

Montrose Activity Center

NEWSLETTER

May 1989

The Montrose Activity Center is a nonprofit 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.

TEXAS HUMAN RIGHTS FOUNDATION SPONSORS 2ND CHALLENGE TO 21.06; LAWSUIT ALLEGES PENAL STATUTE VIOLATES TEXAS STATE CONSTITUTION

The Texas Human Rights Foundation announces the filing of a lawsuit in Travis County District Court on April 12, 1989, challenging the constitutionality of Section 21.06 of the Texas Penal Code, which criminalizes the private sexual relations between consenting adults of the same gender.

The case was filed against the State of Texas as defendant, by five plaintiffs: Linda Morales of Houston, Tom Doyal of Austin, Patricia ("Pat") Cramer of Austin, Charlotte Taft of Dallas and John Thomas of Dallas.

The five plaintiffs are represented by Austin attorney J. Patrick Wiseman with the Texas Human Rights Foundation (THRF) acting as "of Counsel."

The lawsuit seeks to have 21.06 declared unconstitutional and barred from enforcement on the grounds that it violates the plaintiffs' rights under the Bill of Rights of the Texas Constitution and under the common law of privacy as recognized by the courts in Texas. The plaintiffs allege that they are all practicing homosexuals who deeply fear prosecution under 21.06. Specifically, they contend in their petition that the statute:

1. unconstitutionally criminalizes their sexual relations with other consenting adults of the same gender;
2. encourages disruption of their family relationships, thereby causing them alienation and separation from their families;
3. limits their employment opportunities, thus requiring them to tailor their career choices to avoid discrimination in employment;
4. encourages hate crimes against gay men and lesbians, tacitly condoning such practices as "Gay bashing" and verbal assaults;
5. encourages discrimination against gay men and lesbians in the judicial system, and harassment of them by law enforcement officials; and
6. subjects gay men and lesbians to emotional stress because of the state-sanctioned stigma attached to the nature of their private consensual relations.

The plaintiffs contend that 21.06 violates the Texas constitutional guarantees of privacy, equal rights and due process, the Texas equal rights amendment, and the Texas common law right to privacy.

In commenting on the reasons for the lawsuit, Houston attorney David Bryan, the legal director of THRF, said:

"The State of Texas is one of just six states in this country that criminalizes only the intimate and private consenting relations of two men or two women. The rationale given to support this criminalization is frequently that the majority has the right to dictate its view of morality to the populace—precisely the same specious reasoning used in this country until 1967 to criminalize interracial marriages. To borrow words from Justice Blackmun of the U.S. Supreme Court, it is precisely because the issue raised by this 21.06 lawsuit touches the heart of what makes individuals what they are, that we should be especially sensitive to the rights of those whose choices upset the majority."

THRF is a statewide non-profit, public interest education foundation chartered by the State of Texas. In its 13 years of existence, it has successfully sponsored litigation resulting in the free speech rights of gay and lesbian students at Texas A&M University in College Station and at Texas Tech University in Lubbock to receive official university recognition and funding. THRF has sponsored the 7-year challenge of 21.06 filed in federal court in Dallas in 1979, in the case known as *Baker vs. Wade*, which weaved its way through two initially successful court rulings, to be reversed in 1985 in a bitterly divided 9-7 vote of the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit sitting *en banc*. That challenge of 21.06 was brought under federal constitutional grounds, in contrast to the state constitutional grounds alleged in the new challenge of 21.06. In the federal district court's opinion in *Baker*, Judge Jerry Buchmeyer made findings of fact that there are at least 500,000 gay males in Texas and approximately 130,000 to 200,000 lesbians in Texas. He also found that no basis exists to assume that criminal laws like 21.06 reduce the number of gay men and lesbians in society, since persons do not choose their sexual orientation.

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COMMUNITY NEWS.....COMMUNITY NEWS

TEXAS LESBIAN CONFERENCE: JUNE 2-4

The second annual Texas Lesbian Conference (TLC) will take place on June 2-4, 1989 at Astro Village Hotel. The emphasis of the conference will be on "celebrating diversity" by bringing together women of all races, economic backgrounds, political identities, spiritualities and ages to share in our lives as women who love women.

Two native Texas lesbians will keynote the event and over 1000 women are expected to attend. Gloria Anzaldua, chicana, tejana and co-editor of The Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color, will keynote the Saturday morning session. Her address will focus on the borderland experience: caught between two cultures, an alien in both.

Capturing the social diversity of Texas communities, Sunday presenter and lesbian novelist Antoinette Azolakov explores the contrasting views of the feminist and the non-feminist and of the women in traditional versus non-traditional occupations. Her published works include Cass and the Stone Butch, Skiptrace and the Contactees Die Young.

The objectives of the conference are to create a network of lesbians

to facilitate communication, promote grass-root organizations and increase visibility.

The conference is being produced by All Mujeres Interested in Getting Active (AMIGA) and Womynspace of Houston. AMIGA is a lesbian latina organization committed to increasing the visibility of latinas and which works toward civil rights for all. Womynspace of Houston is a non-hierarchical feminist organization founded to create an alternative space for womyn in chemical free, women only, supportive environment.

For more information on TLC '89 write: Box 980134, Houston, TX 77098 or call 713-520-5667. A TLC volunteer orientation is scheduled for Saturday, May 6, all interested women should call or write. A press conference is tentatively scheduled for Sunday, June 4 at 4:00 PM, in the Texas Lesbian Conference Hospitality Suite at the Astro Village Hotel.

