

Montrose Activity Center

NEWSLETTER

April

1989

The Montrose Activity Center is a non profit 501c3 organization whose purposes are to increase understanding of social, racial and sexual minorities, and to encourage acceptance and tolerance of alternative lifestyles so that together, the citizens of the City of Houston and the State of Texas may work in the spirit of peaceful cooperation to build a better society. The organization acts as an umbrella to other organizations such as Lesbian/Gay Pride Week and the Names Project Houston. MAC, PO Box 66684, Houston, TX 77266-6684.

HOUSTON MARCHES IN AUSTIN

by Annise Parker

It's time to make plans to attend the March On Austin For Gay and Lesbian Civil Rights. Word of the March On Austin is just beginning to spread around the state, but excitement is building. The weekend of April 30th and May 1st will see the biggest gathering of gays and lesbians in the history of the state of Texas. It will be second only to the national March on Washington in its impact. The weekend will culminate in a political march and rally designed to shake the foundations of the Texas Legislature and boost our lobby effort in such areas as AIDS funding, repeal of laws that discriminate against us, and protection against "hate crimes." Built around that political statement will be cultural, social, spiritual and AIDS related events.

Austin, as host city, has put together a tremendous line-up of events and invited a stellar cast of special guests. Openly gay San Francisco City Supervisor Harry Britt and Boston City Councilman David Scondras will be speaking. Noble Prize nominee Cleve Jones and the Names Project Quilt he created will be there. Popular lesbian sex therapist JoAnn Loulan will be presenting a workshop. A gay atheist brunch will feature Madalyn Murry O'Hair while an ecumenical religious service will have Father John McNeil, author of The Church and Homosexuality, as guest speaker. Events start Friday night and last through Monday. A Women's Music concert, a Tejano dance, a candlelight AIDS vigil and a special day to lobby the Texas legislature are among many activities—literally something for everyone!

Those of us active in political causes know that most politicians, when pressed on whether they support our issues, will claim that they have no gay constituents. The invisibility that protects us also prevents us from achieving our rights. By attending the March On Austin weekend, you can forever prevent any Texas politician from claiming that we "don't exist." And you can do that while sharing an exciting, emotional

and uplifting experience with literally thousands of other gays and lesbians.

The Houston contingent will be gathering together in the theme of "Houston Freedom Fighters." Local fundraising and organizing efforts center around the idea of a unique 'Houston spirit' and our willingness to fight for what we believe. Many local organizations have already committed to getting their members to Austin. Some are renting buses for group travel or reserving blocks of hotel rooms so they can share a special camaraderie while there. Whether you can attend only the Sunday march, or the entire four days of events, this is something not to be missed.

If you can't attend the March On Austin, you can still contribute. The Freedom Fighter theme will also be used for a special pledge drive to raise funds for our state and national lobby efforts. Those who cannot attend the events of the March weekend can be there in spirit by making a donation that will directly benefit our lobby. Houstonians marching will be asked to carry signs bearing the names of those who made Freedom Fighter contributions.

Hotel reservations and event tickets are already being snapped up. This newsletter contains a March on Austin brochure and a Houston Freedom Fighter pledge form. Brochures and commemorative t-shirts and buttons are available from local bars and business. If you need more information, you can call the Houston organizing committee at 524-0909.

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Annise Parker is Co-chair of March on Austin, Houston Committee.

COMMUNITY COMMENTARY....COMMUNITY

NOTES ON THE TEXAS LEGISLATURE: APRIL 1988

By Ray Hill

The Texas Legislature meets six months every two years. More than one wag has suggested the we would all be safer if they chose to meet two months every six years. The current (71st Legislature) session is more confusing than most because Texas voters approved an Amendment to the Texas Constitution that permitted bills before the House and Senate to have captions that do not relate to the content of the bills. Theoretically, a bill requiring that all cats in the state be on leashes when out of the houses where they live could be captioned "A bill that increases the price of crude oil to \$35.00." Obviously, an increase in the price of oil would meet with approval in the Legislature, but the cats of Texas would loose their freedom in the process.

That constitutional amendment was sold to the citizens as a measure that would not allow reversal on appeal in criminal cases, but it has been used in this session to introduce several bills under different captions so the same bill is referred to several committees and sub-committees making it difficult to track and oppose. Interestingly, most such bills are of an extremely conservative nature: they would criminalize HIV infection, provide public access to the medical records of those infected, and several bills would provide greater censorship of material available to adults. Almost all censorship bills are captioned "Child Pornography," but few have anything to do with children in nude or other poses.

I can fully understand why politics turns the stomachs of some people but this session of the Texas Legislature is like touring the bologna plant and then trying to eat the stuff. Even a political junkie like me has a difficult time keeping lunch down the two days each week I spend in Austin. The only thing we can do to protect ourselves this year is address topics generally and correspond with members of the legislature referring them to lobbyists representing our points of view. If you feel AIDS related issues are important, write your Texas representative and express your concern generally. Then ask that lobbyist Glen Maxey serve as your spokesperson during this session of the legislature. If the proposed ban on dancing hunks in gay bars is important to you, write a few notes about freedom of expression and ask that lobbyist Betty Naylor speak for you until the session is over. If your interests include the right of a woman to chose, ask your legislator to heed the advice of the lobbyists from the National Organization for Women or the Texas Abortion Rights Action League. If the closure of bookstores and a ban of adult videos are important, then express your support for the First Amendment and tell the legislator to check with the lobbyist from the ACLU, or Ray Hill on particular proposed bills (that's what I do in Austin each week). You may call or visit your representative's and/or senator's office rather than write. A call is worth 5 points, a letter 10, and a visit 25. If you plan to join the March on Austin for Lesbian And Gay Equal Rights, April 29, 30 and May 1st, a visit to the Capitol Building is planned for May 1st. If you write now and tell them you plan to visit then, you get maximum points.

If you do not write, visit or call, please be prepared to live with the legislation likely to pass this session. The members of extremely conservative churches are writing the legislature this year. Large sacks of mail go into the Capitol Building each day from the advocates of

Ray Hill is president of Houston Gay/Lesbian Political Caucus and a lobbyist

censorship, those proposing the registration of gay and lesbian Texans, and those calling for tattoos on and the quarantine of PWAs and the high risk groups. One interesting proposal would limit rights under the Texas Constitution to provide no more rights than under the US Constitution, a dandy mechanism to eliminate the Equal Rights Amendment that was added to the Texas Constitution many years ago. If you choose not to protect your rights and express your concerns, do not complain about the consequences. The Texas Legislature is not particularly concerned about the constitutionality of the legislation they pass. "The courts will straighten it all out," they are fond of saying. That takes eight years and those affected in the interim be dammed.

We at Houston Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus are taking a more active role in the legislative process this year. Your participation and help determining our positions are welcome. Our community is being attacked politically and we must respond politically or lose the gains we have spent years to secure.

