do reflects on you, what we do reflects on the rest of the community." That saying is just as repulsive

today as it was when I heard the then president of Integrity Houston recite it for me. The very thought that grown adults could not have the right to disagree with one another and to express that disagreement openly is incredible to say the least. The fact that people complain that they won't attend meetings of certain political groups because there are always "arguments and heated discussions" about issues is only to say that they are so spineless that they cannot stand to sit and discuss and debate issues important to all of us. Debate is the process to which issues are refined before being implemented; there cannot be a democratic process without debate.

I say this to bring light to an issue that has surfaced behind my back. I have been made aware that Dianne Hardy-Garcia, executive director of the Lesbian Gay Rights Lobby of Texas, did not approve of the diverse and varied opinions expressed in last month's newsletter. Specifically, she has complained to the president of the caucus about the inclusion of articles written by Dale Carpenter, a national board member of Log Cabin Republicans. Let me say, right here and now, that Diane Hardy-Garcia and LGRL are NOT the Houston Gay Lesbian Political Caucus. It is my firm opinion that we should do as we please, think as we please, and promote what we think is in the best interest of our members and the Houston gay and lesbian community. I do not need persons from outside of Houston censoring the content of this newsletter.

As editor of this newsletter, I have and will continue to include people in this publication that may or may not maintain the views of the liberal left or moderate right. I expect that there will be controversy and contention over many issues in our community. It is unreasonable and somewhat dangerous to expect all of the people in this community to think and act alike. When we allow differing viewpoints in life, we grow as people, and as citizens, we grow civically. When we attempt to stifle and restrict opinions differing from our own, we retard.

I continue to offer this as a forum for alternative ideas to be expressed. If you have such ideas, please feel free to write these down and submit it for publication. I welcome and entertain any and all political views, especially those with which I may not agree. Whether I agree with the person's opinion or not does not limit my obligation to present those ideas and allow them to be absorbed. It should be by now obvious that I intend to continue to do the same as I have in previous issues. Challenging the status quo is important, necessary and vital to our growing as a community and as people individually. If you really think that one opinion is the only opinion then truly you have not learned the lessons of democracy and free speech. I hope personally that those who are offended by columns written in this publication will contact me and let their voices be heard. I treat all opinions with the respect and consideration that they certainly deserve. And as we learn to listen to others, we will learn how to improve ourselves and make this world a little brighter place to live and play.

The views and opinions expressed in The Caucus News do not necessarily represent the positions of HGLPC.

PHYLLIS RANDOLPH FRYE

**Attorney and Counselor, and
Licensed Professional Engineer**

B.S. Civil Engineering, Texas A&M University 1970
M.S. Mechanical Engineering, Texas A&M University 1971
Licensed Professional Engineer (Texas) 1975
Master Business Administration, University of Houston 1981
Doctor of Jurisprudence, University of Houston 1981
Licensed Attorney (Texas) 1981

Areas of Legal Practice:

--- Criminal Defense ---
--- Transgender Issues and Documents ---
--- Divorce and Family Issues ---
--- Wills, Power of Atty, "Living" Wills ---
Although licensed since 1981, I have not taken additional testing,
therefore the State Bar requires that I state that I am
"Not Certified by Board of Legal Specialization"

Areas of Engineering Practice

--- Civil/Structural/Environmental ---

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713/723-8368 fax: 723-1800 e-mail: prfrye@aol.com

Answers to Frequently Asked Questions About Gay Republicans

by Dale Carpenter



Q: Are gay Republicans gay?

A: Some of us are among the most active homosexuals I know. Often accused of rigidity in our politics, we find that a useful trait in other areas of life.

Q: Are gay Republicans Republican?

A: Most of us are, though we completely reject the current leaders in the party structure. To us, they are a collection of yahoos and boobs who have managed to seize power. They will be forcibly dislodged when the revolution comes.

There are, to be sure, some latent Democrats in our ranks who would probably be more comfortable in the other party, but because they were raised this way (usually in a prosperous family), they can't help it.

Q: Are gay Republicans self-hating?

A: It's amazing. People who have never used the word in any other context in their entire lives and probably have only the dimmest idea what it means manage to conjure up "oxymoron" when they hear about gay Republicans. It's like a macro on their mental computers. One of the primary points we are trying to get across is that there is no such thing as a "gay" lifestyle, or a "gay" wardrobe, or a "gay" politics. We seek the freedom to be ourselves, which means the freedom to be many different things. That includes being a gay Republican.

We are often accused of being willing to trade our civil rights for a tax cut. Some of us are; some of us aren't. But that's not really different from the gay liberals who would trade their civil rights for abortion, or for a poverty program, or for a racial quota. People have different priorities in life regardless of their political leanings. Not everyone has to put gay issues at the top. That doesn't make us self-hating. It makes us people.

Having said that, I recognize that there are self-hating gay Republicans in the sense that they actively support or work

for anti-gay causes and organizations. Part of me pities these people; most of me wants them beheaded.

Q: Are gay Republicans divisive?

A: Absolutely. And we like it that way. We much prefer the "divisiveness" of genuine debate to the mindless conformity and silence of "unity." We disagree with the gay left about affirmative action, capital punishment, military spending, and host of other things. Even we gay Republicans disagree among ourselves about hate crimes laws, employment discrimination laws, and many other matters. Why should we pretend otherwise?

The truth is that the "gay civil rights" movement is many movements. Gays come from every imaginable social, familial, cultural, racial, economic, and political background. We are easily the most diverse political movement in human history. It would be strange indeed if we found ourselves in agreement about policies and strategies. The amazing thing is that we can get a consensus about ANYTHING. In some ways our diversity is a strength and in some ways it is a weakness – but either way it is a fact of life and we will have to learn to live with it. If the price of "unity" is that those who dissent from the prevailing doctrine must be quiet then the price is too high.