TLC '89

Box 980134

Houston, TX 77098-0134

713-520-5667

GAY LESBIAN POLITICAL CAUCUS REPORT

by Ray Hill

As you get this you will either be preparing to go to Austin for the March on Austin for Lesbian and Gay Equal Rights, or you will have just returned. If the former is true, pack. I'll see you there. If the latter is true, get our your checkbook. Now is the time to join the Gay/Lesbian Political Caucus. Marchers are great starters. You go and get all fired up and return ready to get down to business. Business is the work of gaining equal treatment for our people in a prejudiced society. The first order of business is Gay and Lesbian Pride Week. This is the twentieth anniversary of the Stonewall Rebellion. Twenty years ago a handful of dragqueens and street punks stood together at a bar on Christopher Street in New York City. They announced, "Enough is enough. We'll not tolerate any more raids on gay and lesbian bars." Over the following three days their numbers grew and their determination developed. Mayor John Lindsey began negotiations and the rioter's demands were met. That victory is celebrated by our community each year as Gay and Lesbian Pride Week. A movement has developed from that event.

Few of our people have taken the time to study that history and many still think our celebrations are unworthy of their support. Those people have not yet addressed their guilt and shame over being gay or lesbian. I remember Houston's first Gay Pride March. It cost \$600.00 for less than 100 men and women to march from Simpson's Diner to Texas Avenue and Main Street and back to Fannin. Some said we spent \$3.00 a head to make fools of ourselves. We had an ever fewer number of spectators. That march occurred the last Sunday in June, 1976. The Caucus was almost one year old.

In 1979 we moved from Main Street to Westheimer and over 20,000 spectators viewed the 300+ participants in the parade. By 1984 there were 80,000 marchers and spectators and that was our best attended year. The numbers have steadily declined since 1984 with a slight increase observed last year. Coming on the heels of the March on Austin, it is reasonable to expect a good turnout this year.

But marchers and parades only change our feelings about ourselves and one another. Politics change the world we live in. That's why you should join the Caucus.

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

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

[The Threat to Broadcasters]

Jesse Helms might let Mr. Rushdie write what he likes, but reading it will get us a \$10,000 fine and two years in prison.

It is easy to bash the Ayatollah. Especially when you don't have a price on your head.

It's a little more risky to point out that America has its own Ayatollahs—sworn enemies of fundamental rights and liberties. Especially when your broadcast license is at stake.

But since everybody's coming out against censorship, this may be the safest time to do so.

DO-IT-YOURSELF CENSORSHIP

On February 27, 1989, out Pacifica station in Berkeley, California, read passages from Salman Rushdie's novel, *The Satanic Verses* on the air.

This wasn't a stunt. It was KPFA's "Morning Reading," a 40-year-old programming tradition at the nation's oldest listener-supported radio station.

This morning, however, was different.

For one thing, we were threatened by anonymous callers. Threats we took seriously because two Berkeley bookstores had been fire-bombed earlier in the day.

But the reading also was different from almost all others in our history because it was censored.

We felt compelled to omit certain words and phrases from the narrative because otherwise we would have run afoul of vague and arbitrary federal regulations.

A single complaint might mean tens of thousands of dollars in legal fees, loss of our broadcast licenses, prosecution by the Department of Justice, a hefty fine and two years in federal prison.

This is how censorship works, here in America. It's self-censorship, a matter of knowing that one must keep on the safe side of an ill-defined line or risk an avalanche of official harassment.

Everybody operates this way, from the giant TV networks to a student-run FM station. Everybody says it's better to be safe than sorry.

It affects everything you see and hear, from cultural programming to news reports.

It muffles the give-and-take of our democracy. It narrows our alternatives. It silences dissent.

Is this news to you? We rest our case.

THE HELMS AMENDMENT

The attack on your right to hear the new and the interesting began in the early 1980's, when fundamentalists began to besiege the Federal Communications Commission with complaints.

It culminated in an amendment to the FCC's appropriation, written by Sen. Jesse Helms, forbidding the broadcast of material he defines as "indecent."

The power of this word, "indecent," has so far prevented any network news program from telling you the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution is under attack.

They quietly oppose the Helms Amendment but don't want to look like they're defending vulgar language and so forth. So it's left to us to point out the implications.

While the First Amendment protects Mr. Rushdie and the bookstores, the Helms Amendment strips broadcasters of the right to free speech. Americans can write what they like, but we can't read it and you can't hear it.

It's also worth noting that vague and arbitrary pitfalls like "indecent" make the most powerful censorship weapons. The definition can always change to suit the political aims of those in charge—while the cost of defending oneself from such a charge is enough to drive any non-commercial, listener-supported station off the air, quick as a bomb.

WHAT THE FIRST AMENDMENT IS FOR

The First Amendment spells out the difference between, say Pacifica radio and Radio Tehran.

The Ayatollah Khomeini would erase that difference in the name of all that is holy. Senator Jesse Helms would erase it in the name of all that is holy to him.

It's dangerous to disagree with either of these gentlemen. But we think it's clearly necessary.

Bigotry and intolerance are the enemies of freedom.

Before we strike poses abroad, let's make sure our rights are secure right here at home.

Thank you.

In a contest between the Helms Amendment and the First Amendment I support free speech. That's the point of the Rushdie episode, isn't it? Here's my tax-deductible support for your efforts to keep the airwaves open to all:

\$5 ___ \$20 ___ \$40 ___ \$80 ___ more ___

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, ST, ZIP _____

PACIFICA RADIO

2207 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley, California 94704
or KPFT, 419 Lovett, Houston, TX 77006

CELEBRATING 40 YEARS OF RADIO WITH VISION: KPFA and KPFB in Berkeley, KPFB in Los Angeles, KPFT in Houston, WBAI in New York, WPFW in Washington D.C.