March on Austin

524-0909

MONTROSE ACTIVITY CENTER

Box 66684, Houston, TX 77266-6684

Board Members:

Jim Owens (President)

Jack Valinski (Vice President), Brian Keever (Secretary)

Annis Parker (Treasurer), Deborah Bell

Jim Crary, Ray Hill, Bruce Reeves and Joe Watts

This newsletter is an official publication of the Montrose Activity Center, Jack Valinski, editor. This newsletter is mailed to a list compiled from Montrose Activity Center sub-groups. If you would like your name to be added, changed or deleted, please fill out the form and return it. This list is available to organizations requesting it, with direction from the MAC board.

Special thanks in helping put this edition together:

Annis Parker, David Bryan

If you would like to contribute to help pay for this newsletter, you may do so in a tax deductible gift to the above address:

Name

Organization (or not)

Address

City

State Zip

Work Phone

Home Phone

COMMENTARY

LEGISLATOR JOKINGLY URGES DEATH

TO AIDS VIRUS CARRIERS

by R.G. Ratcliffe from The Houston Chronicle

Democratic Senator Carl Parker in an off-the cuff comment during a Senate committee hearing said prostitutes and drug offenders who test positive for AIDS virus should be killed.

The remark was made as the Senate Criminal Justice Committee heard testimony on Parker's bill to authorize judges to order AIDS virus testing for those convicted of prostitution or drug offenses.

Austin AIDS-service volunteer Margaret Tucker questioned Parker's bell because it dose not specity what would happen after the test.

"What happens if that person tests positive?" Tucker asked.

"Kill them," Parker replied, smiling.

GAY/LESBIAN POLITICAL CAUCUS

PRESIDENT'S REPORT: APRIL 1989

by Ray Hill

As reported in the last newsletter, the Caucus has accepted the responsibility to press for passage of Senator Craig Washington's Hate Crimes Bill in the Texas Legislature. We have also asked that the City of Houston add CSSB #22 to their legislative package and instruct their lobbyist, former Senator Babe Swartz, to join us in that effort. When presented with that proposal, the City Council, with few exceptions, responded favorably. Please call your District Council Member and any At-large Members you know and remind them that you encourage their support of this proposal.

While you have your favorite Council Member on the phone, it would be a good time to discuss other matters that concern you. In the Council's legislative package are several proposals that advance censorship. One expands the definition of sexually oriented businesses to include bookstores, video rental shops and hotels/motels that run adult videos, and increases the controls on such business including the ability for the city to close them. One group that has approached the Council to support this measure has long advocated the closure of gay bars in Montrose. There is also no support for any AIDS related legislation in the city's legislative package: no support for increased AIDS funding; no support for the Omnibus AIDS Bill proposed by Senators friendly to the community. The City of Houston will spend in excess of \$200,000.00 of tax money for lobbyists in Austin this legislative session. So far not one cent is devoted to help our community, but a considerable amount will be spent to appease those who oppose our existence in our own community. Now would be a good time to advise your favorite members of Houston City Council how you feel about this.

When you collect your thoughts on these topics, you might join the members of the Caucus who attended our last regular meeting. We wrote Senators and House Members our concerns on several issues. If you would like to get copies of the sample letters passed out at the meeting to help you compose your own, there are copies of these letters in the Caucus office, 900 Lovett Suite 101. The GLPC office is staffed between 6:00 PM and 7:00 PM each week day. Volunteer office secretary, Clay Harper, will be glad to help you get copies of these letters. To find out who your Texas Representative and Senator are, call the Harris County Office of Voter Registration at 224-1919 and give them your precinct number or street address. Please encourage your friends to join and become active in the Caucus.

HALLOWEEN PARADE (AIDS)

by Lou Reed

from his album New York

There's a downtown fairy singing out "Proud Mary"
As she cruises Christopher Street and some Southern
Queen is acting loud and mean

where the docks and the Badlands meet

This Halloween is something to be sure

especially to be here without you

There's a Greta Barbo and an Alfred Hitchcock

and some black Jamaican stud

There's five Cinderellas and some leather drags

I almost fell into my mug

There's a Crawford, Davis and a tacky Cary Grant

and some Homeboys lookin' for trouble down here from
the Bronx

But there ain't no Hairy and no Virgin Mary

you won't hear those voices again

and Johnny Rio and Rotten Rita

you'll never see those faces again

this Halloween is something to be sure

especially to be here without you

there's the Born Again Losers and the Lavender Boozers

and some crack team from Washington Height

the boys from Avenue B and the girls from Avenue D

a Tinkerbelle in tights

this celebration somehow gets me sure

especially when I see you're not around

there's no Peter Pedantic saying things romantic

in Latin, Greek or Spic

there's no Three Bananas or Brandy Alexander

dishing all their tricks

It's a different feeling that I have today

Especially when I know you've gone away

there's a girl from Soho with a teeshirt saying "I Blow"

She with the "jive 2 plus 3"

And the girls for pay dates are giving cut rates

Or else doing it for free

The past keeps knock knock knocking on my door

And I don't want to hear it anymore

No consolations please

for feeling' funky

I got to get my head above my knees

But it makes me mad and mad makes me sad

And then I start to freeze

In the back of my mind I was afraid it might be true

In the back of my mind I was afraid that they mean you

The Halloween parade

See you next year—

At the Halloween parade.

GAY/LESBIAN PRIDE WEEK 89 H O U S T O N Stonewall: 20 A Generation of Pride

713•523•2575 • 901 W. Alabama • Houston, Texas 77006

FEBRUARY MINUTES

The meeting was called to order by Marion E. Coleman at 7:10 PM on February 23, 1989. Ms. Coleman acted as Chair of the Meeting and Mr. Nix acted as Secretary.

Ms. Coleman welcomed the members of the Committee and guests, expressing gratitude to the PWA Coalition for use of its facilities to hold the meeting. Ms. Coleman then appointed Mr. John Nix as Parliamentarian and Mr. Marvin Davis as Sargeant-at-arms.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the minutes of the previous meeting were approved as amended.

Committee Reports:

Messrs. Loyd Powell and Robert Conn reported on the activities of the **Fundraising Committee**. They reported that the Masque for AIDS was not a successful event and was not well attended. They announced that the Haircutathon was scheduled for mid-April and that the auction was scheduled for May.

Ms. Veronica Diaz and Mr. Thad Coverdale presented the report of the **Planning Coordinators**. The report was in written form and distributed to the members present. They discussed the possibility of holding an event at Astroworld on Stonewall Day, coupled with an outdoor concert and rally. They presented the tentative agenda for Gay/Lesbian Pride Week.

Ms. Billie Duncan reported on behalf of the **Communications Committee**. She discussed the activities of the Committee and especially expressed thanks for the support given to the Committee by the local media.