Admit it, when you close the doors and pull the shades down, you like our divisiveness. You are Caucus members, after all.

Q: Don't gay Republicans appreciate what the gay left has worked to achieve all these years?

A: This is the moment when we are supposed to bow our heads obsequiously to the pioneers. Okay: We do owe you our gratitude. The truth is that without upstarts and trouble-makers like Ray Hill people like me would be cowering in our mahogany-lined offices (many of us still do). But, Ray, the kids have grown up and they are as rebellious and cantankerous in their way as you were in yours. They are not satisfied with what you achieved; they want much more.

So, thank you. Now let's get on with our lives, shall we?

Fundraiser at Theater LaB Houston

*Benefiting The Caucus and
The Lesbian Gay Rights Lobby of Texas*

The hit British musical **Blood Brothers** that has been packing audiences in on the West End of London makes its Southwest premiere at Theatre LaB, Houston on April 8 at 7:30 PM.

HGLPC has reserved the whole house for a preview of the Oliview (read British Emy) award winning musical. Proceeds will benefit HGLPC's Political Action Committee and LGRL to stoke the juggernaut action on hate crimes and other critical GLBT bills now in the Texas Legislature as well as the challenges facing us in the upcoming Houston City Council Elections.

Tickets are \$30.00, or \$75.00 for 2 as Underwriters. Call 713-521-1000 for reservations. Please make checks payable to HGLPC-PAC and put your occupation on the check as required by law. There are only 75 seats for this event so get your tickets now.

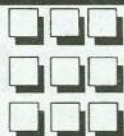
Special Thanks!

Thanks to Roger Howard of the River Oaks Antique Center for his kind donation of computers and a phone system. Also, thanks to another member who donated a Tape Backup Unit for our computers. We really cannot begin to express our gratitude for those heart-felt contributions.



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HGLPC Needs List

Spring is just around the corner and now is a perfect time to start spring cleaning earlier than normal.

The Houston Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus is looking for the following Items. If you have them around and would not mind donating them to the office, please call 713-521-1000 and someone will be glad to help make the necessary arrangements.

- Plain Paper Fax Machine.
- Any Windows 95/98 compatible computer equipment.
- High Volume 24 pin Dot Matrix Printer (*better than 600 cps please*).
- Working High Volume copier (*20+ pages per minute*).
- Paper Folder.
- Cheshire Label Machine.

Legislative Matters

by Bill Agosto

The times, they are a-changin'. Doubtless you all saw or at least heard of the Houston Chronicle editorial on March 3 entitled "Opposed" that took a strong stand against the anti-glb adoption and foster care bills introduced in the Texas Legislature by Reps. Warren Chisum of Pampa and Robert Talton of Pasadena. Not only did the editorial call out the essential bigotry of the bills in language echoing the Lesbian/Gay Rights Lobby of Texas (LGRL) reportedly communicated to the Chronicle by the Houston Chapter of PFLAG, but it deplored all "narrow-minded, anti-gay laws (that) erroneously stereotype homosexuals as criminal deviants." Remarkably, letters to the editor that followed were 3 to 1 in favor of that landmark editorial, a Houston first!

Add to that Rep. Senfronia Thompson's comprehensive James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Bill (H.B. 938) covering sexual orientation as a protected status which was recently reported out of the Committee on Judicial Affairs of the Texas House in tact to be sent to the House floor for a vote, and you've got a real horse race for GLBT rights going.

Then there's the Galveston connection in the uproar over a planned local hotel catering to GLBT's that has been preempting the editorial pages of the Galveston Daily News. Again, despite right wing hysteria, the commentary is clearly in our favor. By the way, there will be pro and con demonstrations in Galveston on April 9. We all need to think about making a dignified appearance to contrast with the raging right.

In addition, on the very day GLBT's and friends will be lobbying in Austin, Monday, March 22, following the Texas GLBT March on Sunday, March 21 (and all the other state marches nationally dubbed "Equality Begins at Home" by NGLTF), the Texas Legislature will hold hearings on two bills introduced by Rep. Harryette Ehrhardt of Dallas that would prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation against both teachers and students in the Texas public schools. Y'all be there! Lobbying is a hell of a lot more interesting than marching.

The point is somebody must be doing something right. Certainly, LGRL has put in a world class performance in Austin and continues to do so. Then to, the Clinton/Lewinsky

drama may have helped loosen the medieval grip on Texas sexuality.

But one thing is certain. Contrary to conventional forebodings, we can begin to talk openly about GLBT adoption, and GLBT hotels, and even GLBT marriage these days without jeopardizing majority support. No politician can afford to ignore that. So get out your ball points and write Warren Chisum and Robert Talton as well as your state representative. Politely express your opposition to anti-GLBT adoption and foster care legislation (We're still a minority). And while you're at it, write Senfronia Thompson and Harryette Ehrhardt expressing your hearty appreciation for their efforts. A two sentence hand written post card is worth a hundred emails. The address is always: The Honorable (Name of Rep.), P.O. Box 2910, Austin, TX 78758-2910. Do it! And remember the immortal caveat of Casey Stengel. It ain't over till it's over.

Alley Theater to Host Special Performance

On Thursday, April 1, the Alley Theater will host a special sneak preview of *Gross Indecency, The Three Trials Of Oscar Wilde* at 7:30 PM. This is a special community event and all proceeds benefit the Alley's Community Outreach Programs. Tickets are \$20 and can be purchased by calling the Alley box office at 713-228-8421.

Wilde's incendiary trial on the charge of "gross indecency" captured the attention of the Victorian world, and has much to say about today's sexual politics. A brilliant new drama, the most talked about new play in years. *Gross Indecency* made Time Magazine's list of Top Ten Best Theatre and won the Outer Circle Critics Award for Best Off Broadway Play and the Lucille Lortel Award for Best Play. It is one of the highlights of the current season at the Alley and should not to be missed.