GAY/LESBIANPRIDEWEEK89

H O U S T O N

Stonewall: 20 A Generation of Pride

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

MARCH MINUTES

After repeated tries the March minutes were not made available to the editor.

NEXT PRIDE MEETING

Thursday, May 25, 7:00 PM

800 Rosine, 2nd Floor

PWA Coalition Office

The Guide

Houston Gay & Lesbian

Pride Week '89

The Official Publication of GLPW is being printed.

Non-Profit organizations will be listed for free.

Business can show their pride and support by advertising.

Show Your Pride...

mail the completed coupon to: GLPW

901 West Alabama

Houston, TX 77006



AD



Organizational Listing

Name of Business /Organization: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Contact Person: _____

Phone: _____

THE WEEK

JUNE 16-25

The following is the official calendar at present, there will be some changes and additions:

FRIDAY JUNE 16

Who: Metropolitan Community Church of the Resurrection

What: Spiritual Renewal

Where: 1919 Decatur

When: 7:15 PM

Cost: Free

Who: Kindred Spirits

What: Talent Night, Nancy Ford

Where: 4902 Richmond

When: 9:00 PM

Cost: Free

SATURDAY JUNE 17

Who: Frontrunners

What: Bar to Bar Fun Run

Where: Start - Venture-N
2923 South Main

When: 12:00 Noon

Cost: \$10.00

Who: PFLAG

What: "What will they say when I tell them I'm Gay?"

Where: Grace Lutheran
2515 Waugh

When: 2:00 PM

Cost: Free

Who: Fathers (Parents)
Parents Houston

What: Old Fashion Picnic

Where: TBA

When: TBA

Cost: TBA

Who: AMIGA

What: Festival de Cine
(Film Festival)

Where: Inklings, 1846 Richmond

When: 5:00 PM

Cost: Free

Who: MCCR

What: Dinner/Dance Banquet,
with Rev. Troy Perry

Where: Multi-service Center
1475 West Gray

When: 7:00 PM

Cost: TBA

THE WEEK JUNE 16-25

SUNDAY JUNE 18

Who: MCCR
What: AIDS Remembrance Chapel Dedication
Where: 1919 Decatur
When: 10:45 AM
Cost: Free

Who: Dignity Houston
What: Riverboat Cruise Island Queen
Where: Allen's Landing Commerce and Main
When: 7:00 PM to 10:00 PM
Cost: \$15.00

Who: Houston Women's Softball League
What: La cage Aux Folles II (Variety Show)
Where: The Ranch 9150 South Main
When: 8:00 PM
Cost: \$3.00

MONDAY JUNE 19

Who: Montrose Counseling Center
What: "Gay Proud & Sober," a film
Where: 900 Lovett # 203
When: 6:00 PM
Cost: Free

Who: Montrose Clinic
What: "What Can Be Done if You Test Positive"
Where: 1200 Richmond
When: 7:00 PM
Cost: Free

TUESDAY JUNE 20

Who: Montrose Clinic
What: "What Can Be Done if You Test Positive"
Where: 1200 Richmond
When: 1:00 PM
Cost: Free

Who: Montrose Counseling Center
What: "Gay Proud & Sober," a film
Where: 900 Lovett 203
When: 6:00 PM
Cost: Free

TUESDAY JUNE 20 (CONT)

Who: PWA Coalition
What: Self Empowerment for HIV+ people with Charles Caulfield
Where: TBA
When: TBA
Cost: TBA

Who: AIDS Foundation Houston
What: TBA
Where: TBA
When: TBA
Cost: TBA

WEDNESDAY JUNE 21

Who: Gay Lesbian Pride Week
What: Cultural Night
Where: Venture-N/The Far Side 2923 South Main
When: 7:00 PM
Cost: Free

Who: Montrose Counseling Center
What: Women of Note with Mary Hellen Merzbacher
Where: 900 Lovett 203
When: 7:00 PM
Cost: Free

THURSDAY JUNE 22

Who: Montrose Activity Center
What: Gay and Lesbian Texas History Evening
Where: Multi-service Center, 1475 West Gray
When: 7:00 PM
Cost: Free

Who: Interfaith Alliance
What: National Day of Remembrance
Where: Multi-service Center 1475 West Gray
When: 8:30 PM
Cost: Free

FRIDAY JUNE 23

Who: The Group (Theater Workshop)
What: "Ten Percent Review"
Where: TBA
When: 8:00 PM
Cost: TBA

SATURDAY JUNE 24

Who: Gay/Lesbian Pride Week
What: Stonewall Day Celebration with Sandy Van Private Pavilion Party 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM
Where: Astroworld, 9001 Kirby
When: 10:00 AM to 10:00 PM
Cost: \$9.00 advance

Who: HWSL
What: All Star Game Houston vs. Dallas
Where: Memorial Park, Field 1
When: 11:00 AM
Cost: FREE

Who: Lone Star Symphonic Band, with Sandy Van, Montrose Singers and Romanovsky & Phillips
What: Stonewall Day Concert
Where: Multi-service Center, 1475 West Gray
When: 7:00 PM to 10:00 PM
Cost: \$10.00 Advance \$12.00 Door

Who: Gay Lesbian Hispanic Unidos
What: Baile '89
Where: Astroville Hotel Kirby & South Loop
When: 9:00 PM to 2:00 AM
Cost: \$15.00 Advance \$20.00 Door

**Stonewall: 20
A Generation of Pride**

SUNDAY JUNE 24

Who: Gay/Lesbian Pride Week
What: The Parade
Where: on Westheimer from Woodhead to Montrose
When: 5:30 PM
Cost: Free

Who: Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus
What: The Rally
Where: TBA
When: TBA
Cost: TBA

Montrose Activity Center

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 10:00 PM, First Unitarian Church, 2510 Fannin. and the reading group at 4:00 PM on the second Sunday of each month at member's houses.