Mr. Brian Keever reported on behalf of the **Marketing Committee** and presented approximately eighteen proposals which had been entered in the logo design contest. Each design was presented in detail, though the identity of the designers was kept a secret until the vote was taken to select a logo. Following a lengthy voting process, the logo designed by Mr. Carlos Olivares was selected as the official logo for Gay/Lesbian Pride Week 1989.

Mr. John Nix presented the report of the **Parade Committee**. He briefly discussed the rules proposed by the Parade Committee which had been distributed to the membership and guests at the time of registration.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was proposed that the rules be adopted as presented. Upon motion duly made and seconded, an amendment was offered to the main motion to delete portions of Rule 8 which were underlined. The amendment carried. The main motion, as amended, was voted upon and carried. There was one dissenting vote.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the slogan "Stonewall 20, a Generation of Pride" was adopted. There were no dissenting votes.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was proposed that all printed materials for Gay/Lesbian Pride Week 1989 contain the words "Houston Gay/Lesbian Pride Week 1989." The motion carried. There were eight dissenting votes.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was agreed to permit the Pride Parade to be broadcasted over KPFT. There were no dissenting votes.

Respectfully submitted, John Nix, Secretary.

NEXT PRIDE MEETING
Thursday, April 27, 7:00 PM
800 Rosine, 2nd Floor
PWA Coalition Office

REQUEST FOR VOLUNTEERS I WILL ASSIST WITH:

Parade Section:

- ☐ Serve as a volunteer on Parade day
- ☐ Serve on the Parade Committee
- ☐ Recruitment of Parade units
- ☐ Development of written standards that all Parade entrants must follow

Communications & Membership Section:

- ☐ Serve as a reporter for the newsletter
- ☐ Membership recruitments
- ☐ Membership mailouts
- ☐ Membership telephone calling
- ☐ Writing press/public service announcements

Fundraising Section:

- ☐ Solicitation of funds
- ☐ Sponsor a fundraiser
- ☐ Coordinate future fundraisers
- ☐ Development of fundraising ideas and schedules

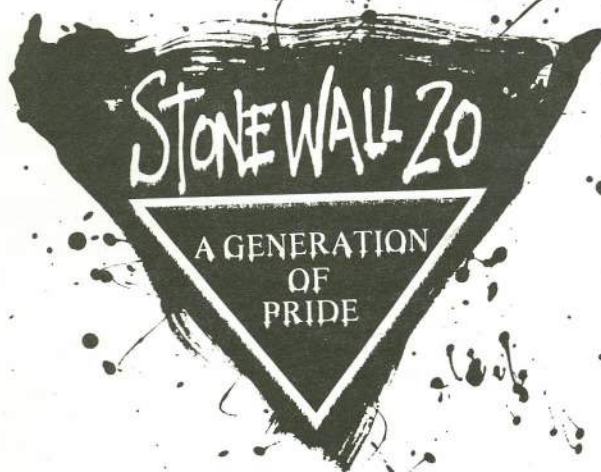
Planning, Volunteers & Events Section:

- ☐ I would like to coordinate a special event
- ☐ I have a special interest in _____ event and would like to help develop and execute it.
- ☐ I have no specific interest but would like to volunteer time as needed.
- ☐ When large numbers of volunteers are needed on an event day, I would like to be considered.

Marketing Section:

- ☐ Development of marketing strategy and ideas
- ☐ Act as a sales representative
- ☐ Would like to donate a prize for the auction

**STONEWALL: 20
A GENERATION OF PRIDE**



AN OPEN LETTER TO A CLOSED MIND

Speaking Out by M.A. Define from Gay Community News

Do me a favor. Please. Don't pick me out of the crowd at the bar in order to subject me to a 20 minute dissertation on how you're "really not gay, just confused." Frankly, Mr. Macho, I don't give a damn. And stop glancing over my shoulder. I doubt very much the "homo spotter" task force is sneaking around with hidden cameras. Look, it isn't that I don't enjoy talking with new people. It's just that I don't particularly care to talk to you.

So please don't tell me how your family would just die if they ever suspected that you might be . . . well, you know. Those of us who are openly gay don't have the slightest notion of the fears and anxieties associated with coming out to parents. We weren't born and raised in the traditional manner. We just sprang up, fully grown, in cabbage patches.

And please don't think you're complimenting me when you say I don't "look like one." I find that comment not only offensive, but incredibly stupid. Despite your misconceptions, you can't usually "spot one of us a mile away." And this habit you have of smugly looking around the bar and picking out four of five people you don't find attractive, then referring to them as faggots, buldykes and disgusting queers with whom you will not be identified, is almost as repulsive as you are. They are not the reason you came out of the closet (although you may be a reason for them to consider going back in). Are you always this obnoxious? Or do gay atmospheres just bring out the best in you.

Look, I'm not a bad person. And I don't go out very often. So when I do, please stop telling me about that old queen in the corner who won't stop cruising you. First of all, he's not even looking at you. He's cruising that cute gay standing a couple of feet in back of you. Actually, no offense (well, maybe a little), but I don't see one person in this whole place paying the least bit of attention to you. But then you're "really not

gay" anyway.

And stop snickering at my button. If you haven't seen one before than you must either be illiterate or unable to afford a radio or television. If you have, and you think pink triangles are funny, maybe you should consider joining up with Lyndon LaRouche. And don't you dare cop a condescending attitude about those of us with AIDS or who are HIV positive. Honey, you have a disease much more deadly.

While I'm at it, don't bother telling me 20 minutes into your monologue that you lied to me about your real name. I have no problem with that, I can think of a lot of things to call you. And no, I certainly do not know anyone who would be interested in being your "date" for a family wedding or the office Christmas party. Personally, I'd rather be forced to have sex with Anita Bryant.

Now how did I already know that you campaigned for Bush and Quayle? And that you're a registered Republican? Go figure. But please don't refer to yourself as an enlightened conservative. That's a non sequitur. Try pompous ass.

If I hear you say "what I do in the privacy of my bedroom is nobody's business and I don't intend on shouting it to the world" one more time, I'll seriously consider taking a picture of you and sending it to the local paper with a caption that reads "GAY HOMOPHOBES DEMANDS THE RIGHT TO BE A HOMO (but only in the privacy of his own room)." Gee, won't your enlightened conservatives let you do that? Not even if you spend the rest of your time openly advocating the enforcement of sodomy laws and trying to get an ordinance passed restricting gay people to certain jobs, accommodations and housing?

I don't understand why people in the closet always tell us about the privacy thing. What do you think we do when we're not running around making it more difficult for people like you? Meeting in a parking lot and deciding which one of your bedrooms we're going to bug this week? Trust me. We have any number of other things to worry about. So if you have to spout off about privacy, go tell it to a judge. Preferably one sitting on the Supreme Court. Better yet, stop by the office of any number of your Republican senators. Or go to Georgia. There's a man named Hardwick who would love to hear your views on the subject.