This is a great opportunity for the community to show it's support for the Alley, which has produced *Angels in America*, *Love, Valour, Compassion*, *The Normal Heart*, *Lips Together, Teeth Apart* and a number of contemporary plays encompassing gay and lesbian themes. We encourage everyone to organize a group of friends for this special performance.

JOIN THE LIBERTY CLUB TODAY

Caucus Liberty Club Members pledge to contribute \$ 10.00 or more each month providing a solid financial foundation for the Organization. Liberty Club Members understand the importance of planning ahead to meet the challenges in the intense fight for the rights and dignity of gay and lesbian people.

Liberty Club members receive special recognition in the monthly Caucus Newsletter and invitations to special receptions.

Liberty Club members are also included in special receptions with elected and public officials. Call 713-521-1000 for more information.

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Ken Council
Kevin Davidson
Dan DiDonato
Rudoff Dietter
Clarence Bagby
Wayne Gresham
Gene Harrington
Robert Johnson
John Kellett
Clair Koepsel
Grant Martin
Patrick McIlvain*

*Michelle Myers
Carl Reidl
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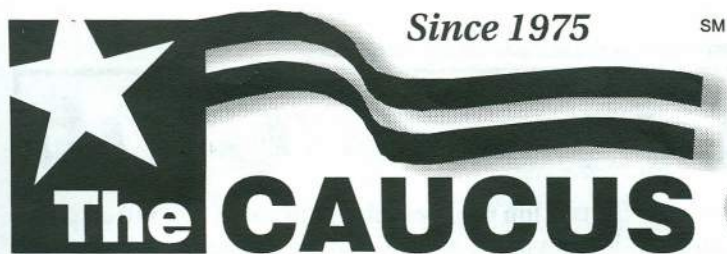


**THE
LIBERTY CLUB
JOIN TODAY!**

Continued from page 1

hosts for the event. Elected officials and potential candidates for public office attending the event included State Representative Debra Danburg, Houston City Councilmembers Carroll Robinson and Jew Don Boney, and former Caucus Secretary Andres Pereira, who has announced that he will run for City Council At-Large Position No. 2, the seat being vacated by term-limited Councilmember Joe Roach.

According to PAC officers, the PAC intends to be very busy this year with fund-raising activities that will help the PAC in its get-out-the-vote efforts and with screening candidates for possible endorsement by the PAC membership. The PAC will begin screening candidates for City Council and for the boards of the Houston Independent School District and the Houston Community College this summer. The full PAC membership will vote on whether to endorse these candidates at the PAC's monthly meeting in late summer or early fall. Those interested in helping the PAC with its work this year should come to one of the PAC's monthly meetings which are held immediately after each Caucus membership meeting on the first Wednesday of every month at 7:30 PM at the Community Center at 803 Hawthorne.



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NEWS

HOUSTON GAY AND LESBIAN POLITICAL CAUCUS

October/November 1999

VOTER GUIDE

Volume 24 Issue 6

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Terence O'Neill
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SECRETARY

Michelle C. Myers
TREASURER

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Vacant	Pos.2
Scott Simpson	Pos.3
Carl Whitmarsh	Pos.4
Tony Carroll	Pos.5
Vanessa E. Foster	Pos.6
Bill Agosto	Pos.7
Dr. Clair L. Koepsel	Pos.8
Mike Stubblefield	Pos.9

Since 1975.

VOTE!
Tuesday
Nov. 2

PAC Voter Guide

As more and more Americans come out of the proverbial closet, the Houston Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus Political Action Committee is once again engaged in an ambitious plan to get volunteers to the polls, train volunteers and provide well-researched recommendations for fair-minded Houston area voters. The Caucus PAC wants you to have the data you need to be an informed voter. Our advocacy and education efforts continue as well.

YOUR VOTE, along with the votes of your family and friends will determine whether we move forward or lose ground in our march toward freedom, justice and equality.

Caucus volunteers devoted many hours screening candidates and finalizing recommendations on which candidates deserve your vote based upon their support for equal treatment of all people as well as their ability to get elected.

"We must scrupulously guard the civil rights and civil liberties of all citizens, whatever their background. We must remember that any oppression, any injustice, any hatred, is a wedge designed to attack our civilization."
- Franklin Delano Roosevelt

It is now legal to take this Voter Guide into the polling booth with you. Please consider using it as a guide in making these important decisions.

**If you found it helpful, please consider supporting the work of the Caucus Political Action Committee.
Call 713-521-1000 for information.**

Caucus PAC Endorsed Candidates

City of Houston Elections ~

Sylvia R. Garcia
Controller

Annise D. Parker
At-Large Position 1

Andres C. Pereira
At-Large Position 2

Andrew C. Burks, Jr.
At-Large Position 3

Robert Chris Bell
At-Large Position 4

Carroll G. Robinson
At-Large Position 5

Maryann S. Young
District C

Jew Don Boney
District D

Michael H. Laster
District F

Yolanda Black Navarro
District H

John E. Castillo
District I

School Trustee Elections ~

*Houston Independent
School District*

Lee Brewer
HISD District II

Alice Pradia
HISD District IV

*Houston Community
College System:*

Morris Edelson
HCCS District V

Caucus News

Volume 24 Number 6

Editor: Sean Carter

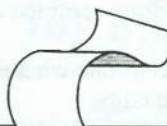
Caucus News is published monthly by:
Houston Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus

Special Voter Guide

Published by:

**Houston Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus
Political Action Committee
Michelle C. Myers, Treasurer**

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Liberty Club

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Ken Council

Hon. Debra Danburg

Kevin Davidson

Dan DiDonato

Rudoff Dietter

Clarence Bagby

Wayne Gresham

Gene Harrington

Robert Johnson

John Kellett

Clair Koepsel

Sue Lovell

Grant Martin

Michael McGinnis

Patrick McIlvain

Michelle Myers

Carl Riedl

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Punch
#169

Annise D. Parker
Council Member,
At-Large Position 1

BA, Rice University,
1978

Member, Houston City
Council At-Large Position 1
member American Leader-
ship Forum; board member,
Contemporary Arts Muse-
um; honorary board mem-
ber, Holocaust Museum and
Montrose Counseling Cen-
ter; HPD Advisory Comm.