MCCR is offering a free Sunday shuttle to the church for their morning worship service. The shuttle's stops are at the following places: Montrose (Disco) Kroger, 9:00 AM and 10:00 AM; Safeway on Alabama, 9:15 AM and 10:15 AM; Across from 1400 Richmond, 9:30 AM and 10:30 AM, for more information call 861-9149.

Mondays

Womyn's Music, KTRU 91.7 FM, 6:00 PM to 7:00 PM

Gay Fathers meet at Dignity Center, 3217 Fannin 8:00 PM, except for May 29 (Memorial Day). For more information call 522-6766

Tuesdays

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

Thursdays

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.

Fridays

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

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.

3 Wednesday

Gay & Lesbian Political Caucus meeting. Major topic Montrose wide voter registration drive week of May 7, PWA Coalition Offices, 800 Rosine, 7:30 PM.

4 Thursday

Gay Parents Support Group, will meet at different locations call 666-1616 for more information.

6 Saturday

Texas Lesbian Conference training, at Inklings, 1846 Richmond, 6:00 AM to 8:00 PM.

8 Monday

Montrose Activity Center board meeting, open to public, will meet at Montrose Public library, 4100 Montrose, 7:30 PM, or call 529-1223 for more information.

11 Thursday

1st Annual Houston Conference on AIDS in America to be held at Hyatt Regency. Fee for registration is \$275. For more information contact International Meeting Managers, 4550 Post Oak, Suite 248, 77027 or 965-0566.

13 Saturday

Inklings, Owners Birthday Bash, Pokey and Annise are celebrating their May birthdays with a special sale for their special customers, 10% off on anything in the store, 1846 Richmond, call 521-3369 for more information or to find out how really old they are.

16 Tuesday

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

17 Wednesday

Gay & Lesbian Political Caucus meeting, discussion on sexually explicit material as exploitive of women, and protecting First Amendment Rights, PWA Coalition Offices, 800 Rosine 7:30 PM

18 Thursday

Gay Parents Support Group, will meet at different locations; call 666-1616 for more information.

Gay Urban Truth Squad (GUTS) regularly monthly meeting 7:30 PM at PWA Coalition, 800 Rosine, second floor.

20 Saturday

Inklings, Owners Birthday Bash, Pokey and Annise are celebrating their May birthdays with a special sale for their special customers, 10% off on anything in the store, 1846 Richmond, call 521-3369 for more information or to find out how really old they are.

22 Monday

"What's it Worth!" benefit for Gay/Lesbian Pride Week, call 861-6495 for more information

25 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

28 Sunday

AIDS Candlelight Memorial, 5th Annual International event, please listen to KPFT or local newspapers 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 see page 5 and 6

..CALENDAR..CALENDAR..

S	M	Tu	W	Th	F.	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

THE LONE STAR SYMPHONIC BAND: A TEN YEAR HISTORY

by Thaddeus Coverdale

Way back in 1978, a group of musicians began playing together to have fun and share their lifestyles which were decidedly different from many of the other musicians they knew or played with. This small group of musicians began meeting with more regularity and under the aegis of Clint Moncrief, Rue Star, Rufus Chaney and a few others, decided to create a Gay Band under the auspices of the Montrose Activity Center. This band became known as the Montrose Marching Band and they had their first rehearsal April 10, 1979 at the service building in Cherryhurst Park. The primary objectives of the band were to have fun and play music and entertain the community.

Let's return to 1979 and see some of the milestones that the band has achieved. In April of 1979 the band began planning for their trip, in October, to the now famous first March on Washington and was one of the few marching bands to lead the parade to the Capitol that day.

Well, 1980 proved to be year of change and discontent as often happens with any volunteer organization. The band dwindled and finally disbanded only to be revived in 1981 by the now infamous Andy Mills, our conductor Emeritus. Andy Mills created an atmosphere of excitement that is still talked about today. The Band played one of their most successful concerts that year at the Tower Theater with 75 musicians and the Montrose Singers with 70 voices. Other concerts of note were "The Montrose Symphonic Band with the Bone Sisters" and in 1982 "The Fred Pacz Memorial Concert." Late in 1983 the Band experienced another upheaval and as a result the loss of about 50% of the bands finest musicians. Andy continued to pump up the confidence of the remaining musicians throughout 1983 helping the newly formed Lesbian and Gay Bands of America plan for their spectacular Gay Night at the Bowl in Los Angeles for the following year, 1984. LGBA was formed in 1983 by New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Houston, Dallas and Minneapolis-St. Paul. As 1984 progressed, more tension developed in the Montrose Band and Andy Mills stepped down as conductor.

Never a group to give up, the Band came under the directorship of Bob Morgan in 1985 and continued the fine tradition. Mr. Morgan had been a trombone player in the Band, and became conductor for approximately 2 years. The Band played several sold-out concerts that year, most notably the Gay Pride Week Concert with guest George

Thaddeus Coverdale is Board member of the Lone Star Symphonic Band and in planing co-chair of Gay/Lesbian Pride Week.

The Montrose Activity Center Newsletter is printed by:

AFX Copy
11832 Airline
Houston, TX 77037
445-2679

Their help has made this publication possible.

Greanias, City Councilman, reciting the narration to Aaron Copeland's Linclon Portrait. Also a highlight that year was the band's 1st and only to date performance at Miller Outdoor Theater, "The Teddy Bears Picnic" with guest hostess Mary June Vandiver and 7 playful Teddy Bears. In 1986, Mr. Morgan returned to school full-time to pursue his degree in music and turned over the duties of conducting to Mr. Jerry Bach, who led several exciting concerts to fulfill that season.