And while you're at it, you should consider writing to Larry Kramer and Harvey Fierstein about the harm being done by all this openly gay stuff. I'm sure once you explained to them that normal people would allow us to live (under certain conditions) if we just stopped being so public, they'd crawl quietly back to their closets and start writing about real issues like the terrible way the press treated Dan Quayle during the campaign and how those slanderous attempts to portray Liberace as a homosexual were really part of a communist plot to take over the world. Hell, everybody knows Mrs. Gorbachev is personally funding ACT UP. She got the idea from Nancy Reagan's "Just Say No" campaign.

Get a grip on yourself. I hardly think major corporations send their people into local gay bars in order to ferret out the "undesirables." Well, maybe some like MCI [telephone] or Kelloggs do. But if you see someone you know from work, they're probably just as "confused" as you are.

Finally, there is no need for you to hide behind the dog food display if you happen to spot one of us at the grocery store. Believe me, we will not, as you so delicately put it, expose you. We are just as concerned as you that as few people as possible know that you are "really homosexual, not confused." This may be difficult for you to comprehend, but we're a thousand times more embarrassed by you than you are by us. After all, we do have some pride.

A P R I L

A P R I L

CALENDAR..CALENDAR..CALENDAR..CALENDAR

Sundays

After Hours, discussion about gay and lesbian community, 2:00 AM to 4:00 AM, KPFT 90.1 FM

Women's Group (A Feminist Group for all Women) meets at First Unitarian Church, 2510 Fannin.

Tuesdays

Wilde n' Stein Radio, discussion about gay and lesbian community, 10:00 PM, KPFT 90.1 FM

Fridays

Breakthrough, Womyn's Music, 8:00 AM to 11:00 AM, KPFT 90.1 FM

Houston Greens, a group interested in working locally to address global issues such as environment, hunger, nonviolence, racism and feminism, meets at Christ the King Lutheran Church, at the corner of Rice and Greenbriar, call 524-3228 for more info.

Dateline Earth, 4:00 PM, news program on KPFT 90.1 FM includes a series on AIDS.

Saturdays

Youth Concerned with Lesbian and Gay Issues, 7:30 PM at First Unitarian Church, 5210 Fannin, call Melinda at 661-0078.

31 March

South Central Women's Studies Conference, sponsored by Women's Studies, UH-CL. Conference will be held at the Doubletree downtown Houston. Academic and activist presentations, exhibits and special events.

"Wilde West," premiere of comedy that pits legendary British wit Oscar Wilde against outlaw Jesse James and Belle Starr. A fundraiser for Gay/Lesbian Political Caucus, Main Street Theater, 2540 Times Blvd., in the Village, call GLPC at 521-1000 for more information.

AIDS & the Law Conference: The Emerging Legal Issues—Sponsored by Texas Human Rights Foundation. Room 101, Texas Law Center Building in Austin. For more information call 1-800-828-6417. This one-day seminar will examine the medical aspects of AIDS, employment issues, estate planning, public benefits, insurance, criminal issues, confidentiality and privacy issues, credit & bankruptcy issue relating to persons with AIDS. Registration fee is \$150, except that the fee is free for all licensed attorneys who agree to accept two pro bone referrals from THRF's AIDS Legal Resource Project.

1 Saturday

Bering Breakfast Club, Bering Memorial United Methodist Church, 1440 Harrold, 7:00 AM to 2:00 PM, \$6.00, 39th Annual, traditional pancake day is returning and it's better than ever!

Gay & Lesbian Switchboard 529-3211

2 Sunday

Body Positive Growth sponsors a Wild Flower Tour to Brenham, \$10 (no PWA will be turned away for lack of funds), leaves 10:00 AM at 3415 1/2 Graustark, call 524-2374 for more information.

3 Monday

March on Austin Houston, meeting at PWA Coalition Office, 800 Rosine, 2nd floor, 7:30 PM. Call 524-0909 for more information.

5 Wednesday

Gay & Lesbian Political Caucus meeting, Travel Lodge-Viscount Hotel 2828 Southwest Freeway, 7:30 PM

Lesbian and Gay Health Conference and Seventh National AIDS Fourm, through the 9th, Cathedral Hill Hotel, San Francisco, for more information write NLGHF Registration, 2300 K Street, NW, Washington, 20037.

6 Thursday

Gay Fathers of Houston have formed a support group that will include mothers as well as fathers in the gay community. The group will meet on the 1st and 3rd Thursday. For more information call 861-6495.

7 Friday

KEYSTROKE will be opening twice a month until May to meet the demand of the many Stop Searching members, 2401 San Jacinto, 9:00 PM, call 785-9258 for more information.

8 Saturday

Westheimer Colony Arts Festival. Drop by the Gay & Lesbian Political Caucus booth along with many other community organizations, on Mary's parking lot. 1100 block of Westheimer, 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM.

9 Sunday

The Women's Group, Group Reading, A Century of Struggle, by Eleanor Flexiner, meets at 10:00 AM, First Unitarian Church, 5210 Fannin, call 522-9113.

Women's Equality/Women's Lives March in Washington, DC, for those wishing to attend the march, Houston chapter of NOW can arrange air fare and accommodations at conferences rate prices. Call 520-8644 for more information.

Westheimer Colony Arts Festival. Drop by the Gay & Lesbian Political Caucus booth along with many other community organizations, on Mary's parking lot. 1100 block of Westheimer, 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM. KPFT Cagin Cookoff listen to KPFT 90.1 FM for more information.

11 Tuesday

Friends and family of Rape Survivors Support group meet at the Houston Area Women's Center, 4 Chelsea, 528-6798

APRIL

APRIL

CALENDAR..CALENDAR..CALENDAR..CALENDAR

12 Wednesday

Barbara Grier, publisher and owner of Naiad Press will speak at Inklings bookstore, 1846 Richmond, call 521-3369 for more information.

14 Friday

Southeastern Conference in Dallas.

15 Saturday

Sweet Honey in the Rock, at the Houston International Festival, downtown.

Deadline for Montrose Activity Center Newsletter May Issue, call 529-1223 for more information.

Board of Trustees meeting of Texas Human Rights Foundation, to be held at Bonham Exchange, 411 Bonham Street in San Antonio. Agenda will include challenge to 21.06 statute, removal of Judge Hampton, AIDS insurance litigation and AIDS legal hotline. A Tea Dance at The Bonham Exchange will also be held as a benefit for THRF from 5:00 PM to 8:00 PM. Call 1-800-828-6417 for more information.

16 Sunday

March on Austin fundraiser, help support this effort sponsored by The Imperial Court of the Single Star, at Brazos River Bottom, 2400 Brazos, 6:00 PM

17 Monday

March on Austin Houston, meeting at PWA Coalition Office, 800 Rosine, 2nd floor, 7:30 PM. Call 524-0909 for more information.