Punch
#161

Jew Don Boney
Council Member,
District D

Attended University of
Texas at Austin, 1969-71;
University of Houston,
1994

Member, Houston City
Council District D; Mayor
Pro-tem of Houston since
1998; ordained Baptist
Minister; chairman,
Houston Chapter, United
Black Front, 1985-95.

Punch
#176

Andres C. Pereira
Council Member,
At-Large Position 2

BA, University of Wis-
consin -Madison, 1991;
JD, South Texas College
of Law, Order of Lytae
scholastic honorary, 1995

Native of Houston; pres-
ident, Human Rights Foun-
dation; member, committee
to raise money to build new
home for Catholic
Charities; Andres' philoso-
phy about city government
is "juntos podemos" meaning
"together we can."

Punch
#162

Mike Laster
Council Member,
District F

BA, University of Texas
at Austin, 1985; JD,
University of Houston,
1988

Texas resident 36 years;
senior assistant city
attorney, City of Houston,
1989-95; secretary, Sharps-
town Civic Association,
member, Greater Southwest
Houston Chamber of
Commerce and Houston
Realty Breakfast Club

Punch
#183

Andrew C. Burks, Jr.
Council Member,
At-Large Position 3

Attended San Jacinto
College, 1968-70; Hous-
ton Community College,
1973-75; Texas Southern
University, 1978-79

Native of Houston;
Community Service Award,
National Council of Negro
Women, 1991; served, US
Air Force, 1970; president,
276 Community Club;
member Harris County
Democrats.

Punch
#160

**Yolanda Black
Navarro**
Council Member,
District H

BBA, University of
Houston, 1973

Native of Houston; senior
fellow, American Leader-
ship Forum; member,
Houston Parks Board;
board member, the Park
People; Mayor's Volunteer
Award, 1996; president,
Navigation Area Business
Association.

Punch
#187

Chris Bell
Council Member,
At-Large Position 4

Individual endorsements
include: Bob Lanier, Joe B.
Allen, Garnet Coleman.
Group endorsements
include: Houston Realtors
Association, C-Club,
Firefighters and HPOV.

Punch
#160

John E. Castillo
Council Member,
District I

BS, University of
Houston; post-
baccalaureate studies in
finance and accounting

Member, Houston City
Council, District I; chair-
man, Council Economic
and community Develop-
ment Committee; member,
Council Customer Service
and Initiatives, Ethics,
Fiscal Affairs, International
Trade Committees.

Punch
#191

Carroll G. Robinson
Council Member,
At-Large Position 5

BA with honors, Stock-
ton State College (Pom-
ona, New Jersey); JD,
George Washington
University

Member, Houston City
Council At-Large Position 5
vice chair, Mayor's Advi-
sory Council on Scenic
Conservation; member,
Council's Aviation, Comp-
etitive Bidding and Com-
munity Development, Fis-
cal Affairs committees.

Punch
#262

Lee Brewer
HISD Trustee
District II

BA, Texas Southern
University, 1976; Med,
TSU, 1985

Texas resident 52 years;
served US Army, 20 years;
Bronze Star, battlefield
commission in Vietnam;
teacher, Houston Indepen-
dent School District, 10
years.

Punch
#195

Sylvia R. Garcia
City Controller

BS, Texas Women's
University; JD, Texas
Southern University

Houston City Controller
since 1998; Humanitarian
of the Year, National
Conference of Communities
and Justice; named one of
"Houston's 25 Power
People" by *Inside Houston*
magazine and "Politician of
the Year", by *Houston Press*

Punch
#266

Alice E. Pradia
HISD Trustee
District IV

BA, Texas Southern
University, 1955; MS,
TSU, 1965;
Administrative
Certificate, TSU, 1975

Life member, NAACP;
board member, East
Sunnyside Civic Club;
former teacher and admini-
strator, Houston Indepen-
dent School District, 15
years; curriculum coordi-
nator, Nat Henderson
Elementary, 2 years.

Punch
#165

Maryann Young
Council Member,
District C

BA, Duquesne
University (Pittsburgh,
PA), 1977

Texas resident 17 years;
senior aide to Houston
Controller George Greanias,
1990-95; news director of
radio station KUHF, 1983-
87; board member, Katy
Prairie Conservancy;
president, Sunset Terrace /
Montclair Civic Association

Punch
#293

Morris Edelson
HCCS Trustee
District V

BA, Lamar University,
1964; MA, Lamar
University, 1965; PhD,
University of Wisconsin-
Madison, 1973

Texas resident 50 years;
volunteer, Texas Institute
for Research and Rehabi-
litation, University of Texas
M.D. Anderson Cancer
Center; served US Army,
public information officer,
1960-63; former Fulbright
Professor in Poland.

VOTE

For Freedom, For Justice For Equality

The candidates listed inside are committed to fairness
for all people and share a basic belief that all Houstonians
deserve equal opportunity.