In 1987 the band and community were pleased at the return of Andy Mills. By this time, however, AIDS had begun taking its toll both emotionally and physically. The once large 75 member organization had been reduced to 30 members, some of whom were ill even then and continued to play. Andy conducted a very emotional and successful benefit concert that year in memory of all band members who had departed; as guests we were proud to have Theresa Mauney and Marsha Carlton.

In 1988 after many tragic losses, the Band literally took a hiatus from performing. The names of Dennis Dunwoody, Bob Morgan and Clint Moncrief are just a few of the fine people and musicians we had lost. Andy Mills decided he needed to move to Los Angeles and so in April the band and Mary's, a long time benefactor of the Band, gave a farewell party to our conductor. Andy was recognized for his long dedication to the Band and designated "Conductor Emeritus" for life. The Band did continue to be a vital part of the community and played a very touching concert for the Names Project that spring under the baton of Ralph Gutierrez. At Christmas in 1988 the Band, under the direction of Roy Cisneros, was joined by Heartsong, The Montrose Singers and the MCCR Sanctuary Choir for a very successful concert at St. Thomas University.

I personally have been in the band for 6 years now, and I can tell all of the community and all of those musicians out there with horns in the closet that I am proud to be apart of a Gay & Lesbian organization that has provided so much for so many. Come out and play with us and be proud of your abilities and your gayness. We love all regular and irregular persons and welcome you into our ranks. We rehearse proudly at MCCR Monday nights from 7:00 PM to 10:00 PM. We also welcome any auxiliary groups who would like to get involved.

The Band thanks you the community for 10 years of support and can only continue as long as there is that support. So next time you see an advertisement for a concert, come hear us! You don't know what you are missing.

AIDS

Legal Assistance

1-800-828-6417

(in Austin call 479-8473)

Monday-Friday 10 AM-4PM

A Free Legal Counseling & Referral Service

Employment • Estate & Financial Planning • Insurance

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A Project of

Texas Human Rights Foundation

2201 N. Lamar Blvd., #203

Austin, Texas 78705

Funded in part by a grant from the Texas Equal Access to Justice Foundation

COMMENTARY....NATIONAL COMMENTARY

INTERNALIZED HOMOPHOBIA: A DEMON WITHIN

by Rex Reece, Ph.D.

from *Frontiers*

Much has been said about "internalized homophobia" in the gay and lesbian community. It's such a constant, so deeply imbedded in our psyches, so insidious, so pervasive and so potentially damaging to individual lives and community progress that repeated efforts to become aware of its existence and effects are necessary.

Internalized homophobia refers to the negative attitudes about homosexuality that the majority culture holds and that we as lesbians or gays have accepted as our own, to whatever degree. We may be able to directly identify examples of such values in ourselves and others, or such internalized attitudes and beliefs may not be conscious, yet affect our behavior to considerable degrees.

We all know that, except for isolated pockets of enlightenment, the world is rather uncomfortable with homosexuality, to say the least. In the majority of places (or minds), the prevailing judgement probably remains that same-sex attraction is sick, sinful or at least unfortunate.

We were faced with these attitudes from the beginning of our lives and are still confronted with them daily; they are perhaps no less stressful to us for their sometimes covert expression. Typically, our parents' discomfort with homosexuality did not allow us to go to them for comfort and relief from the pain and fear that somehow this dreaded homosexuality had something to do with us.

Now we go about our lives interacting daily with others' oppressive "heterosexual assumption," living with the pervasive and subtle tension that the clear awareness in others of our homosexuality would likely be of note. Of course, many of us have suffered and do suffer much more overt abuse because of our homosexuality.

But here, the point is that because we grew up and live in a homophobic culture we're vulnerable to believing some of the same things about homosexuality that the majority culture does. That can range from gross stereotypes that most of us have grown beyond like: "All gay men are effeminate; all lesbians act like men," to less obvious reflections of negative attitudes about homosexuality like "What I do in bed is no one's business."

Internalized homophobia can affect not only one's decision not to come out to one's family, but also, through unconscious processes, block one's ability to get involved in relationships for fear of having confront one's family with a gay identity. No matter how much work we've done, how liberated, conscious or self-accepting we are of our homosexuality, we still are likely to find residuals of internalized homophobia deep in our souls from time to time.

The more obvious manifestations are troublesome, draining power from the community. Examples include the individual who blatantly would prefer to be heterosexual: "If there were a pill, I'd take it," or the closeted lesbian or gay in a powerful position who abuses or discriminates against others of the same orientation in the organization.

Internalized homophobia is likely a contributing culprit in most "closet cases," and its release is a factor in most coming out issues, no matter the level or degree. How often have we heard or said: "I don't feel I have to flaunt my lifestyle" or "I don't want to hurt them [my

family]." Such sentiments reflect, to some degree, the larger culture's pressure to keep a supposedly shameful thing secret, and secrets contribute to feelings of shame.

Internalized homophobia is reflected in our derogatory, stereotypical judgments and comments about ourselves, each other and our community: "What can you expect from a faggot, anyway?" "The gay community is too superficial—only interested in sex, style and status; no one believes in caring, commitment and continuity" or "We brought AIDS on ourselves; it's nature's way of teaching us a lesson."

Internalized homophobia certainly affects our intimate relationships and the way we feel about ourselves. Growing up feeling "different" and "bad" can contribute to a vague core feeling, even as an adult, of "there's something wrong with me." Such a somewhat subconscious negative self-concept can create difficulty when one wants to get involved in emotionally committed relationships: "I can't let anyone get too close; they'll see my basic fundamental flaws and reject me." This attitude can sometimes partially explain the mysterious inability that some gays and lesbians experience of not being able to find a lover.