19 Wednesday

Gay & Lesbian Political Caucus, letter writing campaign to support pending legislation in the Texas Legislature, voter registration swearing in, Travel Lodge-Viscount Hotel 2828 Southwest Freeway, 7:30 PM

21 Friday

KEYSTROKE will be opening twice a month until May to meet the demand of the many Stop Searching members, 2401 San Jacinto, 9:00 PM, call 785-9258 for more information.

Womny Space brunch 1:00 PM meeting 2:30 PM to 4:00 PM

25 Tuesday

Deadline for March Montrose Activity Center Newsletter, call 529-1223 for more information.

March on Austin
see enclosed pamphlet

27 Thursday

Gay/Lesbian Pride Week Meeting, the monthly meeting featuring the progress of the committee including setting the calendar for 1989. Parkway Athletic Club, 800 Rosine, 7:00 PM, call 523-2575

Networking Conference, sponsored by Texas AIDS Network, a roundtable discussions planned for service delivery, education, administration and more, for more information call 512-472-2273.

29 Saturday

Texas Human Rights Foundation sponsors the Lesbian/Gay Community College during The March on Austin weekend & hosts the Roundtable, a discussion of gay & lesbian and AIDS legal issues. To be held at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Austin. The roundtable is open to everyone and special invited guests will include representatives from National Gay Rights Advocates of San Francisco, Lambda Legal Defense & Education Fund of New York City.

8 May

Montrose Activity Center board meeting, open to public, call 529-1223 for more information.

2-4 June

Texas Lesbian Conference, sponsored by All Mujeres Interested In Getting Active (AMIGA), Astro Village Hotel, 2350 South Loop West, call 520-5667 for more information or write AMIGA, Box 980134, Houston, TX 77098-0134.

16-25 June

Gay/Lesbian Pride Week, 20 anniversary of Stonewall Rebellion, many events planned including music events, theatre, culture events and the yearly parade. The parade will be broadcasted live on KPFT 90.1 FM. For more information call 523-2575 and get involved.

The Montrose Activity Center Newsletter is printed by:

House of Coleman
901 W. Alabama
Houston, TX 77006
523-2521

There help has made this publication possible.

CALENDAR

The main purpose of this newsletter is to provide information to the community. It is to serve as a way to network. For this to happen I need your help. If you are part of any community organization, please let me know when meetings, fundraisers, special events are happening so that I can include them in this newsletter. At present we are at printing 700 copies and sending out 450 of those directly to people who have asked to be put on the list. Soon we will be printing 1000. You can get listings in the newsletter by calling me, Jack Valinski at 529-1223 or write:

MONTROSE ACTIVITY CENTER
NEWSLETTER
BOX 66684
HOUSTON, TX 77266-6684.

Send in by April 13 for May issue:

Event: _____

Organization: _____

Time: _____

Date: _____

Place: _____

Address: _____

Description of event: _____

. . . . NATIONAL

A NEW COMPANY SEEKS WORKERS WITH AIDS

by Nadine Brozan
for The New York Times

A New York City company that provides photocopying and other office services to businesses has been established to hire people afflicted with AIDS or the AIDS virus in an effort to restore a sense of normalcy to their lives.

The nonprofit company, Multitasking Systems of New York Inc., announced today that it had begun operating with 10 employees, all of whom either have AIDS or AIDS-related complex or have tested positive for the virus that causes the disease. The employees provide businesses in New York with photocopying, word processing, facsimile, desktop publishing and other services.

In some cases the employees work at clients' offices—so far there are three—and in others at Multitasking's office at 636 Avenue of the Americas.

"Patients do much better when they can work," said Dr. Linda J. Laubenstein, a hematologist and assistant professor of clinical medicine at the New York University Medical Center, who also is president of Multitasking.

"Work is central to everybody's life," she said. "It is what organizes you out of bed in the morning, gives you interaction with others, keeps you from being isolated and from focusing all attention on illness."

Dr. Laubenstein—along with Dr. Jeffrey B. Greene, an infectious-diseases specialist and associate clinical professor at the medical center—began developing the concept three years ago.

"We noticed that patients were either fired from their jobs when their employers learned of the AIDS diagnosis or they were unable to continue in physically stressful jobs," Dr. Laubenstein said. "So we decided to develop an alternate work center where people could work part-time on flexible shifts."

In addition, the company convinced the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation of New York State to offer its services to AIDS patients. William Deschenes, director of provider relations for the office, said the state agency had agreed to offer rehabilitation through Multitasking after a nationwide search last summer showed that no other state provided such a program.

"We decided that we will serve people with AIDS the way we serve any other disabled person," he said. Under the agreement with the state, Multitasking Systems will receive \$22.72 a day for each person the company trains who meets state criteria.

In addition, the New York City Department of Employment has agreed, pending Board of Estimate approval, to finance a two-year training program, said Michael S. Weisburg, executive director of Multitasking.

Multitasking, begun with \$250,000 in grants from corporations and foundations, put notices seeking applicants in newsletters of the Gay Men's Health Crisis and the People With AIDS Coalition last fall.

"We got back 225 responses raging from drug abusers who had never worked at all to two medical doctors who themselves had AIDS," Mr. Weisburg said. "We also had applications from lawyers, hairdressers, waiters, musicians, actors and models."

Ten people, ranging in age from their mid-20's to mid-40's were hired, and the goal is to have a staff of 37 by the end of the year. They are paid from \$7 to \$12 an hour, depending on the job. The average work week is 20 to 25 hours.

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Mr. Weisberg, an associate professor at the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism was diagnosed as having AIDS in June 1988. "I feel more alive today than I ever have because of the work here," he said.

Preference in hiring is given to those who already have AIDS, although some people with AIDS-related complex or who have tested positive for the AIDS virus have been accepted, too.

"We don't want to minimize their difficulties, but usually people in the earlier stages can sustain employment," Mr. Weisberg said. "They don't have to go to the doctor so often, they have no insurance forms saying AIDS, they can remain symptom-free for up to 10 years."

Multitasking has also received requests from other companies for potential employees and so far has referred 11 candidates to new jobs.

"One man with a large communications business called to say he wanted to hire someone with AIDS, but asked us not to bill him for the \$50 fee," Mr. Weisberg said: "We asked why not, and he said: 'I have AIDS myself, and I know someone with AIDS can be productive. But my company must not know about either of us.'"

MILK SUCCESSOR

by Henry Hunt
from *The Houston Post*

A decade after Harvey Milk became a martyr for the homosexual rights movement, Harry Britt has emerged from Milk's shadow to become one of the most prominent gay leaders in the United States. A soft-spoken, divorced, former Methodist minister from Texas, Britt was appointed to the San Francisco Board of Supervisors to take Milk's place after the charismatic gay leader and Mayor George Moscone were assassinated in 1978. Last month the 50-year-old Britt became president of the board, which operates like a city council, after getting more public votes than any of the other six supervisors up for election.

Winning the position was the latest accomplishment in a long period of public service for Britt, who moved to San Francisco in 1971 after preaching in Texas and Chicago, where he held a pulpit in the same neighborhood as civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. and worked with teen gangs.

GAY MARRIAGES: MAKE THEM LEGAL

By Thomas B. Stoddard
from *The New York Times*

"In sickness and in health, 'til death do us part." With those familiar words, millions of people each year are married, a public affirmation of a private bond that both society and the newlyweds hope will endure. Yet for nearly four years, Karen Thompson was denied the company of the one person to whom she had pledged lifelong devotion. Her partner is a woman, Sharon Kowalski, and their home state of Minnesota, like every other jurisdiction in the United States, refuses to permit two individuals of the same sex to marry.

Karen Thompson and Sharon Kowalski are spouses in every respect except the legal. They exchanged vows and rings; they lived together until Nov. 13, 1983—when Ms. Kowalski was severely injured when her car was struck by a drunk driver. She lost the capacity to walk or to speak more than several words at a time, and needed constant care.

Ms. Thompson sought a court ruling granting her guardianship over her partner, but Ms. Kowalski's parents opposed the petition and obtained sole guardianship. They moved Ms. Kowalski to a nursing home 300 miles away from Ms. Thompson and forbade all visits between the two women. Last month, as part of a reevaluation of Ms. Kowalski's mental competency, Ms. Thompson was permitted to visit her partner again. But the prolonged injustice and anguish inflicted on both women hold a moral for everyone.

Marriage, the Supreme Court declared in 1967, is "one of the basic civil rights of man" (and, presumably, of woman as well). The freedom to marry, said the Court, is "essential to the orderly pursuit of happiness."

Marriage is not just a symbolic state. It can be the key to survival, emotional and financial. Marriage triggers a universe of rights, privileges and presumptions. A married person can share in a spouse's

estate even when there is no will. She is typically entitled to the group insurance and pension programs offered by the spouse's employer, and she enjoys tax advantages. She cannot be compelled to testify against her spouse in legal proceedings.

The decision whether or not to marry belongs properly to individuals—not the Government. Yet at present, all 50 states deny that choice to millions of gay and lesbian Americans. While marriage has historically required a male partner and a female partner, history alone cannot sanctify injustice. If tradition were the only measure, most states would still limit matrimony to partners of the same race.

As recently as 1967, before the Supreme Court declared miscegenation statutes unconstitutional, 16 states still prohibited marriages between a white person and a black person. When all the excuses were striped away, it was clear that the only purpose of those laws was, in the words of the Supreme Court, "to maintain white supremacy."

Those who argue against reforming the marriage statutes because they believe that same sex marriages would be "anti-family" overlook the obvious: marriage creates families and promotes social stability. In an increasingly loveless world, those who wish to commit themselves to a relationship founded upon devotion should be encouraged, not scorned. Government has no legitimate interest in how that love is expressed.

And it can no longer be argued—if it ever could—that marriage is fundamentally a procreative unit. Otherwise, states would forbid marriage between those who, by reason of age or infertility, cannot have children, as well as those who elect not to.

As the case of Sharon Kowalski and Karen Thompson demonstrates, sanctimonious illusions lead directly to the suffering of others. Denied the right to marry, these two women are left subject to the whims and prejudices of others, and of the law.

Depriving millions of gay American adults the marriages of their choice, and the rights that flow from marriage, denies equal protection of the law. They, their families and friends, together with fair-minded people everywhere, should demand an end to this monstrous injustice.

Thomas B. Stoddard, a lawyer, is executive director of the Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, a gay rights organization.

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AIDS AS APOCALYPSE: THE DEADLY COST OF AN OBSESSION

by Darrell Yates Rist
for *The Nation*

In seasons of pestilence, some of us will have a secret attraction to the disease—a terrible passing inclination to die of it. And all of us have like wonders hidden in our breasts, only needing circumstances to evoke them

—Charles Dickens
A Tale of Two Cities

Not long ago, while I was researching a book on the lives of gay men across America, a writer friend offered me an unsettling view of gay San Francisco. Rob Goldstein had no use for the polish and smugness of the Castro, the Promised Land for homosexuals; he toured me instead through the disenfranchised Latino gay life of the Mission district and the destitution of the Tenderloin. In the Tenderloin, I met homeless gay men with AIDS and gay teen-age runaways who risked their lives bartering sex for meals and drugs, hustling on every street corner.

I had just spent a night among those abandoned adolescents when, at a dinner in the Castro, I listened to the other guests talk about nothing but AIDS, the dead, the dying—which to their minds included every gay man in the city: fashionable hysteria. "This," one of them actually said, "is the only thing worth fighting for." Not long before, I'd heard Larry Kramer, playwright and AIDS activist, say something like that too, and had felt, in that suffocating moment, that finally we'd all gone suicidal, that we'd die of our own death wish.

Though I tried above all to empathize with my tablemates' wretchedness, the other images of San Francisco kept importuning. I described what I'd seen in their hometown and recalled the gay youth agency I knew best, New York City's Hetrick-Martin Institute, its dreary facilities, small staff and paltry budget. "Shouldn't we start worrying again about all those issues we've forgotten in the epidemic? Gay kids?" I ventured—as though we'd ever really cared. "Even if they don't get AIDS, what are we giving them to live for?"

The guests fell silent. Across from me sat an elder of the city's gay community, a man of money and influence. He stared at me in utter disbelief, his face suspended above the pork roast. "How can we?" he rasped. "We're dying!"

There's an oily sentiment among gay men and lesbians these days that—amid the din of a culture that keeps us in our place—we've matured; that we've grown aggressive in defense of our lives since fate, with some harsh wisdom, sent us AIDS. We produce abundant evidence of sacrifice to prove the claim: For most of this decade we've frantically been building AIDS organizations, draining our pockets poor with AIDS donations, exhausting our strength as AIDS volunteers, doing battle with AIDS bigots, creating mayhem in the streets, nurturing, mourning, worrying about infection till we're sick, dying with a desperate hold on dignity. We've been full of AIDS—gay men,

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lesbians, our parents, our newly sympathetic heterosexual friends. We've all had heart, in fact, for nothing else.

Even lesbians, none of whom, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (C.D.C.), have contracted AIDS making love to a woman, have taken to keening that the whole gay community is dying—so compulsive is the human need to partake in the drama of catastrophe. And this panicky faith that all of us are doomed cries down the sobering truth that it is only a minority of homosexuals who've been stricken or ever will be, leaving the rest of us to confront not so much the grief of dying as the bitterness, in an oppressive world, of staying alive.

No one has influenced (or parroted) the gay community's views on AIDS more than Larry Kramer and his organizational offspring, New York's AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP)—chic street protesters with clones, albeit autonomous ones, in nearly every major city. The numbers they use to pronounce universal death on the gay community's men are immoral because they are panic-mongering, insidious because they are specious. They fall within some extreme theoretical realm of possibility, and therefore prey on the frightened; they willfully propagate the worst that medical science can imagine, regardless of the improbability, regardless of maddening contradictions in epidemiologic definitions and data.

Neither Kramer nor anyone else had any hard national figures on the prevalence of infection with HIV, the virus assumed to cause AIDS. But most activists, and the media, seem to have swallowed the C.D.C.'s estimate of 1 million to 1.5 million men, women and children. These numbers, unchanged since 1986 despite the luridly publicized "spread" of HIV, ludicrously derive not from national seroprevalence surveys but in great part from mythical assumptions about the population size and sexual practices of gay men. Nevertheless, both Kramer's crowd and the media continue to broadcast the notion that HIV infection is uniformly fatal, even though the C.D.C.'s own Kung Jong Lui and William Darrow, on whose research the morbid dogma is based, have disavowed such sweeping prognoses as egregious misapplications of their work. Their San Francisco study, published in the June 3, 1988, issue of *Science*, suggested only that, among a small and very high-risk group of HIV antibody-positive men, there was a 90 percent probability that between 39 percent and 100 percent would develop AIDS—a crap shoot in statistics, one never intended to be a prediction.

More hopeful yet, the New York Blood Center's head epidemiologist, Dr. Cladd Stevens, has found that 20 to 25 percent of the HIV antibody-positive men she studied for ten years show no measurable immune dysfunction. Yet an article in *The Washington Post* on HIV infection, "AIDS Virus Likely Fatal to All Infected," chose, like most media reports, to misinterpret hysterically Lui and Darrow's study. And it is such terrifying irresponsible misanalyses of the San Francisco numbers that Kramer and his disciples embrace. Members of ACT UP have even passed out copies of the *Post* article in the streets, like biblical tracts.

According to the Kinsey statistics—old, but the most reliable figures we have—American men whose homosexuality is "more than incidental" make up 13 to 38 percent of the male population. Today, that's between 11.2 million and 32.8 million men. For the sake of argument, let's accept the C.D.C.'s top figure of 1.5 million people

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who would test positive for HIV in the United States. Let's even assume that all of them are homosexuals—ignoring the hundreds of thousands who are heterosexual intravenous drug users, hemophiliacs, heterosexually infected women, infected babies. Even if all 1.5 million died off in a biologically improbable holocaust, a minimum of 9.7 million homosexually active men and 5.6 million lesbians (from Kinsey's minimum incidence of 6 percent homosexuality among women) would remain uninfected and sentenced to life.

Data on the homosexual population and AIDS will change in time and yield more truth—or less. But no imprecision in the numbers has sobered the gay apocalyptic for a moment. And their fantasy of wholesale mortality gives us yet a new excuse to desert the business of living and ignore the most vulnerable among us. Certainly when it comes to kids, even the homosexual heart for AIDS beats false; it beats only for men of a certain age, a certain color—in fact, a certain social class.

Since its founding in 1981, New York's pre-eminent AIDS service organization, the Gay Men's Health Crisis (G.M.H.C.), with an annual budget of almost \$11 million—and \$1 million more in material donations for new office furnishings last year—has never funded outreach of any kind to gay and lesbian youth. I've been told again and again the organization is fearful of being accused of proselytizing, that most vicious imputation afflicting homosexuals. So children die while we dance to the songs of bigots. The Hetrick-Martin Institute makes its services available to the 150,000 gay and lesbian adolescents that it estimates live in New York City. This group does provide AIDS outreach, but also administers a high school for homosexual kids harassed out of public schools, educates parents and teachers, runs support groups, conducts counseling, furnishes food, clothing and access to shelter to the adolescent homeless—almost all of whom are black or Latino. The institute had a staff last fiscal year of only twenty-four (including street counselors) and a mere \$755,000 budget, most of which came from the city and state. Only 18 percent of the money came from the generosity of homosexual men and women and their friends, whereas nearly three-quarters of G.M.H.C.'s budget currently comes from private donations and interest on the investment of excess income.

But even concerns more immediate than gay children fail to engage our self-interest. The battle against anti-gay violence languishes while assaults have soared specifically as a backlash to the disease. According to the New York City Gay and Lesbian Anti-Violence Project (A.V.P.), in the city alone there were 609 reported queer-bashings last year, reflecting a more than 300 percent increase since 1984, when AIDS stories began to saturate the media. Moreover, the A.V.P. reports that 90 percent of anti-gay and -lesbian crimes nationwide are never reported: Victims are afraid of being forced from the closet and demeaned by the police or made to face, in many states, the legally sanctioned discrimination of sodomy laws. Despite New York's huge gay and lesbian population at risk of assault, the A.V.P. could muster a budget last year of a mere \$150,000, just \$10,000 of which was donated by the community.

The epidemic of violence has been long, brutal and often fatal. David Wertheimer, director of A.V.P., describes the hatred vented in anti-gay attacks as "unimaginable." Speaking about a series of murders in New York's Chelsea neighborhood that began in 1985, he said, "The victim is commonly found stabbed twenty or thirty times, sometimes with his castrated penis stuffed in his mouth." Yet there has

not been a sustained outcry from the gay community against this violence.

Why are we so callous about these attacks? Can no threat but AIDS ignite our indignation? Why do we care so little, in fact, even for the sanctity of our relationships? Why is there no ACT UP specifically to protest laws forbidding same-sex marriage, banned in every state? Why no marathon protest at marriage license bureaus, no sit-ins at state legislatures, no class action suits? Why doesn't such brutality against our lives incite our anger? Are we such demoralized creatures that only the threat of extinction can stir our collective will? When a car wreck left Sharon Kowalski a quadriplegic, her homophobic father had her quarantined by court from Karen Thompson, her lover. Is the murder of their relationship at the hands of American law less of a horror than losing one's lover to a virus?

For the first time since the onslaught of the AIDS epidemic in the early 1980's, one crucial organization, the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, has begun to put AIDS in sane perspective. "We can't go on just living through AIDS," the task force's Urvashi Vaid has said. "We have to think in terms of living beyond it if this movement's going to survive." The organization has contained its AIDS expenditure at 15 percent of its total program budget and reinforced its primary work of gay liberation. Yet the task force has a staff of only ten, and some 400 occasional volunteers nationally. New York's G.M.H.C. has a staff of 105, plus 1,900 volunteers. The task force's 1988 budget was a humiliating \$860,000—more than \$10 million less than the budget of the G.M.H.C. This grotesque disparity is compounded over and over across the nation.

Even otherwise deeply closeted gay men and lesbians are avid in their testimonials about the need to wage war against the disease. But too many of these AIDS crusaders never go public over the right of homosexuals to something more than not dying. In my gym, a crossroads of Manhattan, a coterie of cultish gay men plastered ACT UP's "Silence = Death" logo everywhere in the facility and are given to working out in ACT UP or G.M.H.C. T-shirts—as though sporting such gym wear were a courageous act. But I've not seen one of the crowd so boldly advertise a more indistinguishably gay and therefore riskier issue. A certain interest in AIDS has become the trendy code for suggesting one's homosexuality without declaring it, what being a bachelor and an artiste used to suggest.

The ruse that confronts us is that the fight against AIDS and the struggle for gay rights are the same. Last year, a gay Chicago newspaper headlined, "Riverside [California] Supports Gay Rights." The story below read: "The Riverside City Council unanimously approved an ordinance that bans discrimination against people with AIDS." It's in this very sort of thing that we're deceived. What good do those laws do for most lesbians, who certainly are not suffering from AIDS? Or for the average homosexual or bisexual man, who, whatever our hysteria, would not test positive for HIV either? Or for those who have been exposed to the virus but are asymptomatic, not all of whom will sicken and die, however fantastic the latest rumors? What's the benefit of such legislation to gay men with AIDS themselves if the excuse to abuse their rights isn't AIDS but homosexuality? Any benefit that gay men and lesbians get from the legislated rights of people with AIDS is second-handed grace: You have to claim to be dying to receive it.

But our failure is far more iniquitous than mere dereliction. For, though the constituencies of gay rights and AIDS activism may overlap, the politics—as conceived—are often violently incompat-

ible. At the October 1987 National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights, an uncommon show of militant self-respect among homosexuals, at least a half-million of us paraded not just against AIDS but for all the rights and privileges that heterosexuals enjoy. Yet, even we rallied, I sat in a meeting of national AIDS activists who fretted over the possibility that the event would become a political embarrassment for AIDS lobbyists. The symbolic public same-sex wedding the Saturday before the march, a demonstration for spousal rights, was a particular sore point. The director of a powerful national AIDS umbrella organization especially complained that when the wedding hit the news a disgusted Congress would renege on AIDS funding. She and her colleagues still hoped desperately that last-minute maneuvers would kill the thing—treachery battering away gay liberation.

Some angry lesbians question whether bourgeois gay men ever wanted more than comfortably closeted sex anyway—and now wonder if they want more than a quick cure for AIDS in order to get back to the old days. Some ask more bitterly yet whether men, who demand center stage for AIDS, would sacrifice a pittance of their politics or pleasures if lesbians were the ones dying. Yet, there always have been gay men who've wanted more than sex and obsequious privacy, whose cause has been politically radical and impolite. They've been largely shouted down by the politics of this epidemic. And the more the AIDS movement divorces itself from the demands of gay rights, the more it becomes a route to respect for homosexuals not open to unapologetic gay activists. AIDS is the cause celebre, and, insidiously, we are drawn in, chumming with the Liz Taylors and even the William F. Buckley Jr.s. (who've contributed charitably to the fight against AIDS, though Bill has called for tattooing infected gay men's asses). Gossip columnists bold-face AIDS activists' names among mentions of the socially

registered. New York's artsy Bessie Committee even gave ACT UP a performance citation last year for its street protests, unlikely applause for genuine revolutionaries.

But even homophobes who'd never want to see a homosexual holding a lover's hand, especially in front of the children, can cry (and contribute) at the thought of so many gay men dying. They're with us on AIDS: Dying and preoccupied with dying, we're less of a threat, our radical potential diverted to mere survival. Through a marriage with disease we've arrived. But to live with our apostasy we've also had to hide from the damning truth that our patrons in the fight against AIDS are seldom dear friends when we're not being sick, just homosexual.

It isn't a virus that for centuries has deprived us gay men and lesbians of our freedom, nor is it this epidemic that now most destroys our lives. Nor is it bigotry. It's our own shame, a morbid failure of self-respect and sane, self-righteous anger. If we care about nothing but AIDS now, it is because identifying with sexually transmitted death plays to some dark belief that we deserve it.

In the midst of death, we are confronted with a choice of life that so far we've only dallied with, the terrible responsibility of living free. For wholeness demands more than arguing with bigots, more than crying for acceptance, more than fighting against disease. It asks that we abandon selfishness, self-pity and every compromise of our self-worth. It insists that we nurture the dying, more selflessly than we ever have, but care as much for the promise of life. It compels us to understand that silence equals death not only in the middle of an epidemic, but that it always has killed us and will continue its genocide when AIDS is gone. And wholeness forces us to forsake AIDS as our dark obsession, as the sum of our lives. For this disease is at least as fatal to our hearts as to our blood. Our devotion to it will kill us more surely than a virus ever could.

March on Austin

DANBURG FILES BILL TO LEGALIZE STREET SKATING
from *The Houston Post*

State Representative Debra Danburg, D-Montrose, no novice to the ups and downs of urban skating, wants to upgrade roller-skating to the status of cycling and other recognized means of travel.

A bill filed by Danburg would make it legal not only for thrill-seekers to glide down the streets of Houston on weekends but for anyone to commute to work on their roller skates.

"A lot of her constituents skate as a primary way of traveling to and from work," said Donna Poston, an aide to Danburg. "They are currently doing that and being ticketed—for something that's hurting nobody."

The bill would make it legal to roller-skate on the public roadways and would require skaters to abide by the same traffic rules as cyclists.

The proposed law would override a 40-year-old Houston ordinance that prohibits skating on city streets except at crosswalks and has triggered demonstrations by the Urban Animals, a group of adults who don skates and kneepads on weekends to cruise downtown at night.

Danburg, who describes herself as a "pretty lousy skater" but one who likes to travel in the Urban Animals pack, said there ought to be a statewide standard of roller-skating safety.

"Sure, I think skating is safe," she said, "if you obey all the traffic laws, stay with the flow of traffic and remain on the far right-hand side. Then it's as safe as bicycles."

"QUOTABLES"

From *The New York Times*

"'We the People' tell the government what to do, it doesn't tell us. 'We the people' are the driver—the government is the car. And we decide where it should go, and by what route, and how fast."

—Ronald Reagan, in his farewell speech, January 11, 1989

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From *Testimonies: A Collection of Lesbian Coming Out Stories*. Alyson Publications, 1988

"Coming out is not a singular, one-time event. Whenever we step from being another face in the crowd toward being an individual who has a name and a personality, we're again faced with the decision of coming out. And again and again, as long as we continue to have the defiance to exist. We don't all dye a purple streak down the middle of our hair, quit our job, start a 'womyn'-owned business and secede from the patriarchy by embracing lesbian separatism, although I know one dyke who did."

—Liz O'Lexa, author of *You Must Not Be Doing It Right*