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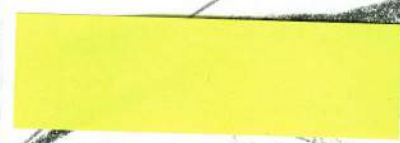
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HGLPCNews

HOUSTON GAY & LESBIAN POLITICAL CAUCUS

A letter to HGLPC

by
*Annise
Parker*



City Council candidate
Annise Parker

Thanks to all of you who supported me in my city council race. Your money and your volunteer hours made the race possible. Your encouragement and help gave me the strength to persevere. I appreciate the faith you have shown in me.

There were many positive aspects to this race. I ran an effective, professional, issue-oriented campaign. I was considered a serious contender in the eyes of political pundits and the media from the beginning. I was able to raise issues that would not otherwise have been addressed, but also to convey the range of issues I consider vital to this city.

Coming in third of 19 candidates, with 11% of the vote, is a very strong showing. I won all the Montrose precincts by a large margin, led in the Heights and the Washington Avenue area, and got votes all over the city. There was a 7% city-wide voter turnout. Montrose voted in a higher percentage than the rest of the city, but there just weren't enough total votes coming from the areas where I ran strongest.

My five thousand votes included a lot of non-gay support, so we know that many gay voters stayed home. Possible solutions are already being implemented. My campaign was a test run for HGLPC's new computer technology. Data sorts from voter registration rolls enabled me to mail to gay and lesbian voters who had never been on any community lists. Precincts where I ran strongest are being assigned precinct captains for door-to-door efforts. We are analyzing the effectiveness of our phone banking.

The local gay/lesbian media was particularly supportive. I am pleased by the depth of coverage of the race, and personally honored by the coverage afforded me as a candidate. The mainstream media coverage was wholly inadequate! If you read the *Post*, you might not have known there was an election. They didn't even bother to screen or endorse a candidate. The positive aspect for me is that local non-gay media finally refers to me as a "neighborhood activist" or a "civic activist" I have never been a single issue candidate, and that is finally being reflected in the coverage.

I think it is important to state that I received only a half-dozen negative phone calls over the course of the campaign — none because I am gay! I was open about who I am and what I believe, both as an individual and as a candidate, and was treated respectfully everywhere I campaigned.

continued on page 6

What's New?

Welcome to the new,
expanded HGLPC News!

Two new features can be
found within these pages.

First, each month a different community organization will be featured in an in-depth article. This will allow HGLPC members to learn more about other activities going on in Houston. We will be providing copies of HGLPC News to the featured organization so its members can learn more about us.

Second, we are selling advertising space to lesbian, gay, and other friendly businesses. This will help cover postage — yes, bulk rates went up too!

Of course, a bigger newsletter means more work! We need volunteers to sell ads, write articles, brainstorm fresh layout ideas, and help with the dreaded bulk mail sort. Sign up at the March 1 meeting.

Last, but far from least, we would like to extend the most sincere gratitude to **Norm Thompson** who has generously donated all printing for HGLPC News.

Status

A Message from the President

HOUSTON GAY & LESBIAN POLITICAL CAUCUS

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HGLPC News is a monthly publication of the Houston Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus, which is solely responsible for its contents. HGLPC meets the first Wednesday of every month at its offices, 2700 Albany Street, Suite 304, at 7:30 PM.

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Hooray for our Sister City. Three cheers for Dallas. Way to go, "Big D." Last month, Dallas — a more politically conservative city than our own Houston — banned employment discrimination based on sexual orientation.

by
Terri
Richardson

But wait, you say. Where was the news coverage about the demonstrations in the streets of Dallas that led up to this great victory? Where were the front page photos of gloved, helmeted Dallas Police Department officers dragging lesbian and gay protesters away from City Hall? Why didn't we hear about the hundreds who marched to City Council Chambers demanding their civil rights, and where was TWT's and The Triangle's coverage about the eloquent speeches that Dallas gay and lesbian leaders made at the protest rally?

We're an informed, sophisticated group. What gives? Where was the media?

There was no media, of course, because none of the aforementioned acts occurred. There were no marches, no demonstrations, no protests. In the State that gave us Warren Chisum, Phil Gramm, and Dick Armey, the ruling body of Texas's second-largest City simply voted and announced that it will not tolerate discrimination based on a person's sexual orientation. Period.

The time has come for the Houston Gay & Lesbian Political Caucus to get serious about its purpose and methods for achieving its goals. We know why Dallas's City Council outlawed discrimination, and that is because three of Dallas's City Councilmembers are gay. Their days are spent listening to citizens complain about potholes and garbage pick-up, and they set aside hours and hours to pore over budgets and scrutinize bids, and read every report from every obscure city agency, and ask and answer every inane question put to them, and then say, "Oh, by the way, it's wrong to discriminate against lesbians and gay men."

Understand this: Only when an openly gay man or lesbian is sitting at the table at 801 Bagby, facing the Municipal Channel camera with the hearing impaired interpreter in the little circle, will the issue of discrimination against gays and lesbians again be raised. Our friends will not do it, as well-meaning as they may be. Only we can do it for ourselves.

If you have dropped out of the fight because you "did your time" and now you're working on your back yard landscaping, you are selling yourself short, because younger activists need to learn from you. If you make six figures a year and cannot imagine how a meter reader's opportunities for employment advancement with the City of Houston have anything to do with you, think again; the weakest among us will usually be targeted first, but they will not be targeted last. If you believe we don't have a chance to elect a lesbian or gay man to City Council in Houston, you are defeatist and frustrating and disappointing.

And if you think I have no right to talk to you this way, you're probably right; I probably don't. I am not, however, going to stand around from now until November and wonder why Dallas has three gay city councilmembers and Houston has none, and why queers in Dallas celebrate the passage of a non-discrimination ordinance and we in Houston bemoan the fact that we don't have and can't get one. Rather, I intend aggressively to encourage my friends to

continued on page 6

P-FLAG

This Month's Feature

The roots of P-FLAG — Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays — go back to 1972 when a mom and dad happened to turn on their TV and see their beloved son Morty being brutally beaten, while New York City police officers looked on with indifference. Jeanne and Jules Manford had long known and accepted that their son was gay. But suddenly, they wanted to do more than just be accepting.