Internalized homophobia can affect not only one's decision not to come out to one's family, but also, through unconscious processes, block one's ability to get involved in relationships for fear of having to confront one's family with a gay identity.

How does one root out internalized homophobia? It helps to recognize the power the dominant attitudes of our culture have to affect how we learned to feel about ourselves and how we see ourselves now. We must see it as constant, ongoing issue, both in terms of the past and present and how it impacts our community, and our public and private lives. It helps to be open to questioning the homophobic aspects of our own and others comments and behaviors.

Being involved in organizations, activities and friendship networks where, among other purposes, there is permission and encouragement to support and confront each other's homophobic attitudes can be beneficial. Seeing it in others sometimes helps us see it in ourselves. Sometimes our attitudes are so comfortable and familiar to ourselves, it would never occur to us to question them without the benefit of another's perspective. We must be open to considering a different way of seeing ourselves.

As mentioned earlier, sometimes homophobic feelings have been internalized so early and deeply that we are unconscious of their existence or effect. Such attitudes can be a contributing factor to a poor self-concept, self-destructive behaviors, loneliness and isolation, chemical addictions, compulsive behaviors, depression, anxiety, relationship failures and sexual problems.

Negative attitudes about homosexuality predominate in the world. We as gay men and lesbians have been tremendously affected by such values and continue to be daily. Recognition of our vulnerability to accepting homophobic perspectives is necessary in order to examine our own assumptions and behaviors. Such work is beneficial to the lesbian and gay community and rewarding to the personal lives of the people involved in such a process.

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BITTER HARVEST: AIDS AND THE ARTS

THE LIST OF WORKS LENGTHIENS, SHEDDING LIGHT, SOMETIMES SURPRISINGLY, ON US AS A SOCIETY

by Michael Kimmelman
from *The New York Times*

It would hardly be an exaggeration to describe American culture in the late 1980's as art in the era of AIDS. Art has confronted AIDS the way people confront AIDS—with fear, anger, sorrow, defiance and confusion. In a country that idolizes youth and health, AIDS has struck at the very heart of the American self-image. Art about AIDS reveals something raw in the American soul.

That art has illuminated our capacity as a nation to be both self-absorbed and also selfless; it exposes the cruel barriers we erect between healthy and sick, rich and poor. Human suffering has inspired some of our greatest art, but in the midst of a crisis, traditional judgments of quality seem less important. Indeed, the terms in which discussions about culture and AIDS have been cast are unusually and resolutely pragmatic—essentially, not what AIDS does for art but what art can do about AIDS.

The body of work in the performing and visual arts that refers specifically to AIDS is growing exponentially. It ranges from Larry Kramer's impassioned play "The Normal Heart" to the quietly moving Names Project quilt that is like a giant field of cloth tombstones; from the late photographer Robert Mapplethorpe's self-portrait with a skull's-head walking stick to Ross Bleckner's metaphorical and eerie paintings of shields and starry skies; from the television movie "Intimate Contact" to "Beirut," Alan Bowne's nightmarish fantasy play; from a poster by the activist artist group Gran Fury, declaring "With 42,000 Dead, Art Is Not Enough," to Masami Teraoka's deceptively elegant watercolors in the style of ukiyo-e prints. Cancer kills more people but has engendered virtually no art. One must struggle to think of an art form that has not been affected by AIDS.

Many artists have seen it as their duty to rouse Americans, especially those who, when it comes to AIDS, might prefer to sit passively by. This is a country that prides itself on compassion but prefers that sick die unobtrusively. In response to the discrimination and indifference that people with AIDS have repeatedly encountered, artists have called on Americans to live up to their stated ideals. Not surprisingly, these efforts have often revealed the limitations of art in guiding a society's conscience.

The crisis has not always brought forth the best from our artists and cultural leaders. AIDS is increasingly an affliction of poor people and minorities, but artists still treat it principally in terms of middle-class white men. Even those television dramas that have tried to deal seriously with the issue tend to shy away from the demographic facts, preferring as their central characters hemophiliac children infected through blood transfusions. The film industry has so far demonstrated an almost complete lack of interest, with references to AIDS primarily limited to movies shocking for their callousness and cruelty.

The artistic response to the crisis cannot be measured simply by compiling all the work that is explicitly about the pandemic. AIDS has become so familiar a part of life in the 80's that artists need not even refer to it by name for their audiences to understand the allusion. Across

the cultural spectrum, a new wariness toward sex has certainly been influenced by AIDS. Often it is the very absence of a reference to AIDS that can be most telling.

The art about AIDS that has emerged since the syndrome was first diagnosed in 1981, but especially over the last five years, has not been concerned simply with loss, although much of it arises from grief. It is complex in its motivations, various in its manifestations. The Black Plague that swept through Europe during the 14th century could be justified as an act of God by a large proportion of the population, and the body of works commissioned by the church to explain it to the faithful is among the great cultural legacies of the Middle Ages. But many people no longer accept religious explanations. AIDS has inspired collective doubt, and the art reflects this ambivalence.

Because AIDS polarizes people, because it reinforces prejudices and hatreds, the artistic reaction to it has, first and foremost, focused on dichotomies—healthy and sick, gay and straight, us and them.

Nicholas Nixon, whose photographs of people with AIDS were shown late last year at the Museum of Modern Art in New York and are now at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, shows how the line between us and them can be drawn all too clearly. Mr. Nixon chronicled in several series of photographs the final months in the lives of AIDS patients, graphically illustrating their progressive deterioration and eventual death. Certainly the artist meant for his viewers to feel pain when looking at these portraits of gaunt people, so reminiscent of Nazi concentration camp inmates. Certainly the intention was to elicit sympathy, to give touching human form to a baffling medical issue, to incite outrage at the affliction's devastating results.