Jeanne wrote an angry letter to the *New York Post* expressing her outrage, which inspired other parents of gays and lesbians to respond. Soon afterward, at the 1972 New York Pride Day parade, Jeanne marched at Morty's side carrying a sign that said, "Parents of Gays, Unite in Support of Our Children."

The crowd went wild. Initially, Jeanne thought they were cheering for Dr. Benjamin Spock who was marching behind her with a group of Vietnam veterans. But soon, she began to realize the impact of her presence. "They came out of the crowd into the street and kissed me. And they asked me to talk to their parents. That's when I knew I had to form P-FLAG," says Jeanne, as quoted in the introduction of the recently published *Uncommon Heroes*.

P-FLAG was officially launched in 1981, with a total of 20 chapters. Today, there are more than 350 affiliates spread across the U.S., 11 in Canada, and a handful in other countries including Australia, England,

France, and Israel. Growth has been spurred in recent years by organized attacks on the rights of gays and lesbians. Parents with gay sons and lesbian daughters began to see their own children being vilified by politicians and ministers, and like the Manfords, they were propelled to action.

While P-FLAG Houston's roots go back to the 1970s (Annella Harrison, mother of Patrick McIlvain, participated in early efforts to form the national organization), the local chapter has experienced tremendous growth over the last three years. Today, we mail our monthly newsletter to more than 700 persons, have 250 dues-paying members, and counted 125 people at our last meeting.

Virtually every meeting is an attendance record-breaker. Parents and other family members, gay men and lesbians, and supportive persons in the community including counselors, ministers, and mental health professionals, fill the pews at our meeting place — St. Francis Episcopal Church at 345 Piney Point. Meetings begin with a program, such as a panel of ministers discussing religious concerns, or youth from HATCH talking about their experiences at home and school. After a short break, we divide into small groups for discussions. Truly, these sessions are the heart of P-FLAG, offering an environment where each individual can speak from the heart. Sitting in a circle, we listen, nurture, cry, laugh, console, and rejoice. Most of all, we learn — from each other, from the community of experience represented, and in the end, from ourselves.

Overall, P-FLAG's mission is threefold: to support families, to educate the public, and to advocate for equal rights. Typically, parents come to their first P-FLAG meeting needing support. As they learn about homosexuality, meet lesbians

by
Gail
Rickey

and gay men, and interact with other parents who are concerned about the well-being of their sons and daughters, they become advocates — and activists!

Last year, P-FLAG Houston embarked on a new venture: presenting an educational event titled "Healing the Hurt: A Conference on Homophobia." When we began planning the event, Oregon and Colorado were still reeling from hate-filled anti-gay initiatives, and gays-in-the-military was the top story in the news. We knew we had to speak out. If all we were able to do was to save one young person from suffering the fear of rejection and the pain of isolation that our own children had endured, if we could sensitize one school counselor or minister or therapist to the problem, if we could energize one more person to stand up for our gay and lesbian children, then our work would be worth the effort.

With grateful hearts, we welcomed 340 attendees, far surpassing our original goal. Keynote speaker Dee Mosbacher honored us with a showing of her video, "Straight from the Heart," which was recently nominated for an Academy Award in the Documentary Short category! Importantly, the conference — designed to educate — did much more. Minute by minute, hour by hour,

continued on page 6

In this space every month, HGLPC News will feature a different lesbian or gay organization from Houston. Next month's planned feature is Twenty Something, a group for young people who "graduate" from HATCH.

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 Since 1975.

**PAC Endorsement Meeting
September 1 ~ Lovett Inn**

By Clair Koepsel and Scott Simpson, PAC Screening Co-Chairs

The HGLPC Political Action Committee will hold its endorsement meeting for the November city elections at the general meeting on Wednesday, September 1, 1999 at the Lovett Inn, 501 Lovett Blvd.

Credentialing will begin at 7:00 p.m. To be eligible to vote during the endorsement portion of the meeting, you must be an HGLPC member. New members, who recently joined, must have paid their membership dues by the close of the last general meeting on August 4, 1999. Those members whose membership has run out may become eligible to vote by bringing their membership up to date prior to the endorsement portion of the meeting. Membership Committee members will be on hand to assist you on bringing your membership up to date.

The meeting will begin at 7:30 p.m. Candidates are invited to speak briefly (one or two minutes) to the membership. At approximately 8:15 p.m. Credentialing will be closed, and only caucus members will be allowed to remain in the meeting for discussion and voting on endorsements.

The screening process is currently underway. "Invitation to screen" letters have been mailed to 57 candidates who have filed for the offices of Mayor, City Controller, five At-Large City Council seats, and nine City Council district seats. Letters have also been sent to HISD and Houston Community College Board seats. Screening panels are currently interviewing candidates to make recommendations for endorsement at the September 1 meeting. Thanks again to Jay Seegers, Clarence Bagby and Carl Whitmarsh for their leadership as panel chairs.

Training sessions were recently held to instruct new Caucus members on how to screen candidates effectively. A special thanks goes to Michelle Myers and Clarence Bagby for their work in developing a very detailed and updated screening manual and for conducting the training sessions.

Thanks also to Bill Agosto, Mike Bodin, Zeph Capo, Sean Carter, Kevin Davidson, Sarah DePalma, Jim Duke, Patti Edwards, Vanessa Edwards Foster, Phyllis Frye, Steve Garland, Carmen Pollock, Jennifer Pool and Desiree Walton for their participation on screening panels.

A Progress Report by the President

By Carl S. Smith, President

The year has been moving along rapidly, and the Houston Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus has been working hard. For those of you not keeping score, here are some of the things that our organization has accomplished so far.