But just as certainly, the artist makes people with AIDS look like freaks, like sickly, helpless "victims," in the most fatalistic sense of the word. Particularly because Mr. Nixon's presence as the artist is always implicit in these carefully orchestrated images, the subjects seem that much more removed from the viewer's world. Mr. Nixon's photographs—and similarly, a few of the photographs of people with AIDS by Rosalind Solomon that were shown at New York University's Grey Gallery last year—underscore the differences between "us," the unaffected onlookers, and "them."

Epidemics are a horrible but familiar part of biological history. Yet because AIDS happened to enter this country and spread most rapidly among gay men and intravenous drug users, the syndrome immediately came to be viewed by many as moral retribution for sin, supplanting leprosy and cancer as the most socially abhorrent affliction ("AIDS has banalized cancer," Susan Sontag observed in her new book, "AIDS and Its Metaphors").

LAYING BARE UNGENEROUS IMPULSES

In this context, Mr. Nixon's sensationalistic pictures sent out a grim message. They confirmed that people with AIDS were indeed different, that they were, in fact, barely still human. They summoned up that part of the American soul that is least generous to the least fortunate.

But what is the alternative? Pictures by two other photographers, Neal Rantoul and Tom McGovern, demonstrate that an opposite tack is hardly better. Each depicts what appear to be healthy, attractive men and women—people who are just like "us." If Mr. Nixon's photographs frighten away viewers, these could lull them into feeling that AIDS is less significant than they had thought. Or put in the more

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explicitly functional terms that characterize the discourse on AIDS and culture: Mr. Nixon's photographs may be potent and well-crafted images, but of what benefit are they to people with AIDS?

One of the more sensitive variations on the "us versus them" theme comes from Ann Meredith whose depictions of women with AIDS are now on view at the New Museum of Contemporary Art in New York. Like Barbara Kruger, among others, Ms. Meredith explores the relationship between image and text. Accompanying her portraits are statements from the subjects and statistics about AIDS. Presenting women with their children, on the beach and on the street, at home as well as in the hospital, these pictures do not announce illness, but the texts insist there is more to these portraits than what we see. Ms. Meredith's use of language allows her to walk a subtle line between Mr. Nixon's macabre photographs and the ambiguous pictures by Mr. Rantoul or Mr. McGovern.

Ms. Meredith's photographs are also an exception to the rule that AIDS-related art deals with the plight of gay men. By portraying heterosexual mothers, both white and black, poor and middle class, infected from their husbands or through intravenous drug use, Ms. Meredith's works suggest that no one can afford to be complacent about AIDS.

DEMOGRAPHICS CHANGE, BUT THE ART DOES NOT

Whether in a play like last year's "Zero Positive" by Harry Kondo-leon or a television movie like "An Early Frost," AIDS has been portrayed mostly as a problem confined to gay men, reinforcing perceptions of AIDS as a "gay plague" and of the arts community as predominantly gay. Distressingly few works of art have addressed themselves to the increasing numbers of blacks and Latinos, the women and drug addicts also stricken. AIDS is becoming predominantly a crisis among poor people, but it would be impossible to know this from the cultural response. The pandemic's demographics may be changing rapidly, but the art about AIDS does not.

For middle-class whites to paint a canvas or write a play aimed at poor blacks or Latinos might not be particularly effective. Such works of art might best arise from within the black and Latino communities.

Or at least they might come from artists, including pop musicians, who frequently reach minority populations. But perhaps for commercial reasons or for fear of altering carefully cultivated public images, these artists have been leery of the subject.

One of the exceptions is "Ojos Que No Ven" ("Eyes The Fail to See"). A video produced for the Latino AIDS Project as a kind of soap opera addressed specifically to Chicanos in the San Francisco Bay area, it speaks literally and metaphorically in a language familiar to the targeted audience. Like many of the videos produced in response to AIDS, "Ojos Que No Ven" is full of practical information about safe sex, clean needles and AIDS testing, but it weaves its news into a drama.

TV PREFERS 'INNOCENT' VICTIMS

Yet another exception to the rule that AIDS art is about gay men is a television movie like this year's "Ryan White Story" on ABC, about a boy ostracized by neighbors and schoolmates because he has AIDS. But while it does provide a different perspective, "The Ryan White Story" illustrates the way commercial television typically deals with highly charged subjects. Rather than situating a black woman or a gay man or a drug addict as the key figure in a drama, network executives have tended to prefer white hemophiliac children, a relatively small group within the affected population. Steering clear of explosive issues like gay rights or free needles for drug addicts, producers of television dramas have preferred "innocent" AIDS victims.

This has been the case despite the example of "An Early Frost," a conscientious tear-jerker that, as it happened, drew a large audience when it was broadcast on NBC in 1985. It cast Aidan Quinn as a gay man with AIDS hoping to regain the love of a disapproving father. The plight of Mr. Quinn's character, a young lawyer from Chicago, became increasingly poignant after friends and family members turned their backs and hospital nurses refused to treat him. Although the show received several Emmy award nominations, the networks attempted nothing like it again.

Indeed, when gay men with AIDS have appeared in other TV shows, the results have sometimes been horrific. An episode of NBC's

CALENDAR

The main purpose of this newsletter is to provide information to the community. It is to serve as a 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 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 1,000. You can get listings in the newsletter by calling me, Jack Valinski, at 529-1223 or write:

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Send in by May 15 for June issue:

Event: _____

Organization: _____

Time: _____

Date: _____

Place: _____

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Description of event: _____

"Midnight Caller" outraged AIDS activists by turning a bisexual man into a murderer, who intentionally spread the virus through sex with unsuspecting women.