1) The Gay and Lesbian Leadership Training - This training, conducted by Dave Fleisher (formerly of the Victory Fund) and Grant Martin, provided a springboard for the year. Several officers and board members attended, and the training provided crucial guidance and motivation for the youthful but committed new leadership of the Caucus.

2) HGLPC PAC Fund-Raiser honoring Annise Parker - A huge success, this event at the Blue Agave really kicked things off, raising over \$4,000 for the PAC and enabling the Caucus to make a

contribution of \$2,500 to the Parker Campaign.

3) ACLU Gay Civil Liberties Celebration - The Caucus partnered with the ACLU on this fantastic evening. As an underwriter and sponsor, this coalition building effort highlighted our commitment to furthering GLBT rights for all of us.

4) HRC/PFLAG/HGLPC Evening at the Alley - In continuation of the coalition building theme, this additional joint event brought together members from all three organizations for a pleasant evening of theater in previewing "The Three Trials of Oscar Wilde." The theme of the play, the persecution/prosecution of Oscar Wilde for being homosexual in late 19th century London, reminded everyone in attendance what the frightening mix of morality and the judicial process can result in. (Cont'd on page 3)

New Personalities Fill HGLPC Board Positions

A Look at the "New Group"

SEAN D. CARTER
Secretary

After a term as Student Body President of Louisiana State University and working in depth throughout the Louisiana political system, Sean moved to Houston and decided to take a brief break from politics. "Louisiana politics can do that to you," explained Carter. "The days of Huey Long may be something you read about in the history books, but his legacy still lives on in the workings of the Louisiana legislature. Majoring in political science at LSU can be quite overwhelming." Sean had worked on various city, state and national campaigns, doing his internship with the Louisiana State Republican Party (prior to making the "party switch").

Raised in Dallas, Sean returned to Texas and for the past five years has spent the majority of his time working within the charitable aspects of the Houston Gay and Lesbian Community, raising tens of thousands of dollars for various organizations. He is an active member of the Imperial Court of Houston in which he has served in various officer positions; he has served as Board Vice President of External Affairs for the Colt 45's and is currently the Stone Soup Chairman; he has served on the Steering Committee of Soiree Aubergine on which he has also served as Chairman.

Sean's interests within the community are very diverse as he is also a member of the National Leather Association, the Executive and Professional Association of Houston, Miss Camp America, and the Fabulous Boys Network. A former model for Elite and Victors of Paris, Sean enjoys singing, a talent which helped him win the title of Mr. Gay Texas All-American in 1998. In January, Sean decided to renew his involvement in politics by participating in the Gay and Lesbian Leadership Training, and he is currently involved in the Chamber's Leading and Learning Series.

Boasting his greatest honor as being elected as this year's Pride Parade Male Grand Marshal, Sean is the Development and Marketing Manager for the Montrose Counseling Center and is a member of the National Society for Fund-Raising Executives.

PATRICIA EDWARDS
Board Position 2

"Patti" Edwards is a computer drafter and has lived in Houston for 38 years. (Don't ask her how old she was when she moved here.) Her interest in politics has been motivated by her desire to see more lesbians become involved in the workings of the community. "Seeing Annise become Houston's first openly gay woman elected to office has been very inspirational," said Edwards. "I want to do my part to help, and after joining the Caucus, I realized that we need to get the women more involved."

Patti's hobbies include golf ("Of course, I'm a lesbian."), Comets ("Go Comets!!!"), golf, movies ("Yes, I was there the opening night of Star Wars."), art ("A proud member of the Museum of Fine Arts"), and did we mention golf.

She lives with "Bucky" the human dog, who is "the most adorable Pomeranian." She loves to work out ("At the Q Club!") and loves participating in Fun Runs. She is very excited about her new position and hopes to bring a fresh new outlook to the Houston Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus.

CARL WHITMARSH
Board Position 4

Carl Whitmarsh is no stranger to the political arena. Carl currently serves as the Community Aide for Rep. Ken Yarbrough, and is former Legislative Assistant to Senator Lloyd Bentsen. He has served as the Executive Director of the Harris County Democratic Party and liaison with the Houston Police Department Positive Intervention Program.

Carl has also been a former civic club president and was the recipient of one of the President's "Points of Light" for volunteerism. Carl is currently one of two openly gay officers of the Harris County Democratic Party, serving as Secretary of Senate District 15. Carl is also a former state convention delegation chair and a delegate to 13 state Democratic Conventions.

Carl received the Outstanding School Volunteer Award at Katherine Smith Elementary School for reading to seven second-grade classes each week. He is a Spark Park Board Member, and a member of the Sight Based Management Team of Clifton Middle School. Carl's boasts his greatest achievement ("or thrill") in politics as casting the first vote in 1971 for Fred Hofheinz for Mayor and being invited to the White House for breakfast with President and Mrs. Jimmy Carter.

VANESSA EDWARDS FOSTER
Board Position 6

A 42-year-old pre-operative transsexual, Vanessa Edwards Foster was born in San Diego, California and raised in Corpus Christi, Texas. She has been a resident of Houston since 1988.

Very active within every aspect of the community, Vanessa is currently the President of the Gulf Coast Transgender Community [GCTC], and President/Newsletter Editor of the Texas Association for Transsexual Support [TATS]. Vanessa was the Founder and Board Chair of the first statewide PAC for Transgenders. She served as an original Board Member of the Unity Committee and has recently been asked to sit on the board of the Montrose Counseling Center.

The Assistant Director for the Texas Gender Advocacy & Information Network [TGAIN], Vanessa co-coordinated TGAIN's Transgender Lobby Days (the first large-scale statewide TG lobby effort). Vanessa served as the Volunteer Coordinator for the Annise Parker's 1997 Campaign, and recently acted as the Volunteer Whip for the Houston Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus's own lobbying effort in Austin for EBAH. "I actually got the chance to show a couple of members the ropes on their first lobbying appointment with none other than Rep. Warren Chisum." Vanessa also serves as one of the three regional directors on grassroots TG National Lobbying Effort. Her volunteering efforts include Angels Amongst Us, Navidad En El Barrio, and annually at Salvation Army.

Vanessa has also coordinated/chaired Panel Discussions/Presentations on Transgenderism at Baylor College of Medicine, U of H-Downtown, Sam Houston State University, LiB, MCCR, and Texas Dept. of Human Services - Huntsville. She has also coordinated the setting up of Panel Participation in GLB panel studies at Baylor College of Medicine.

Progress

Continued from page 1

5) Computer System Upgrade - Generously underwritten by John Freeman and Michelle Myers, this system overhaul networked all of the Caucus PCs. In addition, all Harris County voter information was purchased and loaded onto our server. Now the Caucus has significantly increased our computer resources and is leveraged to put these resources into effective political action.

6) Reception for John Paul Barnich - In honor of Houston's first openly gay municipal judge, the Caucus' reception was another feather in our cap. Attended by Caucus members and various local politicians, we witnessed the swearing in of Judge Barnich. After his speech, HGLPC presented the new Judge with a gift in recognition of his years of support.

7) Membership Increase of 100% - Under the aegis of membership chair Michelle Myers, we have already doubled our paid membership to over 300. For those of you who aren't current on your dues, please open your checkbook and drop that check in the mail now.

8) Blockwalk for Annise - In yet another joint effort, this time between the Caucus and the Parker Campaign, the Oak Forest area was blanketed by Parker volunteers. Many people in the area were not well informed about GLBT issues, but the large majority were very receptive to the idea of an openly gay/lesbian candidate. It's refreshing to know that our support extends beyond Montrose.

9) LGRL Fund-Raiser at Theater Lab - Thanks to the strong efforts of Bill Agosto and Sean Carter, this was another fund-raising success. Theater Lab's production of "Blood Brothers" was well received, and the Caucus netted over \$1,500, half of which was promptly mailed to LGRL to help them in their efforts to stop the anti-gay adoption bills and pass hate crimes legislation.

10) Phone Banking for Hate Crimes Legislation - Spearheaded by Bill Agosto, the Caucus barraged wavering House members with phone calls at the eleventh hour. Apparently, these calls worked as the Texas House passed a Hate Crimes bill that included sexual orientation - a momentous achievement!

11) Voter Registration Drive - This summer we have been working diligently on voter registration which goes to the heart of what the Caucus is all about. So far we have had over a dozen sessions, and more are scheduled. Many of you have seen us out in the Montrose area at Crossroads, Toupee's, Lobo, the Gay Kroger, Java Java Café, and many other venues. It has been a lot of fun, and we have registered numerous gay and gay-friendly voters.

12) Partnering with Q-Patrol - In the continuing efforts to increase our exposure in the community, we have teamed up with Q-Patrol in their efforts to make the Montrose a safe area for everyone. HGLPC walks with Q-Patrol one Friday a month. Anyone can get involved in this worthwhile endeavor, so come and join us!

13) Sign'Em Up 5,000 - The Pride Parade provided the backdrop for one of the most ambitious projects in the recent history of the Caucus. The goal of the project was to collect 5,000 signatures on a petition in support of Federal Hate Crimes legislation. Twenty Caucus volunteers lunched at La Strada before the parade, and the petition circulation began in full force. After three hours of working the crowd of 75,000+, the end result was over 1,500 signatures!

14) Improving "The List" - Massive strides have been made in upgrading the famous Caucus mailing list. Through the passion and tireless work of Jack Valinski (HGLPC Data Base Administrator), the list is being updated and increased on a weekly basis.

15) Transgender Inclusion - In a wonderful general meeting, HGLPC voted unanimously to include transgenders and bisexuals in the newly adopted mission statement. This mission statement was incorporated into article II of the Caucus bylaws, and in my opinion,

was long overdue. So far this year, this is the accomplishment that I am most proud of.

16) Relocation of General Meetings to the Lovett Inn - After spending one year in the new Lesbian and Gay Community Center, the board decided that it was in the best interests of the Caucus to relocate our meetings at the Lovett Inn, where the meetings were held prior to the community center's inception. The primary consideration was the need for a larger space.

17) Chief Bradford Addresses Bar Inspections - In our first general meeting back at the Lovett Inn, Houston Police Chief Clarence Bradford was greeted by a standing room only crowd to address the controversy surrounding the recent bar "inspections" during Pride week. The Chief, along with City Council Member Annise Parker responded to queries from the audience to the satisfaction of (almost) everyone in attendance.

So don't let anyone tell you that your Caucus is not out there working for you. We have a substantial list of accomplishments that we can all be proud of, but the year is not over...and the elections are just around the corner. Working to elect our endorsed candidates remains the organization's primary focus. Now is the time for everyone to come out and make the big push for November.



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Liberty Club

Caucus **Liberty Club** members pledge to contribute \$10 or more each month, providing a solid financial foundation for the Caucus. Liberty Club members understand the importance of planning ahead to meet the challenges in the intense fight for the rights and dignity of Gay and Lesbian people. **Liberty Club** members receive special recognition in the monthly Caucus News and invitations to special receptions. **Liberty Club** members are also included in special receptions with elected and public officials. Call 713-521-1000 for more information.

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Caucus News

Volume 24 Number 5

Editor: Sean Carter

Caucus News is published monthly by:
Houston Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus
Post Office Box 66664, Houston, Texas 77266
Phone: 713-521-1000

Preferred graphics



GRAPHICS ADVERTISING

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