Hollywood has hardly been more sensitive or realistic. Many recent films may seem to be affected by AIDS and its chilling effect on sexuality. Lina Wertmüller is working on a movie about the pandemic. But major American studios have yet to produce a film specifically on the topic. Among the few movies to refer to AIDS, the recently released "Heart of Midnight" includes the character of a child molester who dies of it, and in "Troma's War," a grotesque film that means to be comic, a man with AIDS, covered with lesions, tries to infect women held hostage by a band of neo-Nazis.

HOW ACTIVISTS FIGHT BACK

Much of the early art about AIDS, during the mid-1980's, took an elegiac or documentary approach. But increasingly, artists have responded to fear-mongering in things like "Troma's War" by adopting a stridently militant tone (the filming of "Midnight Caller" in San Francisco was frequently interrupted by public demonstrations). Many artists now see their role not simply as public mourner but as political activist reacting to a government and a populace still uninformed and unconcerned.

Activists have, in part, focused their attentions on reshaping the language of AIDS, so much of it fatalistic and moralizing and alarmist, and they have tried to promote a vocabulary that is both more accurate and more sympathetic to sufferers.

They have concentrated on art forms that can reach the largest audience. A visitor to an exhibition of art about AIDS now at the University Gallery of Ohio State University in Columbus sees only a few easel paintings among the dozen of handbills and photographs and treatises. The heart of the show lies in the dozen of hours of videotaped dramas and instructional presentations. Many of the films were also shown as part of "AIDS Media: Counter-Representations," at the Whitney Museum of American Art in Manhattan earlier this year.

As have other activists, AIDS activists have questioned the efficacy of displaying work in traditional cultural institutions like museums and galleries, where artists preach mostly to the converted. They have condemned some of the memorializing material as too passive. AIDS activist design and distribute posters and flyers (stickers and buttons declaring that "Silence=Death" can be seen all over New York and other cities), fashion store-window displays and organize demonstrations. They insist that artists are not helpless, that their contribution to the fight against AIDS need not be limited to elegies and fund raisers.

That idea animates Gran Fury, an artists' collective whose members belong to Act Up (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power). Gran Fury's approach is typified by a canvas that appropriates the format of Robert Indiana's quintessentially 60's "LOVE" painting to display the single word "RIOT."

It is, at the same time, a response to a work by the group General Idea in which the work "AIDS" was made to fit Mr. Indiana's scheme, seeming to suggest the spiritual distance between the 1960's and the 1980's. But whereas General Idea's work is somewhat oblique, Gran Fury means to be straightforward. Its stridency can be shocking in the context of an art scene dominated by painters who speak only in cool, ironical tones.

Gran Fury's approach contrasts with Ross Bleckner's latest paintings of what appear to be starry skies, or, perhaps, malignant cells. Mr. Bleckner has said his works are in part inspired by AIDS. They are complex and hauntingly beautiful in execution. But they look muted

as a response to the crisis. Mr. Bleckner presents not precisely elegies but sleek and self-conscious evocations of elegiac art from the past. His paintings say as much about elegance as about their ostensible subject.

Activist art about AIDS leaves no doubt about its intended message. It can be frighteningly dictatorial in its refusal to allow alternative responses to a problem. Like other agitprop, it can be condescending in its simplemindedness, even counterproductive in its eagerness to provoke. Chances are that, like political art from the 1960's, it will last principally as the relic of an era. But most of these works don't pretend to be great art in the way traditional art historians use that phrase. To be heard above a roar of misinformation and in the face of so much indifference, shouting may be necessary. The goal is not to produce museum masterpieces but to save lives, by whatever means at an artist's disposal.

HUMOR AS A CATHARSIS

Counter to what the activists sometimes contend, there is, of course, no reason why art about AIDS must be limited to either Mr. Bleckner's kind of work or to Gran Fury's. Some of the most inspiring art has been slight. "The AIDS Show" is a series of sketches staged by Theater Rhinoceros in San Francisco, many of them comic. Some of the performers have AIDS and by their presence they seem to insist that coming down with the syndrome does not mean giving up laughter. Humor can be both cathartic and inspirational. Humor helped William W. Hoffman's otherwise heart-wrenching play, "As Is," won a 1985 Obie Award and receive several Tony nominations. Mr. Teraoki's watercolors succeed in part because they are both didactic and funny. Art about AIDS need not be somber.

Nor must it be specifically about AIDS to put us in mind of the crisis. Ultimately, a compilation of AIDS art may include not only works about the pandemic but also works that have been affected by it. In the wariness toward sex that "Burn This" and "Frankie and Johnnie in the Clair de Lune" express, both could be called AIDS plays. "Eastern Standard," "The Heidi Chronicles" and "Gus and Al" are three plays currently on New York stages that make at least oblique references to the pandemic. A movie like the remake of "The Fly" has even been construed as a metaphor about AIDS.

For now the central issue isn't what will last and what will disappear. "We don't need a cultural renaissance," declared Douglas Crimp, an activist and art critic, in a recent issue of the journal *October* that was devoted to AIDS. "We need cultural practices actively participating in the struggle against AIDS. We don't need to transcend the epidemic; we need to end it."

"QUOTABLES"

From Gay Community News

"Yes, but that's gays and lesbians. It's a lot easier to dump on gays and lesbians than on half a million women!"

—A Boston Amtrak ticket salesperson, speaking to a lesbian reproductive rights activist who was purchasing her ticket to attend the April 9 March for Women's Lives and Women's Equality. The salesperson had suggested that he thought the National Organization for Women—the sponsor of the march—should have chartered trains from Amtrak for the event. His comment came after the lesbian reminded him of its agreement to provide such trains for participants in the October 1987 March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights.