

THE TEXAS T|R|I|A|N|G|L|E

Vol. 2, Number 7

The Lesbian and Gay News Weekly

November 23, 1993

Mexican artists walk along cutting edge

By Sheri Cohen Darbonne
TRIANGLE Staff

HOUSTON—At the center of fiery cultural and political movements in Mexico, artists and gay activists Jose Maria Cobarubias and Jorge Fichtel walk a fine line between the cutting edge and the dagger of danger.

The two men are the producers of a respected week-long festival of lesbian and gay culture in Mexico City. They are also at the forefront of an internationally notorious human rights battle: Fichtel and Cobarubias are fighting for justice in the unsolved, execution-style murders of over 30 crossdressers and openly gay men in the state of Chiapas, near the border of Guatemala.

Cobarubias and Fichtel were in Houston last week on the first stop of a three city tour intended to establish ties with and promote exchange among international cultural and political organizations, especially those which explore lesbian and gay work. On Wednesday, Nov. 17, they presented a lecture and slide/video showing at DiverseWorks, an alternative art space that regularly spotlights gay and lesbian artists. The local gallery-performance hall produces its own annual gay and lesbian arts festival in May, and hopes to organize a presentation exchange with the Mexican festival for 1995.

They appeared here as part of a tour



Activists sound alarm about right wing

By Rick Brown
TRIANGLE Staff

AUSTIN — The harsh ring of political wake-up calls greeted gay and lesbian Austinites last week in church and political gatherings, as activists formulated strategies to meet the anti-gay forays of the Christian right wing.

Dr. Mel White, dean of the Dallas Cathedral of Hope Metropolitan Community Church and a man intimately acquainted with the twists of right-wing logic, spoke passionately from an Austin pulpit, urging MCC parishioners to battle for their lives.

White, who wrote speeches and books for the likes of Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson and Oliver North before coming to terms with his own sexuality, cited a litany of "painful similarities" between Nazi Germany and the present-day U.S.

"Nobody thought Hitler would take seriously the anti-sodomy laws, close down gay organizations, steal mailing lists and murder homosexuals," he said. "But in four short years, from 1936 to '39, more than 50,000 gay Germans were thrown into concentration camps, where they were used as slaves or summarily shot."

White cited conversations with

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They appeared here as part of a tour organized through "La Red," a Latin American network of progressive cultural organizations, which will also include presentations at the Mexican

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"Erotico Y Plural," from the poster for the 1988 Exposicion Y Mesa Redonda

Help calls mounting, so are bills

By John David Moss
Special to the TRIANGLE

AUSTIN — "Please call back when you want to talk, okay?"

Margaret Parker listens one last time before hanging up the phone. She has been volunteering at Out Youth Austin's Helpline for more than 18 months, and this call could place her over the 1,000 mark.

"I've answered from 850 to 1,000 calls," she says, sitting back. "It's ..." The phone rings again. "Out Youth. Hi, this is Margaret."

Out Youth Austin's Helpline has been in operation for two years but its continued duration is up for grabs. Precisely because it has been a phenomenal success, with young people calling its tollfree number from all over



Margaret Parker (Photo by Cindy Lawrence)

the country, unpaid bills have mounted to more than \$3,800 and, upon receipt of the November bill, may exceed \$5,000.

"Unless we come up with a plan for stable funding by mid-December, we'll

have to hang it up," says Lisa Rogers, Out Youth's program coordinator.

The Helpline was started to help dispel myths and stereotypes, provide AIDS education, and offer a place where isolated young people could anonymously begin to explore their sexuality in a positive, nurturing environment.

The 800 number allows youth to call from anywhere in the country. And call they do. From just July to September, the number of calls more than tripled from 500 to 1600. At an average cost of \$1 for each call, the October bill alone topped \$1,200, showing calls from small towns and rural areas in 40 different states.

Parker estimates that 80 percent

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White cited conversations with Oregon equal rights organizers and MCC officials, who said a spate of recent office burglaries netted perpetrators one item only: gay mailing

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Festive and Gay Tables for the Holidays - in ARTS

THE TEXAS
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Robin Bernstein Lee Lynch
Judith Meyer Ed MaddenTHEATER REVIEWS
David Mark Cohen Jeff MackeyPHOTOGRAPHERS
Gary Brown Gregory L. Havican
Cindy Lawrence Amber Ratisseau
Mary Beth RyanCARTOONISTS
Todd Camp Eric OrnerCOLUMNISTS
Jeff Bray Charles Allen Dews
Wesley G. Hicks Ellen Hobbs Ted SmithMARKETING DIRECTOR
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O | P | I | N | I | O | N



L E T T E R S

To the Editor,

I want to thank you for your noting the appointment of Rich Bailey and myself to the Austin Human Rights Commission. I am gratified by the opportunity to serve the community in this capacity.

There was, however, one thing wrong in your article. Although I am actively supportive of gays and lesbians and their issues, I am openly heterosexual. If I were a lesbian, as is one of my daughters, I like to think I would be very open and proud. But as things are

community and our advancement to be able to elect openly-gay people to any elected office. Our enemies feed on this type of reporting! We, as gay people, sometimes appear too busy fighting among ourselves, and we may appear to be totally irresponsible to the office(s) to which we are elected as well as to its constituents. And our enemies will be able to accuse us of using City Council, City Hall, and other hard-earned elected and appointed positions to manipulate their definition of the so-called "gay agenda."

“ QUOTES
OF NOTE ”

“Just what kind of jobs are we talking about here!?”

David Letterman, commenting on the oft-repeated quote by Ross Perot that “if NAFTA passes, the loud sucking noise will be your jobs going south of the border.”

“It has taken a federal court to speak the truth to the Clinton administration, Sen. Sam Nunn and the Neanderthals at the Pentagon. America’s despicable and indefensible policy of excluding gays from the military is unconstitutional, a federal appeals court has decided ... Sam Nunn be damned. America must end this shameful discrimination now.”

Editorial in the San Francisco Examiner regarding a U.S. Court of Appeals ruling that the ban on gays and lesbians in the armed forces is unconstitutional.

“President Clinton may have failed to rally political support for the rights of gays in the military, but there appears to be another way to undermine the longstanding ban: In the court. For the fifth time this year, a federal court ruled against the Pentagon and in favor of gays who want the right to serve openly in the armed services. The consistent message from the courts says that after stripping away military tradition and dire warnings about troop morale, we are left with the fact that a ban on gays is discrimination, pure and simple.”

Editorial in the San Jose Mercury News on the same ruling.

SPORTS
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THEATER REVIEWS

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Houston: Calvin Smith

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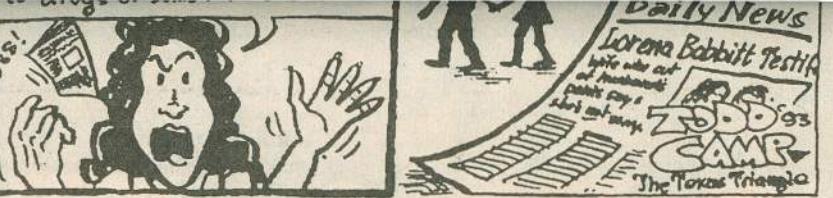
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Thanks for all your efforts to educate and to inform. Keep up the good work!

Sincerely,
Sally Rau McIntosh
Austin

To the Editor,

For all the wrong reasons, and now that it is in the gay press, it seems the Dallas City Councilman Craig McDaniel code enforcement/neighborhood zoning problems continue to build. Somehow Councilman McDaniel's "property" issue has now become a "gay" issue when the sexual orientation of any of the players has absolutely nothing to do with the problem. It appears the Texas Triangle is simply stirring the pot that is detrimental to the lesbians and gays of Dallas. Hugh Strange's reporting and his very slanted, distorted critique of two *Dallas Observer* articles is irresponsible journalism.

It is stories like this that hurt our

community and our advancement to be able to elect openly-gay people to any elected office. Our enemies feed on this type of reporting! We, as gay people, sometimes appear too busy fighting among ourselves, and we may appear to be totally irresponsible to the office(s) to which we are elected as well as to its constituents. And our enemies will be able to accuse us of using City Council, City Hall, and other hard-earned elected and appointed positions to manipulate their definition of the so-called "gay agenda."

Although Mr. Strange's critique of the two *Dallas Observer* articles appears to have been read by Mr. Strange, it also strangely appears that a biased person in Dallas was telling him how the *Observer* articles should be interpreted. It is apparent to me that Mr. Strange did not do his homework ... nor did he bother to investigate to discover the real facts. It is unfortunate, I believe, that Mr. Strange's intent was to make this a gay issue after listening to unreliable people. I will agree, though, that the *Observer* articles were slanted. However, the writer was 99% accurate with her facts and homework had been done!

Incidentally, do you think the writer was just a little surprised when she got back from vacation and read in the *Triangle* that she is now divorced and now has an ex-husband?

My most difficult part to swallow about this article, other than why one's sexuality is germane to a code enforcement/neighborhood zoning issue, is the fact the *Triangle* decided to "out" someone who absolutely doesn't have

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tary is unconstitutional, a federal appeals court has decided ... Sam Nunn be damned. America must end this shameful discrimination now."

Editorial in the San Francisco Examiner regarding a U.S. Court of Appeals ruling that the ban on gays and lesbians in the armed forces is unconstitutional.

"President Clinton may have failed to rally political support for the rights of gays in the military, but there appears to be another way to undermine the longstanding ban: In the court. For the fifth time this year, a federal court ruled against the Pentagon and in favor of gays who want the right to serve openly in the armed services. The consistent message from the courts says that after stripping away military tradition and dire warnings about troop morale, we are left with the fact that a ban on gays is discrimination, pure and simple."

Editorial in the San Jose Mercury News on the same ruling.

"I fell in love with her when I profiled her 10 years ago. I admire her, I appreciate her candor, her vulnerability and her courage."

"60 Minutes" reporter Mike Wallace, talking about Martina Navratilova, quoted in USA Today.

"For years, I felt unappreciated; now I'm overappreciated. It's ridiculous. I hit an average shot and get a standing ovation. It's like before I was always the visitor and now I'm the home team wherever I go."

Martina Navratilova, in the same USA Today article, about her own surge in popularity.

"I have often said that I am closer to my friend Judy Ogle than I am to Carl [Dean], my husband, and it's true. We have done everything together, but *not that*. But what would be the big deal if the rumors were true? There are a lot of gay people in the world! I'm just not one of 'em."

Country songbird Dolly Parton, responding in TV Guide to rumors about whether she is a lesbian.

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The short list of Thanksgiving blessings

QUEER NOTES

by ELLEN
HOBBS



Sometimes it can be hard to think of things about which to give thanks. What with nine states being targeted for statewide anti-gay legislation pushes in the next year, the frightening uncertainty that NAFTA might not have been such a good idea after all and, of course, the looming fear that Ross Perot could be gunned down by Cuban assassins at any moment, coming up with things to be thankful about can be quite a chore.

So, once again, I am coming to the rescue with a short list for those of you who are lacking ideas for things about which to give thanks. I hope that once

I get the ball rolling, you can take it from there:

- "Out There," a new queer comedy special, is slated to begin airing on Comedy Central on December 3. The special's first sponsor will be *Out Magazine*.

- Joseph Steffan, who was kicked out of the Naval Academy for being gay in 1987, won an appeal in which the Navy was ordered to give him an officer's commission immediately. The ruling, made on November 16, was the fifth time this year the courts have ruled that the military must reinstate openly gay personnel, even though President Bill Clinton has backed down on his promise to end the ban.

- Texas is not currently on the religious right's hit list for state-wide anti-queer legislation. (Watch out for those stealth candidates for local offices, however!)

- Kudos once again go to Austin City Council for having the gumption

to give city employees benefits for their domestic partners. This is not the first time the city has come to bat for queer rights, remember; Austin was one of the first cities to boycott official city travel to Colorado.

- *The Advocate*, which has been changing its look recently, won the 1993 Magazine Week-Folio Award for excellence among newsweeklies. The runners up? *Time* and *Newsweek*. Congratulations to the folks at *The Advocate*, and a round of applause to those at *Magazine Week-Folio* who recognized the non-mainstream newsweekly's worth.

- Austinite Kay Turner's new book, *I Dream of Madonna: Women's Dreams of the Goddess of Pop*, is not only more interesting and sexier than Madonna's own tome, *Sex*, but also better made and significantly less expensive. *I Dream of Madonna* is published by Collins Publishers San Francisco and available at fine bookstores everywhere.

- And speaking of consumerism, there's still plenty of shopping time left before the holidays. That means you'll have time to seek out lots of queer-friendly retailers from which to purchase cool gifts for your friends and family.

- If you're looking for ideas on who to buy from, check your area's queer-friendly shopping guide or yellow pages and advertisements in queer publications. If you can't find what you're looking for, ask a friend or queer business person.

- The holiday gift-giving season is an especially good time to flex the muscle of queer buying power. When buying from a gay-friendly merchant, make sure you mention that you appreciate business people who show support for the gay and lesbian community. It will help retailers realize what a large source of income the queer dollar can be.

- Happy Thanksgiving. And remember to refrigerate that gravy as soon as dinner is over.

And God created two

sexes, four genders

By Jean Steffan
Special to the TRIANGLE

Although God created two sexes, male and female, He created four genders. He created masculine and feminine men and masculine and feminine women. These divisions do not pertain to "gay" and "straight" because anyone can express sexuality with anyone else at any time (and they do) at various points in their lives.

MASCULINE MEN

toward these roles. In fact, we have so many wars because it is by keeping a war going all the time, the masculine man can insure his dominance. When masculine man is respected for his contribution and is not expected to be anything but what he is, he will be much more comfortable. When masculine man is taught by the other genders that these are his roles and he is not God, everyone else will be much more

strain himself to "be sensitive" and "find the female within himself" or being allowed and encouraged to be his natural self, while staying within his limits, and I believe most men would go for it in a heartbeat. Ask a masculine man if he would give up the race for life where he could build houses, bridges, machinery and gadgets, hunt and fish all he wants, fight to win against any real enemy without any pretended rules

them the dignity of their parts in the whole scheme of things. Show a masculine man a deer, and he'll see meat. Masculine man loves to provide and protect.

FEMININE MEN: These are the keepers of beauty. They are the designers, the costumers, they are the artists, the dancers, the playwrights, the actors and the makers of magic. Wherever there is color and line and beauty to be

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MASCULINE MEN: These are the warriors, the builders, the hunters and the impregnators. These are their jobs. They protect the other genders from enemies, construct shelter, bring home the bacon and give women their children. Around us in society, we see masculine men naturally gravitating

toward these roles. In fact, we have so many wars because it is by keeping a war going all the time, the masculine man can insure his dominance. When masculine man is respected for his contribution and is not expected to be anything but what he is, he will be much more comfortable. When masculine man is taught by the other genders that these are his roles and he is not God, everyone else will be much more comfortable.

Masculine man has run the show far too long and we are close to destroying ourselves because masculine man's natural aggressiveness and competitiveness has been allowed to run rampant. Give a masculine man a choice between playing God and having to

strain himself to "be sensitive" and "find the female within himself" or being allowed and encouraged to be his natural self, while staying within his limits, and I believe most men would go for it in a heartbeat. Ask a masculine man if he would give up the race for life where he could build houses, bridges, machinery and gadgets, hunt and fish all he wants, fight to win against any real enemy without any pretended rules of fairness, and impregnate women all his life, and I believe most men would give up trying to be everything to prove their superiority.

Masculine men need to be taught that there are three other genders who have their roles, too, and that it will not be tolerated for him to continue to deny

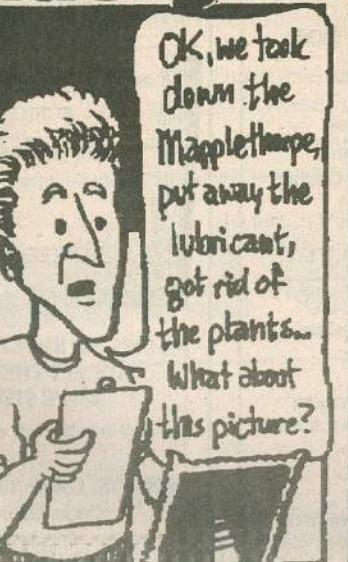
them the dignity of their parts in the whole scheme of things. Show a masculine man a deer, and he'll see meat. Masculine man loves to provide and protect.

FEMININE MEN: These are the keepers of beauty. They are the designers, the costumers, they are the artists, the dancers, the playwrights, the actors and the makers of magic. Wherever there is color and line and beauty to be expressed, there you will find the feminine man. Too long have they been denied the credit that is theirs for finding and creating beautiful things in a sordid world. Without the feminine man we have no elegance, no dignity. Their gifts raise us above ourselves. They see

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life underground

The straight decorator Dewey hired to hide his private life is just about done redecorating before the folks arrive for Thanksgiving...



OK, we took down the Mapplethorpe, put away the lubricant, got rid of the plants... What about this picture?



What about it?
It's semi-pornographic.



THAT'S MY BROTHER!



But he's wearing a G-string...

Stuart always did have a problem with clothes...

Why does it seem like I'm forgetting something?

Next week: SURPRISE!!

by todd camp

O | P | I | N | I | O | N

All have different reactions to seeing deer

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and reflect back to us a side of humanity the other genders do not see, but the other genders can only see when the feminine man shows it to us.

AIDS is not only wiping out a whole generation of feminine men, it is also robbing us of their contributions. We will not truly appreciate this gender until we begin to miss what they give us. They need to be loved and appreciated for who and what they are and what they have always given to the rest of us. They are also the natural emotional companions of the masculine

man. Show a feminine man a deer, and he'll see the deer's beauty. Feminine man's first love is art.

MASCULINE WOMAN: She is the nurturer. She tends the animals and the sick. She prepares the dead for burial. On the third day, according to the Bible, the women came to the tomb to get Christ's body to prepare it for burial. Masculine women are natural veterinarians, nurses, funeral home workers. They have served as midwives down their history because they are the natural providers of support and understanding needed by the feminine

woman, which the masculine man cannot provide. Masculine woman is the one who helps the feminine woman raise the children, and she always does the tough jobs. It is the masculine woman who staffs the battered women's shelters. She is the female attorney who fights for feminine women and their children in court. The strong, smart woman who fights for women's rights are usually masculine women, as are the women in universities who teach women to realize their own worth. Without masculine women, the animals, the sick, and women/children would have no champion. Show a masculine woman a deer, and she'll see something to take care of. Masculine woman's first love is nurturing.

FEMININE WOMAN: She is the home-maker, the bearer and tender of the young, the gatherer and gardener. Look at the magazines at the checkout stand at any grocery store. All the women's magazines concern themselves with the feminine woman's concerns — children, home, and garden. She is the maker of clothes, the cooker of food, the planter, the tender of homefires. She looks to the masculine man to understand her and give her support, but he will never be able to do it — it is not in his nature. What he can give her is her children, her home, her meat, her safety. The companionship she craves will come from the masculine woman. Show a feminine woman a deer, and she'll see a pet — something to love. Her first love is her home and children.

There are two exceptions to these gender classifications — one for each

it leads. He is the shaman that every culture needs to see past the world to a larger reality. He belongs to the people and is not designed to do the work of the other masculine males. His first love is God (or God in the guise of the spirit that is the sum total of humanity). This spirit moves through him to keep us in touch with our divine origin. He is the metaphysician — the barometer. He is naturally in touch with the greater collective consciousness — the mind-at-large. In contemporary America, he is often the musician and songwriter. Show him a deer, and he'll probably view it as a symbol. The priest's first love is humanity.

ON THE FEMALE SIDE — THE CONCUBINE: Society has banned, banished and negated the concubine, calling her by many derogatory names. But this is still the world's oldest profession because it is the natural role. The English refer to sex as "comfort" and it is the concubine's role to provide comfort to the man who needs what she has to give. Usually, it is the priest. In ancient times, the temple virgins filled this role. The temple virgins were respected and considered vital members of society for offering comfort to the priests. The word "virgin" originally meant a woman who belonged to herself; who was unattached to a man or children throughout her life. She was the femme sole, the woman alone, and her job was to provide understanding, sympathy, comfort and guidance to the man who served humanity.

These were the "holy whores" and nowadays, you will find many of these



Disparity Study City of Austin Public Hearing Schedule

Wednesday, November 10, 1993

Austin Convention Center, 500 East First
Meeting Room 9, 3-6 p.m. & 7-10 p.m.

Formal public hearing to receive anecdotal evidence of discrimination and close the Disparity Study.

Tuesday, December 7, 1993

Town Lake Center, 721 Barton Springs Road
5:30 p.m.

Affirmative Action Subcommittee meeting and public hearing



Disparity Study

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Meeting Room 9, 3-6 p.m. & 7-10 p.m.**

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Tuesday, December 7, 1993

**Town Lake Center, 721 Barton Springs Road
5:30 p.m.**

Affirmative Action Subcommittee meeting and public hearing with community organizations, community leaders, and other business groups on implications of Disparity Study.

Tuesday, January 4, 1994

**Town Lake Center, 721 Barton Springs Road
5:30 p.m.**

Affirmative Action Subcommittee meeting to discuss policy recommendations.

Tuesday, February 1, 1994

**Town Lake Center, 721 Barton Springs Road
5:30 p.m.**

Affirmative Action Subcommittee recommends policy/ordinance changes to City Council

Thursday, February 17, 1994

City Council public hearing on policy recommendations

Thursday, February 24, 1994

City Council adoption of policy changes

For more information, contact Kendall Moss at 499-3297.

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There are two exceptions to these gender classifications — one for each sex. They are:

ON THE MALE SIDE — THE PRIEST: This is a masculine male, but he is not a warrior, not a constructor, not a hunter. His job is to report us to ourselves, mirror us to ourselves. He is the philosopher, the poet, the thinker, the writer. He warns us when we are going in the wrong direction, he sees the straight line between where we are and points to where

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These were the "holy whores" and nowadays, you will find many of these types of women following musical groups. Even a man who is married to his music and who is intent upon saying what he needs to say, needs the concubine's comfort. If the concubine sees a deer, the last thing she'll want to do is to hurt it, trap it or interfere with it in any way. The concubine's first love is to serve a spiritual man's physical needs.

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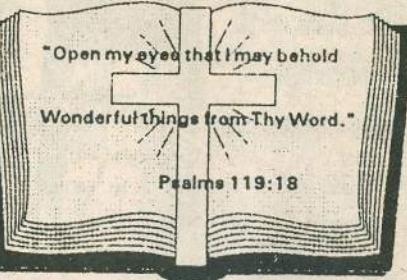
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Backlash against gays vicious in Mexico

continued from page 1

Fine Arts Museum in Chicago and the Washington Performing Arts Society in Washington, D.C.

During the presentation and in a prior interview, they also discussed the cultural and social politics of being gay in Mexico, and their roles as co-directors of Circulo Cultural Gay, the Mexico City-based organization that sponsors the festival.

Speaking through an interpreter, DiverseWorks volunteer Chris Rincon, Cobarubias and Fichtel explained that Circulo Cultural Gay was formed in 1985 in part to break down and organize an unwieldy, "out of control" gay movement, whose leaders were losing their grasp on goals due to "a general sentiment of burnout." Cobarubias said at the time that he and Fichtel were members of another gay organization, Lambda, that had sponsored a well-attended gay rights march in 1984.

"We decided that we would have another group that would handle the responsibility of producing a week long festival of our culture," Cobarubias said. "There wasn't really anyone else providing an outlet for gay culture."

Because of its concentration on the arts, a fiercely appreciated venue in Mexico for expression of culture, individuality and diversity in Mexico, the festival enjoyed acceptance in Mexico City. This, said Cobarubias, was planned. "We tried to make it as professional and mainstream as possible...we invited very well-known artists to participate," he said.

At first, the biggest problem was motivating gay and lesbian people to

ing such recognized artists as Francisco Toledo and Juan Serano.

Like the American Gay and Lesbian Pride Week, Semana Cultural Lesbica Gay (Lesbian-Gay Culture Week) usually takes place near the end of June; and, like many U.S. cities' annual pride festivals, the celebration takes a full year to plan and execute.

The festival is the culmination of year-long work for the Circulo group, which also produces smaller juried art exhibitions and benefits periodically, said Fichtel. The event and its sponsor group depend solely on individual donations and fundraisers, such as sales of a gay cultural calendar, for production expenses and the festival often runs a high deficit, Fichtel said.

However, unlike most American gay arts/entertainment/culture groups, Circulo Cultural Gay and, by virtue of their visibility, Cobarubias and Fichtel, often find themselves playing the role of spokespersons for the overall gay and lesbian community of Mexico. By taking the forefront in speaking out on gay rights issues, such as the Chiapas murders, the art promoter-curators have become high-profile political ac-

tivists.

In 1991, that role took them to Chiapas, where according to Cobarubias, ghastly rights abuses were occurring with virtually no attention from police, political leaders or the public. Gay men and, especially, transvestites, were routinely being kidnapped, taken to rural areas and shot to death, usually with high-power weapons theoretically only issued to police corporations or the Mexican military.

"This is what put Mexico on the map in terms of human rights," he said.

Interestingly, because of the Chiapas tragedy and activists' perseverance, gay rights is becoming recognized and widely accepted as a human rights issue meriting general support and emergency status in Mexico. A recent march to protest sluggishness in the investigation of the killings—among videos shown by Cobarubias and Fichtel—was attended by over 20,000 people. In the video, women with babies, children and elderly persons can be seen interspersed among the hordes of gay, lesbian and transgendered people carrying banners

demanding justice, joining in a mob that seems driven by an odd mix of anger, desperation...and celebration.

Gays have gained the support of human rights groups, including the Department of Human Rights of the Archdiocese of Mexico, in their fight to unearth the truth, Cobarubias said.

Human rights abuses against gays and a general attitude of intolerance and discrimination continue, said Fichtel, but as more people come out of the closet, the political and social situation of Mexican lesbians and gay men is improving. "It's an ambivalent thing...because of public events like Semana Cultural Lesbica-Gay, there is now more exposure...there is a better climate now to be out.

"But there is still the risk of social persecution...and in Mexico, the backlash tends to take a very physical form."

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At first, the biggest problem was motivating gay and lesbian people to participate, because of the general atmosphere of intolerance in the country against the gay community, Cobarubias said. However, since then, the festival has made a big impact on both the community and the public, and the quality of work shown during the event has improved, he said. The caliber of participants has steadily risen, includ-

ing a gay cultural center, the festival often runs a high deficit, Fichtel said.

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A|R|O|U|N|D | T|H|E | S|T|A|T|E

National helpline in need of financial infusion

continued from page 1

of the calls are about coming out. "They are isolated, depressed, confused, and have no support system."

One such caller is John. He lives in a small town in Florida with the nearest city two hours away. He says he calls once a week to talk about the problems he has because of being gay. His community is very religious, very conservative, he says. His church is threatening to excommunicate him and his family will cut him off if he doesn't "go straight." For John the Helpline is his only support.

Between callers, Parker tells the story of Tracy, 14. Tracy accepted the fact that she was a lesbian. Her problem was that no one else has accepted her for being that. "The stories all have the same familiar ring," said Parker. "Her church condemns her, her parents tell queer jokes, and she felt she had no other way to deal with it. When I first talked to her,

she called with a loaded gun, ready and willing to use it on herself."

National statistics show an unusually high rate of suicide among gay youth, with one of the latest occurrences this summer in Austin.

Parker shakes her head, recalling the night that Tracy called. "The things Tracy wants out of life are not unreasonable demands on society: she wants to go to A&M, she wants to be a firefighter, and she wants to have someone love her for the rest of her life. Normal desires of a 14-year-old."

Tracy did not use the gun, thanks to Helpline. Parker was able to let her know she was not alone, that there are those who understand. She also let her know that the way she is being treated is not okay.

Parker was able to get Tracy to agree to put the gun away and to call back the following night. When Tracy

called back, she agreed not to use the gun for the next week. She has called back a number of times since and no longer wants to die. "She is doing okay," says Parker with a smile. "Oh, she still has problems being young and a lesbian, but she is alive and now has a foundation where people support and care about her."

"Obviously, we are providing a much needed service or we wouldn't be getting the incredible amount of calls that we are getting," says Parker. "We have more than 100 volunteers, yet what we don't have is money to pay the phone bill. We need money in a big way."

Can the Helpline continue without funding? "No," said Parker. "But I'm not giving up. I just can't believe that all those people who say, 'I wish there had been a place like that when I was young' are going to let the Helpline die. There are just too many kids out there."

LETTERS *continued from page 2*

anything to do with the issue, and will not, unless this issue reaches a City Council meeting by whatever mode that may be used. I thought "outing" was used as a tactic against those gay elected officials when they have voted against our issues, not because of someone's personal vendetta against the elected official. Here, again, the *Triangle* insists that one's sexuality is germane to the real issue here in Dallas, which is that of zoning and code enforcement.

With all the people who have been involved with Councilman McDaniel's campaign as advisors and handlers, most of whom are very knowledgeable with code enforcement, why didn't at least one of them speak up and say

man that there were major problems with some of his properties and that they had to be fixed prior to his bid for the council seat? It appears he was left to hang...

I am very disappointed with *The Texas Triangle* for sensationalizing this story. It was certainly uncalled for!

Alan Ross
Caven Enterprises
Dallas

To the Editor,

In your November 10th issue, Hugh Strange wrote an article, "Dallas councilman fights media sting, gay stereotype," about Dallas City Councilman Craig McDaniel. This article referred to the Lesbian/Gay Political Coalition of

feel compelled to respond.

The Lesbian/Gay Political Coalition supported Mr. McDaniel in his bid for City Council due to numerous factors. Craig ran as an openly gay man with a track record of involvement and leadership in city and neighborhood issues. District #14 extends from Oak Lawn to East Dallas including neighborhoods with the strongest percentage of gay and lesbian voters in Dallas. Since his election, no major issue affecting our community has come before the City Council, however, Craig has appointed lesbians and gays to Boards and Commissions. He, along with his partner, serve as good role models to gays and non-gays alike.

Many readers of Mr. Strange's ar-

"I don't have help here. No one understands, and the few who try are afraid to help," says John, who calls soon after. He says that, just last week, he was beaten up. He wouldn't tell anyone that the reason for the fight was that he is gay, or the fact that perpetrators called him "faggot" as they kicked him while he lay on the ground.

"We need people to support the line," he said. "You have to understand that, little by little, this is killing me. I need the Helpline."

The Helpline is more than that to him, he said. It's a lifeline.

Out Youth is a program of the YWCA and donations are tax deductible, said Rogers, asking potential donors to consider a monthly bank draft to assist the program to stay in business. Contributions may be sent to Out Youth, 2300 Guadalupe, Austin, Tx., 78705, or call 512-472-9264.

issue, nor a gay or lesbian issue. We understand both sides of the conflict, as duplex and apartment owners convert their property to single family use for homeowners who live next to apartment dwellers making life unbearable.

This issue should be decided by the neighborhood. Mr. Peter Brooks, referred to in the article as a prominent member of LGPC, lives in Junius Heights and has every right to express his personal opinion on this issue. Mr. Strange gave the impression that Mr. Brooks announced LGPC will take some action against Councilman Paul Fielding. We want to assure your readers that LGPC has not discussed or proposed any action concerning this Junius Heights zoning dispute, nor

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As Laura Miller recommended, we are reserving our ammo for battles over important issues which affect lesbians and gays in Dallas. Unlike Laura, we are proud to be served by Texas' first openly gay City Councilman, Craig McDaniel.

Paul Rogers and Louise Young
Co-Chairs of LGPC, Dallas

The *Texas Triangle* welcomes readers' comments. Please address letters to the editor to *The Texas Triangle*, 1615 West Sixth Street, Austin, TX 78703, or fax to (512) 427-8154. Letters may be edited for length or clarity. Authors' names may be withheld, but anonymous letters will not be published.

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CORRECTION: In our Nov. 10 story on Dallas Councilman Craig McDaniel, we described *Dallas Observer* columnist Laura Miller as the ex-wife of state Rep. Steve Wolens. The couple is not divorced. *The Triangle* regrets the error.

A|R|O|U|N|D | T|H|E | S|T|A|T|E

Ex-conservative minister issues wake-up call

continued from page 1

lists.

Violence could it happen here? It already is. percent over the last has gone up 175 speak, God's gay, lesbian and bisexual. As we people in America are being legislated against, banned from the military, despised, rejected, bashed and murdered," he said.

The occasion was Sunday night's installation service for Austin-MCC co-pastors the Revs. Wendy Foxworth and Kenneth Martin, who also were the pastors of a San Fernando Valley, Calif., MCC church that White first visited when wrestling with coming out.

After years of Christian "ex-gay" therapy, electric shock treatments and even exorcism, White said he "was giving up on the present, terrified of the future, certain that God hated me and wanting to die."

He said the two pastors ministered to his spirit by "daring to proclaim that God loved me exactly as I was."

His visit came on the heels of a meeting of the Austin Lesbian and Gay Political Caucus last Thursday in which representatives of FACT, Families



Dr. Mel White (Photo by Rick Brown)

Against Censorship in Teaching, warned of encroaching limitations on civil rights by Austin's right-wing Christian community.

One FACT speaker was the Rev. Jim Rigby of St. Andrews Presbyterian Church, who said part of the reason the group is reaching out to the gay community is the common cause they share.

"There's also a great empathy among our people toward gay people, who are being targeted for oppression, and nothing short of that," he said. "As human beings, we're very concerned."

FACT vice president Sandy Rice said

the group is purely a local organization that formed nearly two years ago after advances extremist groups made in imposing a restrictive sex education policy on Austin schools.

School board elections scheduled for January were very much on the minds of the representatives, who are determined that no Christian right did in Round

They appealed for gay election, even as ALGPC co-chairs Dianne Hardy-Garcia and Sonny Hood reported to the 80-or-so people present on another pending election in which gay men and lesbians could suffer removal of some recently won rights.

Losing that election, which is targeted for May, could mean city of Austin domestic partnership rights won last September would disappear.

A right-wing front organization called Concerned Texans currently is collecting petition signatures to force the election and recently received training from outside organizer Kevin Tebedo, the man behind Colorado's successful Amendment Two.

Lisa Davis, a Lesbian Avenger who

recently returned from the East Coast, said right-wing groups there are starting to play the gay and lesbian community off against black and Latino communities, employing a slickly produced video to further their cause.

"They're going into churches and showing this video to people of color, saying, 'You better get on the ball and start working against gay rights,' and it's making gay men and lesbians of color totally invisible," she said.

Glen Maxey, whose Austin district includes more black and Latino voters than white voters, said he had to work with gay and lesbian representatives in the Legislature to protect establishment of vaccination clinics at elementary schools in East Austin.

Another lesbian who recently attended an Austin "family values defense conference" said the Christians who attended are intent on sabotaging state health care provisions that would benefit minority residents.

Said Maxey, "These people aren't going to stop with a few narrow issues. They want to control everybody's lives."

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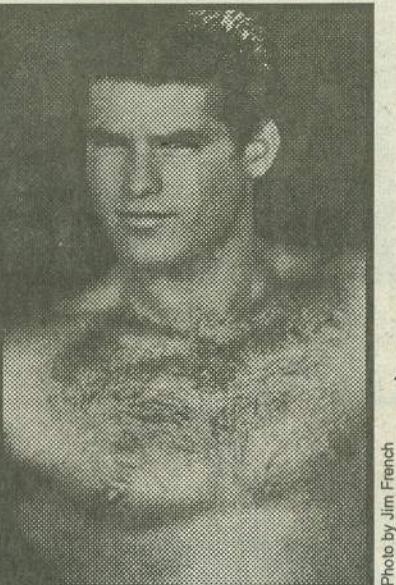


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Christopher benefit raises \$100K

By Hugh Strange
TRIANGLE Staff

AUSTIN—"We honor not the dead, but the living. We now preserve life and help our neighbors hold on to that with precious dignity," said Gov. Ann Richards at a Nov. 20 benefit for Christopher House.

Speaking to a crowd of almost 400, Richards called the project a "national model for AIDS care and an expression of this community's commitment to take care of its own."

The \$100-per-plate dinner was coordinated by the governor's daughter, Ellen Richards, who said total proceeds from the night totaled \$100,000.

The crowd was a mix of celebrities (Miss TRGA), volunteers, and supporters. Paul Bradshaw said the benefit was the first he had attended for Christopher House.

"I decided to support it because, for one thing, it's a unique facility and something the community needed desperately. I also commend the approach they took to fundraising by involving a big segment of the straight commu-



Governor Ann Richards (Photos by Kenneth David Lockerman)

nity. From what I've seen, with the participation of the straight community, Christopher House is going to be o.k.," Bradshaw said.

Christopher House is the state's first residential intermediate-care center for people with AIDS. Also known as a "step-down" facility, the center will provide 24-hour skilled nursing care for those patients who need sub-acute medical attention during periods of illness. PWAs can currently expect to pay \$1,100 per day for a hospital stay; Christopher House estimates its daily cost will be \$375. Because the center will be state-licensed, it is eligible for reimbursement from public and private third-party payers.

"Christopher House is a substantial addition to the continuum of care for people living with AIDS, and it is the first significant addition to the housing continuum since Project Transitions opened," said Eugene Sepulveda, chairman of the Austin/Travis County HIV Commission, adding: "Christopher House will improve the quality of life for people living with AIDS."

Five MCC couples register as partners

AUSTIN—Stating that gays and lesbians need to be out in number to fight the religious right, the Rev. Kenneth Martin, 49, co-pastor of the Metropolitan Community Church, and his lover, Tom Cole, 45, on Monday trekked to the Travis County Courthouse and registered their 19-year relationship.

Four other couples affiliated with the church also registered at the same time. They were: Iza Rivera and Carmen

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The Rev. Martin said that he and his partner decided to register their "long, established relationship" to support benefits for domestic partners of city employees and "because we see it as an important marker on the road to legalizing marriage. It's important to have our (gay and les-



Carmen Cruz, Iza Rivera, Scot Lumry, Dr. Jim Medcalf, Scott Mitchell and Kevin

Maxey continues fundraising efforts

By Hugh Strange
TRIANGLE Staff

AUSTIN — At his first major fundraiser aimed at re-election, state Rep. Glen Maxey, last week netted more than \$10,000. The event was held Nov. 17 at the La Zona Rosa restaurant.



Brigid Shea and Glen Maxey (Photo by Kenneth David Lockerman)

"We're here tonight to get a little bit of money, and to field off any major opponents," the Austin Democrat told the Triangle. "I fully expect I will have a Republican, fundamentalist-type opponent in the general election."

Maxey beat conservative Republican Dick Mallory in the 1992 general election with about 72 percent of the vote. Mallory has indicated that he will run again but said, in a telephone interview, that he has not yet decided to seek a rematch in the heavily Democratic and Hispanic House District 51. "I am considering it, but a lot depends on what happens between now and the filing deadline. While I think it's simply a matter of educating the voters, Mr. Maxey is most vulnerable in the Democratic primary."

Maxey said the biggest challenge would come in the primary and, that while some Democratic Hispanic leaders in his district have attempted to find a Hispanic challenger, most

(Miss TRGA), volunteers, and supporters. Paul Bradshaw said the benefit was the first he had attended for Christopher House.

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Four other couples affiliated with the church also registered at the same time. They were: Iza Rivera and Carmen Cruz of Kyle, who have been together 11 years; Scott Lumry, 34, and Dr. Jim Medcalf, 62, who have been together since last April; and Kevin Taggart, 29, and Scott Mitchell, 22, who have been a couple for two years.

"We're here for two reasons," said

Taggart. "To register our commitment to each other, and to send a message to the religious right that we are here in number and can't be beaten."

The Rev. Martin said that he and his partner decided to register their "long, established relationship" to support benefits for domestic partners of city employees and "because we see it as an important marker on the road to legalizing marriage. It's important to have our (gay and lesbian) relationships recognized legally. It's important because there is so little societal and familial support for our relationships."

Thus far 140 couples and domestic partnerships have registered at the Travis County Clerk's office.



Carmen Cruz, Iza Rivera, Scot Lumry, Dr. Jim Medcalf, Scott Mitchell and Kevin Taggart stand in line to register.



The Rev. Ken Martin and Tom Cole (Photos by Kenneth David Lockerman)

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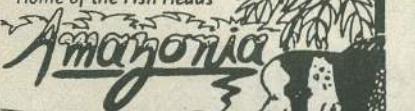
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Glen Maxey (Photo by Kenneth David Lockerman) told the Triangle. "I fully expect I will have a Republican, fundamentalist-type opponent in the general election."

Maxey beat conservative Republican Dick Mallory in the 1992 general election with about 72 percent of the vote. Mallory has indicated that he will run again but said, in a telephone interview, that he has not yet decided to seek a rematch in the heavily Democratic and Hispanic House District 51. "I am considering it, but a lot depends on what happens between now and the filing deadline. While I think it's simply a matter of educating the voters, Mr. Maxey is most vulnerable in the Democratic primary."

Maxey said the biggest challenge would come in the primary and, that while some Democratic Hispanic leaders in his district have attempted to find a Hispanic challenger, most have said they will support him.

The first openly gay candidate elected to the Texas Legislature, Maxey said he will continue to work for gay/lesbian causes, while continuing to focus on other issues important to the district. "I'm not a single-issue candidate or representative."

The fundraiser, held at Austin's La Zona Rosa, drew 80 supporters who paid \$25 each to get in the door. The remainder of the money came in response to Maxey's mailout in connection with the event.

A|R|O|U|N|D | T|H|E | S|T|A|T|E

Dallas says no to hate

By Jim Gifken
Special to the TRIANGLE

DALLAS— Newly-appointed city manager John Ware last week told lesbian and gay leaders at a reception for him that discrimination of any kind is wrong.

"Given the many challenges we're facing in Dallas, we don't have any choice but to pull together," Ware said at a reception sponsored by ARETE, a professional organization for lesbians and gay men. "We must show cohesion at the government level in order for you to have confidence in us. And we cannot afford to discriminate against anyone. Period."

Ware, who is black and took office just 17 days prior to his appearance before the group, said that primary concerns to him are juvenile violence, economic revitalization, and quality of life. Listeners raised questions of increased funding for AIDS and health benefits for same-sex partners.

Ware was to have been en route to the city's annual planning retreat at Lake Texoma which, after telling Dallas Mayor Steve Bartlett that he had prior plans, was postponed a day.

"We must recognize that this relationship is a reciprocal one," said John Ramos, ARETE spokesman. "We vote.

We pay taxes. This community is diverse and one of the largest and most vibrant in the country ... We're not asking for special privileges or favors as a community. We're only asking we be recognized as the legitimate community we are."

Openly gay city councilman Craig McDaniel explained the relationship between the council and city manager. "While the city council debates and structures policy, the city manager is responsible for implementation. Once we have established policy, such as we no longer discriminate against gays and lesbians in the police force or any other level, John Ware will endorse and accept that as his direction."

Dallas organizations represented at the reception included the AIDS Resource Center, AIDS Services of Dallas, the Black Tie Dinner Committee, Cathedral of Hope-MCC, the Dallas Gay & Lesbian Alliance, the Dallas Legal Hospice, the Dallas Tavern Guild, DIFFA/Dallas and the Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund. Also, HRCF, the Lesbian/Gay Political Coalition of Dallas, Oak Lawn Community Services, Razzle Dazzle Dallas, PrimeTimers, Stonewall Professional & Business Assn., the Turtle Creek Chorale, and the Women's Chorus of Dallas.

STATE BRIEFS

County kick-off for AIDS millions

AUSTIN — The Travis County HIV Commission and the Austin/Travis County Health Department will launch a "Stand Up and Be Counted: It Could Mean Millions" campaign at a press conference Tuesday, Nov. 23, at 3 p.m. The briefing will be held in the Executive Session Room of the Council Chambers, 311 W. 2nds St.

The campaign will be directed to persons diagnosed with AIDS and their physicians.

According to Eugene Sepulveda, chairman of the HIV commission, federal legislation through the Ryan White Title I Act provides separate funding for metropolitan areas hardest hit by the HIV epidemic and, if the Austin SMA (Travis, Hays and Williamson counties) report a total of 2,000 cases, that region will qualify for a million dollars. "If the caseload goes to 2,000, we will become a Title I city," said Sepulveda. "We need 212 more reported cases" to qualify.

Said Janna Zumbrun, executive director of AIDS Services of Austin: "Qualifying for Ryan White Title I funds is a critical step in our community's efforts to provide medical care and social services to those in desperate need."

"On March 7, 1994, millions of dollars and hundreds of thousands of units of services will fly out the window unless enough persons with AIDS are counted," said Jose Orta, project director of Informe-SIDA.

Houston coalition receives grant

HOUSTON — The PWA Coalition of Houston has received a \$650 grant from the Rodney Seiler Foundation of Houston. According to Thomas Street Clinic Volunteer Director Jean Bennett, the funds will go toward special events for patients during the holiday season. Between last March and the end of October, said Bennett, the clinic's volunteers have contributed 5,643 hours, worth an estimated \$62,078. "This effort has been at a cost of \$4.10 an hour, which has been funded by DIFFA."



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Have building, need mortgage payment

By Rick Brown
TRIANGLE Staff

SAN ANTONIO — The Esperanza Peace and Justice Center, a clearing house for progressive activism and a center of lesbian and gay community life, is almost out of the woods.

Director Graciela Sanchez said last Friday the board of directors have a new building under contract in a prime location after eviction from previous

digs Oct. 31. Talks also are continuing with an architectural firm on renovations, she said.

Now, the biggest worry is money, especially since Sanchez hopes to hand over the needed \$194,000 purchase price free and clear, or at most with just a couple of years of payments. "We're totally thrilled, but now we have to finance it," she said.

Lesbian and gay Texans could go a long way toward alleviating that worry by turning out Friday and Saturday for the center's 5th Annual Peace Market, a event rich with potential gifts for holiday giving.

Location of the market is 1420 W. Commerce in San Antonio. Items for sale will promote themes of peace, cultural diversity, social justice and ecological protection and include hand-crafted jewelry, clothing, musical instruments, books and holiday-themed decorations.

Esperanza activists already have in hand \$4,500 from a successful Halloween fund-raising dance, plus an undisclosed sum from an East Coast philanthropist, whom a previous *Texas Triangle* article helped alert to the center's plight, Sanchez said.

The new Esperanza structure is a 9,500 square-foot, two-story building purchased from San Antonio decorator Don Yarton, who lowered his price substantially to allow the deal to go through, Sanchez said.

Located at 922 San Pedro, the building is south of downtown, with nearby landmarks including The Wild Club, a popular night spot, and San Antonio College, the city's largest junior college.

The latter Sanchez called "a good, diverse school."

"We're really waiting to see how we will be affected by and affect the school," she said.

The board intends to include a cafe and bookstore into the floor plan of the new center to go with the meeting rooms and offices of affiliated organizations, which in addition to lesbian and gay interests promote those of feminists, environmentalists and people of color.

Sanchez was hopeful the new center would provide the focus for a new gay "ghetto" and a place for the community at large "to hang and be comfortable."

A series of misunderstandings and behind-the-scenes maneuvering brought

the center to the brink of closure earlier this year, when landlords in its current location issued the order to vacate.

Opening in 1987, Esperanza has served as a progressive light in a city characterized by the dual conservative influences of the U.S. Military and the Catholic Church.

Sanchez' vision was and remains a location and atmosphere where progressive groups can come together, hash out differences and share resources and ideas.

The benefit of such an alliance became clear when a gay Latino man was murdered on New Year's Day 1990 in a hate-inspired crime.

The Lesbian and Gay Media Project, an Esperanza-related watchdog committee, publicized the murder and helped direct San Antonio's attention to the senselessness of the killing.

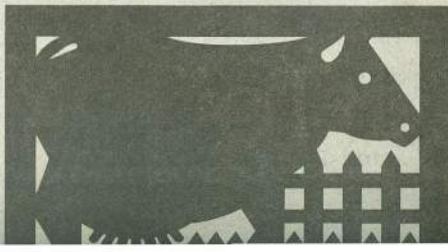
Other Esperanza accomplishments included establishing the longest-running AIDS-related art festival in Texas and sponsoring the national premier of *Tongues Untied*, a film about black gay men, months before its controversial airing on public broadcasting stations.

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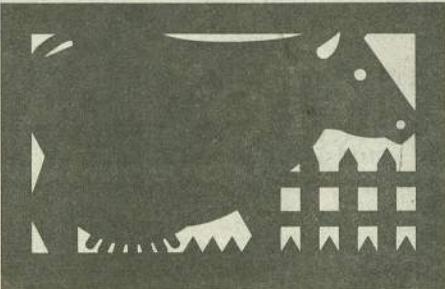
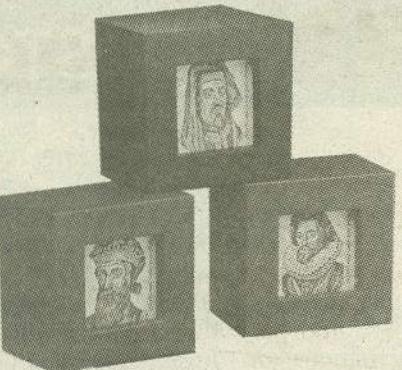
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Amidst grudges the military ban plays on

By Keith Clark
Special to the TRIANGLE

WASHINGTON — Although the Administration and Congress seem to have arrived at a grudging agreement on the military policy concerning gays and lesbians in the nation's armed forces, it also appears that the U.S. courts — and probably the Supreme Court — will have the last word.

A Nov. 16 federal appeals court ruling upholding the claim of ex-midshipman Joseph Steffan that he had been illegally forced out of the Naval Academy because he is gay was the fifth federal court decision this year rejecting the Pentagon's previous policy of banning lesbians and gay men from the armed forces. Almost no one thinks it will be the last federal court to tackle this increasingly problematic issue.

The academy made Steffan resign from Annapolis just six weeks before his he was to have graduated in 1987 after he declared to a superior that he his gay. The regulations under which he was forced out bar gays and lesbians from the military.

A new policy adopted by President Clinton earlier this year theoretically permits lesbians and gay men to serve, but only if they hide their sexual orientation. Clinton's policy would not ask and would limit inquiries about the sexual orientation of service members and recruits.

A congressional compromise measure sponsored by Rep. George Skelton (D-Mo.) and Sen. Sam Nunn (D-Ga.) incorporates a more restrictive version of Clinton's policy, including a statement that homosexuality is incompatible with

people by what they do and not by who they are," Judge Abner Mikva wrote for the unanimous three-judge panel of the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia, a panel made up of President Carter appointees.

The Justice Department has so far given no indication of whether it will appeal this most recent court ruling. But one way or the other, some legal experts say, the issue is likely to end up before the Supreme Court, possibly as early as this coming year.

"This is the collision of competing constitutional claims, the asserted right of gays to be free from discrimination versus the president's power as commander in chief and the power of Congress to regulate the military," said Paul Rothstein, a constitutional law professor at Georgetown University.

The appeals court decision didn't, of course, deal with the so-called "don't ask, don't tell" policy, but gay rights activists and legal scholar agree that the judicial basis of the court rulings so far would probably be little changed under either of the new policies.

Gay rights leaders argue that neither Clinton's plan nor the new congressional policy are improvements on the current outright ban. "In our view the new policy contains the same constitutional defects as the old one," said William Rubenstein, director of the Lesbian and Gay Rights Project of the American Civil Liberties Union.

Supreme Court Clues

Although there is little to indicate how the Supreme Court justices might view the issue of gays in the military, there are some clues into the individual

sodomy statutes.

Since then, five new justices have joined the court - Antonin Scalia, Anthony Kennedy, David Souter, Clarence Thomas and Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

Legal scholars believe the court's most conservative justices - Scalia, Thomas and Chief Justice William Rehnquist - would be likely to support the government's position of excluding gays and lesbians from the armed forces.

Justices John Paul Stevens and Harry Blackmun dissented in the 1986 Georgia sodomy decision, and analysts say they could be expected to vote against the military ban on gays as well.

That leaves Kennedy, Souter, Ginsburg and Sandra Day O'Connor.

O'Connor voted with the majority in the 1986 case, and she tends to be very deferential to government authority.

As a judge on the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals in California, Kennedy in 1980 wrote an opinion upholding the Navy's policy of expelling gays. But he drew a significant distinction between homosexual conduct, which he said warranted dismissal, and homosexual status, which he said might not.

As an appeals court judge in Washington, Ginsburg joined in a 1984 ruling against a sailor discharged for homosexuality. But she cited a Supreme Court precedent as controlling her decision and didn't join the majority in saying that constitutional privacy rights never cover homosexuality activity.

Souter's judicial views on gay rights are unknown. But he is emerging as something of a centrist maverick, fond of challenging conservative orthodoxies.

Georgetown University's Rothstein says he believes the high court is un-

issue involves a fundamental civil right, not a question of micromanaging the armed forces.

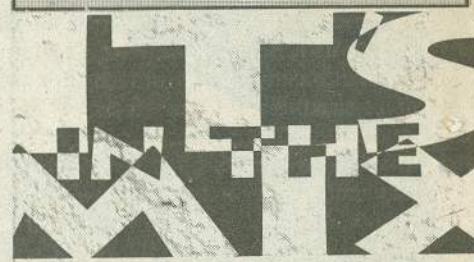
Unmarried couples to reap benefits

BOSTON (AP) — In an unusual move for a health insurance company, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Massachusetts will expand its employee medical benefits to also include unmarried couples.

The policy, to begin Jan. 1, will extend benefits to couples whether they are of the same sex or opposite sex, the company has announced.

Arthur Banks, Blue Cross' senior vice president for human resources, said the decision demonstrates the company is "committed to supporting the needs of a diverse work force."

At least one other Blue Cross plan, in Vermont, also plans to offer similar benefits to its employees starting next year, a spokesman said.



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Behavior Not Status

The appeals court ruled that the Navy's ban on gays was based on prejudice and served no legitimate purpose and ordered the government to reinstate Steffan as a commissioned naval officer. "America's hallmark has been to judge

gress to regulate the military," said Paul Rothstein, a constitutional law professor at Georgetown University.

The appeals court decision didn't, of course, deal with the so-called "don't ask, don't tell" policy, but gay rights activists and legal scholar agree that the judicial basis of the court rulings so far would probably be little changed under either of the new policies.

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Supreme Court Clues

Although there is little to indicate how the Supreme Court justices might view the issue of gays in the military, there are some clues into the individual justices possible thinking about gay rights generally.

In 1986, the Supreme Court dealt gay rights activists a major setback in a 5-4 ruling that the constitutional protections of privacy do not extend to private homosexual conduct between consenting adults. The ruling upheld Georgia's

O'Connor voted with the majority in the 1986 case, and she tends to be very deferential to government authority.

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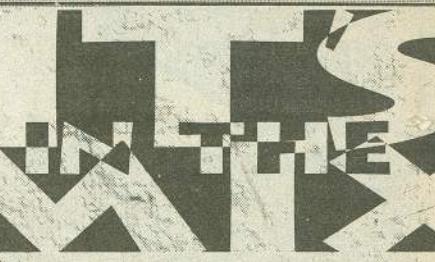
Souter's judicial views on gay rights are unknown. But he is emerging as something of a centrist maverick, fond of challenging conservative orthodoxies.

Georgetown University's Rothstein says he believes the high court is unlikely to overturn the Pentagon ban because of its long-standing historical deference to the military, the president and Congress.

But Kenneth Karst, a constitutional law professor at the University of California at Los Angeles, says the court could vote against the policy, arguing that the

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Homosexuality not new in school papers

By Dan Woog
Special to the TRIANGLE

Just about everything in high school has changed in the past couple of decades. Dress codes are out for teachers as well as students; Taco Bell, Pizza Hut and McDonald's have invaded the cafeteria. And high school newspapers are no longer the grimy, grainy, poorly written and worse-laid-out purveyors of administrative pap that seemed their fate for so many years.

The trend toward topicality and honesty — spiced with plenty of USA Today-style graphics — was illustrated earlier this fall for all of Texas to see by the editors of the Featherduster, a tabloid-size newsmagazine published by

students at Austin's Westlake High School.

The first issue of a three-part series on diversity dealt with homosexuality. "History weaves itself around us," Chip Flynn wrote on page one. "Old conventions fall to dust and new ones spring up to take their place; the stuff of legends unfolds before our very eyes. Each new day demands we cast aside old viewpoints, throwing out the swords and hatred of bygone eras, and greet the dawn with a clear, unwavering gaze, free from the darkness of past generations."

Not a bit like news about the debate team, drama club and cafeteria food, is it?

A host of articles in the five-page special section examined various aspects of gay and lesbian life. Included were teachers who incorporate homosexuality into the curriculum, the intricate reactions of religion and the judicial system to gay issues, and an interview with a gay Westlake student (who wanted his name used, but was overruled by the school administration).

The ensuing uproar was covered by the Texas Triangle. But the Featherduster articles, thorough and provocative as they were, blazed no new trails. Homosexuality has already become a staple of the high school press.

"As recently as the early '80s, there were no gay or lesbian stories in high school papers at all. Today it's so common, you're almost wrong to call it a trend," said Tom Rolnicki. He should know: As the longtime executive director of the National Scholastic Press Association (NSPA), a non-profit organization providing evaluation services, advice, contests, competitions and other support to high school journalism advisers and student writers, he reads hundreds of school papers each week.

They pour in daily from 50 states, their pages filled with a bewildering array of local controversies and concerns. But in many ways, they're all the same: The social currents that ripple across MTV, Sassy Magazine and Blockbuster Video bind teenagers together from Pt. Barrow to Key Largo. The jungle telegraph transmits, with faxlike

speed, news of fashions and fads. And gay and lesbian issues are part of today's messages.

"It's common practice today to do one story or more a year about gay and lesbian students, accompanied by sidebars on support groups and maybe an editorial or opinion column," said Rolnicki from NSPA's Minneapolis headquarters. As a gay man, he is both pleased with and intrigued by what he reads.

"I've been thinking about this for a long time," he said. "I think the main reason for the shift is AIDS — not because it affects gay men, but because it afforded student journalists the opportunity to write candidly about a serious topic, and use correct adult language in reporting."

In the 1970s, Rolnicki said, the high school press "got serious." Stories about drugs, divorce and other personal issues first crept, then swept onto the pages of high school papers. But, he said, teenage writers still "tip-toed around lots of stories. They might do a teen pregnancy piece, but they wouldn't write the word 'penis' or 'va-

continued on page 13



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team, drama club and cafeteria food, is it?

A host of articles in the five-page special section examined various aspects of gay and lesbian life. Included were teachers who incorporate homosexuality into the curriculum, the intricate reactions of religion and the judicial system to gay issues, and an interview with a gay Westlake student (who wanted his name used, but was overruled by the school administration).

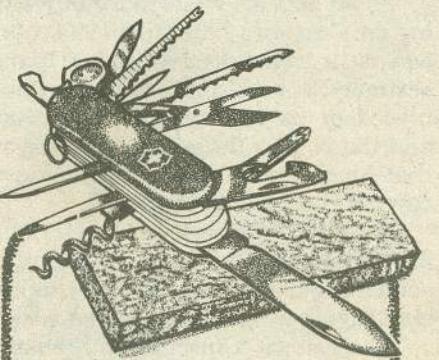
He also provides evaluation services, advice, contests, competitions and other support to high school journalism advisers and student writers, he reads hundreds of school papers each week.

They pour in daily from 50 states, their pages filled with a bewildering array of local controversies and concerns. But in many ways, they're all the same: The social currents that ripple across MTV, Sassy Magazine and Blockbuster Video bind teenagers together from Pt. Barrow to Key Largo. The jungle telegraph transmits, with faxlike

because it affects gay men, but because it afforded student journalists the opportunity to write candidly about a serious topic, and use correct adult language in reporting."

In the 1970s, Rolnicki said, the high school press "got serious." Stories about drugs, divorce and other personal issues first crept, then swept onto the pages of high school papers. But, he said, teenage writers still "tipped around lots of stories. They might do a teen pregnancy piece, but they wouldn't write the word 'penis' or 'va-

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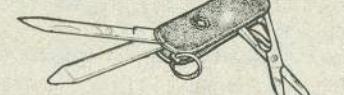


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In '70s high school press 'got serious'

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gina.

"But then in the early '80s came AIDS, and they had to use both clinical medical terms and also street language. It would have been hard for a principal to tell a high school reporter not to cover AIDS, when everyone from the Surgeon General on down (not up, unfortunately) was saying that students *needed* that information. And the student press was a great way to get that information across."

That led, Rolnicki said, to "peripheral stories" on gay men, which in turn sparked stories on gay students, homophobia and other related topics.

A female reporter for a high school paper in Georgia wrote a column entitled "Keep Uncle Sam Out of Our Bedrooms," an explicit response to a Supreme Court decision about invasion of privacy laws. "That was a landmark story for the high school press," Rolnicki recalled. "It took the subject of sodomy laws and made it real." He also was impressed by an editorial in an all-girls school paper commending a college for allowing a lesbian organization on campus. "That was a real break-

through," the NSPA director said. "It showed that stories about lesbians were important, too. Up to that time it was easier for the high school press to talk about gay men."

"I think we'll see more 'normal' coverage of student activities. Stories about a kid who's involved in a gay youth group, or sewing a quilt panel, or going to Washington for the march, rather than survey-type pieces on gay rights or homophobia."

School papers deal with homosexuality in a host of ways. There are opinion pieces (occasionally penned by a self-identified gay or lesbian student) as well as feature stories, editorials and hard news pieces concerning homophobia or queer curricular issues. "Student writers sometimes still have difficulty with terminology, and sometimes the stories lack the polish of the commercial press," Rolnicki said. "Some of them read like a high school

theme — they cite Seventeen magazine or Newsweek as sources, rather than first-hand information — but these writers make up for all that with candor. They deal in depth with difficult issues; they devote a couple of pages to it, and they are doing more and more interviews with actual kids."

Because he is not in the schools when the papers come out, Rolnicki finds it hard to judge reactions to gay and lesbian stories. "My sense from followup stories, letters to the editor and phone calls to us is that there are occasional slaps on the hands and a few complaints. But because I've seen these types of stories for several years now, and all across the country — Wyoming, Montana, Wisconsin, Iowa, not just California and New York — it says to me that schools are more enlightened than they used to be. And they should be. These really are student topics, even if some teachers and parents don't like their kids to be thinking about them."

One of the highlights of each school journalism year is NSPA's national convention and workshop. Hundreds of teachers, advisers and students

meet to exchange ideas, papers (and addresses), attend seminars, and listen to professional writers and editors. "We recently had for the first time a speaker identified as a member of the National Lesbian and Gay Journalists Association," Rolnicki reported. "He didn't speak on a gay topic, but afterward I saw a number of students go up to him, and identified themselves as gay or lesbian. We didn't seek him out as a speaker because he was gay, but we're always conscious of the need to provide role models. We've gotten women, African-Americans and Hispanics involved — and now this sexual orientation thing is working out too."

As the visibility of gays and lesbians in schools increases, student press coverage won't fade into the background. But, Rolnicki said, the type of stories might change. "I think we'll see more 'normal' coverage of student activities," he predicted. "Stories about a kid who's involved in a gay youth group, or sewing a quilt panel, or going to Washington for the march, rather than survey-type pieces on gay rights or homophobia."

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L.A. partner health benefits program proposed

By Keith Clark**Special to the TRIANGLE**

LOS ANGELES — Three members of the Los Angeles City Council on Tuesday, Nov. 16, introduced an ordinance to extend medical benefits to domestic partners of city workers, both gay and straight.

Meanwhile, due to what he called "severe financial restraints," New Orleans Mayor Sidney Barthelemy vetoed a city council-adopted measure that would have allowed gay and lesbian city workers to enroll their partners in the city's health insurance program on a par with the spouses of married employees.

And, at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, N.J., five gay and lesbian employees filed a lawsuit against the school and the state of New Jersey demanding the same health benefits offered to the families of heterosexual workers. The suit asks for compensation for denial of the benefits from 1981, when Rutgers adopted an anti-bias policy, to the present.

The proposed Los Angeles measure, authored by Councilwoman Jackie

Goldberg and seconded by Councilmen Zev Yaroslavsky and Richard Alarcon, would let city workers who have lived with domestic partners for at least one year obtain medical and dental insurance coverage for them and any of their dependent children.

"We think it's a small amount of money but a large step forward," said Goldberg, the city's first openly gay council member.

Based on similar programs in other U.S. cities, proponents say only about 1 percent of the city's workers would be expected to sign up for the benefits package. That would work out to an additional \$758,000 to the city's annual \$21.6 million expenditures for spousal benefits.

Although Mayor Richard Riordan says he wants time to study Goldberg's proposal before deciding what position he will take on it, Council President John Ferraro said he's confident the measure will pass.

Around the U.S., there is a gradually emerging trend for cities and private businesses to extend health and other benefits to unmarried partners - usually both gay and straight. Ironically, although the domestic partners movement originated in the gay rights movement, surveys indicate that only

a relatively small percentage of all eligible workers take advantage of the programs and that the majority of those who do are usually heterosexuals.

In Laguna Beach, Calif., for example, since the city adopted a partners benefit program in 1990, only 18 of the city's 200 employees have signed up so far - and only one of those 18 was gay.

In larger cities, Seattle's example suggests similar patterns. Only 2.3 percent of Seattle's 10,000 city employees have opted for the partner benefits program, and again, the majority of those participating (67 percent) are heterosexuals.

According to the Los Angeles-based Spectrum Institute, an organization that specializes in family diversity issues, the main reason for the small number of workers who actually enroll in benefits programs - whether city plans or those of private corporations - is that their partners also work and have health insurance through their own employers.

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The proposed measure, authored by Councilwoman Jackie Goldberg and seconded by Councilmen Zev Yaroslavsky and Richard Alarcon, would let city workers who have lived

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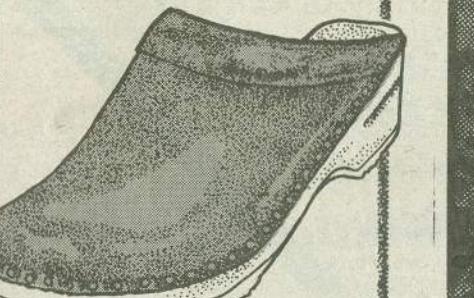
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Lesbian mom, sperm donor battle in court

By Arlene Zarembka
Special to the TRIANGLE

The seemingly simple question, "Who are the child's parents?" does not have a simple answer. Controversy over a decision by a New York Family Court judge this spring illustrates the sharp disagreements on this issue that can develop within the gay and lesbian community. In perhaps the first decision of its kind in a case concerning a visitation dispute between lesbian co-parents and a known sperm donor, the judge refused to give paternity and visitation rights to the donor, who was a gay man.

The case involved a lesbian couple who had two daughters, each lesbian having one by donor insemination from two separate known donors. A gay man who, in 1981, had been the sperm donor for one of the daughters brought suit ten years later seeking a paternity order. Before he donated sperm, he and the lesbian couple had agreed that he would have no parental rights or responsibilities. They also agreed that he would make himself known as the biological father to the child born of the insemination, should the child ask about her origins.

After the child was born, he had no contact with her or the mothers for three years. When the daughter was about three, she began to ask about her biological origins. The donor and the lesbian family spent several days together so that the daughter could meet her biological father. For the next six years, the donor visited with the mothers and their two daughters several times a year, and corresponded with the child that he fathered. Eventually, he asked to take both daughters to meet his biological family, but did not want the mothers to be included in the visit. The mothers refused this proposal. The sperm donor then filed suit to obtain a declaration of paternity and visitation rights.

The Family Court judge expressed no reservation about the type of family that the lesbians had created — two lesbians raising two daughters equally as sisters, even though the children are not related to each other biologically. The judge found that the daughter viewed the two lesbians as her parents, and that she did not view the sperm donor as a parental figure.

Although New York state law requires that a known father of a child be granted

paternity rights, the judge refused to grant paternity rights to the sperm donor. He found that the two lesbians were the daughter's parents, even though the lesbian co-parent had not adopted the child. In a remarkable ruling for a patriarchal culture, the judge did not consider either biology to be destiny nor a male to be an essential parent for a child.

But was it the right decision? The case raises disturbing questions, as both sides used arguments, in an effort to win, that have victimized gay men and lesbians in custody cases in the past.

The mother's attorney stirred the kettle of AIDS-phobia, grilling the sperm donor on his HIV status, T-cell count, and general health condition. Although the judge gave other reasons for the decision, he did note the HIV status of the sperm donor in a footnote, leading one to wonder if the AIDS ploy played a role, if just a small one, in the mother's victory.

On the other hand, the donor's attorney argued that because the lesbian co-parent of the daughter is not legally recognized as a parent, the daughter would have two parents only if the donor were granted paternity rights. Courts routinely have used such an argument to deny lesbian co-parents custody rights, because they have no recognition in law as parents.

While a purely biological criterion for defining parents is hardly appropriate, as it excludes lesbian co-parents, step-parents, and others who function as parents from being considered legally as parents, a purely parenting criteria (i.e. those who act as parents are entitled to parental rights) has its own problems. If

take care of her children from a previous relationship might, for example, find the boyfriend threatening a custody battle if she leaves, as a way to force the woman to stay with him, even though she never intended for him to be considered the children's parent.

Nancy Polikoff, of the American University law school, has developed an approach that bridges the gap between a purely biological and a purely parenting model. She proposes that a parent be defined to include a person who has maintained a functional parental relationship with a child, if a legally recognized parent has created that relationship with the intent that it be parental in nature. This allows for recognition of the custody rights of those who are considered parents by the parties involved. At the same time, it prevents those who have a relationship with a child that is not parental from being able to use the courts to force visitation whenever a dispute between the adults affects the relationship with the child.

Polikoff's approach does not answer the question as to whether or not the New York decision was the right one — only those hearing the entire case could decide whether the original agreement between the parties (that the sperm donor was not to have any parental rights or responsibilities) was changed by the statements and conduct of the lesbian mothers later. But the standard would be a useful one for the courts, as well as the lesbian and gay community, to adopt to aid in resolving visitation disputes between lesbian co-parents and known sperm donors.

Arlene Zarembka is a practicing attorney.

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DAVIS, CA — **Be PROUD!**, one of the largest suppliers of gay and lesbian pride products, has just released its new 1993-94 wholesale and retail catalog. Featured are over 200 items including jewelry, flags and banners, decals, windsocks, clothing, teddy bears, journals, soaps and more. The company, celebrating its third year of business, is owned by Nancy Avery and Dorothy Mason. As activists, they believe that visibility in society is the key to obtaining full civil rights. Ten percent of their profits are donated to community organizations. To obtain a free catalog, call 800/755-9976, or write to P.O. Box 1364, Davis, CA 95617.

Mapplethorpe's gay season's greetings

BOSTON — 'Tis that gay holiday shopping season once again, and this year the Robert Mapplethorpe Laboratory for AIDS Research in Boston is offering holiday greeting cards imprinted with "Orchids" by the late photographer. The cards run \$10 each, a portion of which is donated to the research facility. For information: (617) 646-1946.

Meanwhile, Don't Panic, a chain of *tres gai* shops, is offering Freedom Lights, the "world's first gay tree lights." According to the firm's brochure, the new lights allow Christmas trees to "finally come out of the closet." The multi-hued lights were inspired by the gay and lesbian rainbow flag and "come in a wacky retro '50s box encouraging buyers to 'Have a Mary Christmas' and practice safe tree decorating." Contact Don't Panic at (800) 457-2642.



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DALLAS, TX — The **Crossroads Market**, a gay and lesbian bookstore with stores in both Houston and Dallas, has introduced a mail order catalog called Browse-at-Home. It contains more than 250 book and music entries and offers access to virtually any book in print.

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TRIANGLE ARTS

Vol. 2, Number 7

November 23, 1993

Vance, the all-singing, all-dancing activist

By Sherilyn Brandenstein
Special to the TRIANGLE

AUSTIN — Vocalist, actor and director Boyd Vance wants every stagestruck child to have the opportunities he received.

"When I was a kid ... we lived down the street from Texas Southern University (in Houston). In 1964, some of the most talented people in the African-American opera and music world produced *The King and I* [there]. It was a full-stage production with all black people," he recalls with affection. "Me and my brother played the Siamese twins ...

"About three years later, the Opera Department produced 'La Bohème.' And I was that little boy in the third act that did, 'I want a trumpet or a horse,'" he sings. These were the theatrical experiences Vance considers pivotal in directing him toward a career in the arts.

The animated actor is marking a year and a month of playing Tony, a roll hair stylist, in Zachary Scott Theatre Center's production of *Shear Madness*. Meanwhile, he also appears in *45 RPM*, a revue of 60s and 70s pop tunes, at Katz's Top of the Marc this month. Weekdays find him shuttling between his East Austin office at Informe-SIDA and the bars, bookstores and



tion, he works to raise black children's self-esteem. That, he says, is a more important consideration in the campaign against black genocide than whether he is pro-creating.

Wilson says that Vance has matured while working through the tensions which arise in a cast such as *Shear Madness*, which is wedded together in a long run. "He's more interested in consensus [now]," she says. In his 12-year affiliation with the theatre center, Wilson says Vance's respect for dramatic texts has increased, despite a penchant for improvising. "Now he wants a greater consistency from one performance to the next," she notes.

Besides playing diverse characters in Project Interact children's theatre productions at the center in the 1980s, he also directed *The Wiz*, *A ... My Name is Alice*, *Purlie*, *The Dinosaur Play*, and *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*, an August Wilson play. Across the river at Capitol City Playhouse, he directed *Eubie*, *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, and *A Streetcar Named Desire*. When Live Oak Theatre produced *The Colored Museum* in 1990, Vance served as a consulting director.

Commenting on his directing approach, singer-actress Janice Stinson says, "He's more free, let-

some of the most talented people in the African-American opera and music world produced *The King and I* [there]. It was a full-stage production with all black people," he recalls with affection. "Me and my brother played the Siamese twins ...

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Vance excels at improvisational singing and acting. Zachary Scott's artistic director Alice Wilson considers the character of Tony a natural vehicle for these talents. Indeed, Vance has developed a notable African-American gay figure in this, Austin's longest-running



Boyd Vance, alive and at center, now in his second year in Zachary Scott Theatre Center's production of *Shear Madness*, also works with Informe SIDA as an AIDS educator. Also pictured, from left, are Robin Carbone, Patricia Wappner and Douglas Taylor (Photo by Kirk Tuck)

comedy. Not only has he gained notoriety with the character, but his portrayal also earned a 1993 Critics' Table Award.

Amid his whirlwind of health and arts activism, Vance fends off criticism

from black fundamentalists about gay people. He calls himself an ally of the black family, not a threat. Whether helping a child with his math, coaching a fledgling actress or teaching HIV preven-

tion, as *Shear Madness* is currently being presented in a long run. "He's more interested in consensus [now]," she says. In his 12-year affiliation with the theatre center, Wilson says Vance's respect for dramatic texts has increased, despite a penchant for improvising. "Now he wants a greater consistency from one performance to the next," she notes.

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Commenting on his directing approach, singer-actress Janice Stinson says, "He's more free, letting [the actor] develop the character ... And you can put some individuality to it." She says that Vance's democratic sympathies lead him to double-cast some shows, so that more people can participate.

For two years, Boyd directed drama and taught music at St. Stephens Episcopal School. *Shear Madness* continues on page A3

Nash hits 'dysfunctional' bullseye

By Rob Davenport
Special to the TRIANGLE

Anybody who caught Rob Nash's one-man show, *12 Steps Toward a More Dysfunctional You*, at Esther's Follies last July, must have been treated to quite a performance, the equivalent of channel-surfing for the proscenium stage. Unfortunately, I didn't see that play, but if Nash's new work—which uses the same set of six characters—is any indication, it must have been a minor revelation of character acting: one man playing all the parts, switching from personality to personality, like a nervous television



Rob Nash

watcher switching between channels. Last Sunday, Nash gave a read-through of the sequel to *12 Steps Toward a More Dysfunctional You*, called *12 Steps Toward a More Dysfunctional Christmas*. Even without sets, atmospheric lighting or sound effects, the piece kept the audience engrossed, probably because the play at heart doesn't

need props. It works just fine on Nash's extraordinary ability to make his characters come to life. It also helps that we don't need special lights or sound to get the humor: the bullseye impersonations of celebrities like Phil Donahue, or stock characters like the teenage girl, Ashley, 'a child of the mall', compulsively dropping her consonants—"Omagah!" instead of "Oh, my god!"

The *Christmas* play continues the saga of the Smiths—Mildred, the family matriarch; Fred, her gay son who has AIDS; Margaux, her busy-

INSIDE ARTS

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Ice princess Turandot, p. A3

ON SCREEN

Bill Moyers looks right, p. A4

AT THE TABLE

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ON THE STREET

The great Montrose twister, p. A11

O | N | S | T | A | G | E

Halcyon Days offers sharp political satire

THEATER
REVIEW
by DAVID
M. COHEN



For Ronald Reagan, the 1983 invasion of Grenada was "one of the highest of the high points" of his eight years in the presidency. For playwright Steven Dietz, it's the defining event of the entire era: one that taught the military the manipulative tricks that would prove so useful in Panama, Libya, the Persian Gulf (and even Iran-Contra).

Dietz's *Halcyon Days*, currently on view at Hyde Park Theatre, is a noble American attempt at the kind of political satire that British playwrights like David Hare (*Pravda*) and Caryl Churchill (*Mad Forest, Top Girls*) seem to toss off so effortlessly. And while the satire falls short in providing major insight—does anyone really need to be reminded at this late date how vacuous President Reagan and friends were?—the talented Frontera Productions cast compensates with razor-sharp characterizations of petty, loathsome Washington insiders.

Whether it's Ray Pond as an unc-

tuous, rose-loving Spin Doctor Strangelove, or a blond Ken Webster as a Howdy Doody/Dan Quayle-like candidate-in-training, these Beltway Bandits are deftly amusing. Katherine Catmull shines as a Peggy Noonan-inspired speechwriter, serving a literally cardboard president and sparring with Dick Reiss's jaded senator capable of volcanic anger. Reiss's cynical humor is a nice foil to Catmull's naivete. Their scene at the opera — talking about things "we don't want to talk about" — achieves brilliance.

Scott Davis and Annie Suite generate much heat as medical students who delight in playing at bondage scenes. Ameerah Tatum's solid Caribbean accent lends authenticity to her thankless role as the only native Grenadian, while John Eathorne is a comically menacing CIA operative.

Director Jim Fritzler demonstrates his usual creativity and panache. He's also responsible for the patriotic-colored setting dominated by a life-sized photograph of a smiling Reagan Cabinet and a jumbo American flag.

On the debit side, the presence of scene-shifting stage managers is, at times, intrusive, and hasn't anyone ever heard the ring of a cellular telephone? Overall pacing of the piece seems slow, but to be fair, Dietz's play takes a bit of a nosedive in the later scenes, straining for righteous

indignation that forces the actors into shrillness.

But don't get me wrong. *Halcyon Days* is for lovers of slick political satire and connoisseurs of accomplished acting. And doesn't that cover just about everybody?

[Frontera Productions' *Halcyon Days* performs Thursday-Saturday at 8pm through Dec 4 at Austin's Hyde Park Theatre, 511 W. 43rd St. Phone: 452-6688. There will be one matinee on Sunday, November 28 at 4pm and one special performance on Monday, November 29 at 8pm.]

• • •

Briefly ... Even if physical pain hadn't driven me from Different Stages' *Orpheus Descending* after one act, I'm certain it would have taken days to recover from the emotional anguish evoked by this shabby, misguided attempt at producing one of Tennessee Williams' fascinating, early plays.

Paula Ruth Gilbert showed potential as Lady Torrance, but the hammy, insufferable posturing (both vocal and physical) of the entire ensemble was hardly inspiring. Unless you're interested in viewing a demonstration of seven ways to eat a pickle (I kid you not!), I suggest you wait for the Alley's spring revival of the play in Houston. Williams — and Austin — deserves better than this.

Flesh and Bone
suspenseful

By Steven Alan McGaw
Special to the TRIANGLE

One of the best things about *Flesh and Bone* is that it's good to see James Caan in a role that taps (and even tests) his considerable talents. But there's a lot to like in this graceful, atmosphere-laden tale written and directed by Steve Kloves (*The Fabulous Baker Boys*).

In the film's claustrophobic prologue, a young boy turns up one night in the front yard of a Texas farm family. He's lost, he says, and the farmer and his warm-hearted wife agree to put him up for the night, planning to help him home the next morning.

But, for them, tomorrow never comes. Late in the night, the boy pads downstairs and unlocks the front door. A man enters, black Stetson on his head, an empty pillow case in his weathered hands. But the ruse and subsequent robbery turn deadly when the farmer awakens and comes downstairs, gun in hand. The robber opens fire and doesn't quit until the entire family is dead. All except the infant girl, left to cry in her crib.

Three decades later, Arlis (Dennis Quaid) is a sullen loner maintaining a small, seedy empire of vending machines and games in the tiny, burned-up towns that dot Central Texas.

But this cherished routine is upset when he meets the drunken mess that is Meg Ryan (she col-

Characters leap from family to stage

continued from page A1

body daughter-in-law; Matt, the druggie grandson; Ashley, the Valley Girl grand-

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But his cherished routine is upset when he meets the drunken mess that is Meg Ryan (she collapses coming out of a cake at a roadhouse bachelor party), a young woman whose charm and offhand manner belie her melancholy and sense of isolation. Fleeing a bad marriage, Ryan (the real-life Mrs. Quaid) sets her sights on the reluctant Arlis and succeeds, it seems, in breaking through his carefully constructed shell.

But the unlikely couple has a rendezvous with fate, and neither of the pair can suspect what they will learn (or do) before it's all over.

Quaid does a fine job of building an off-putting facade around his frightened adolescent core. Ryan proves once again she can rise to the occasion of demanding material. Caan gives his all in a deliciously evil turn as the icily villainous Roy, and newcomer Gwyneth Paltrow is devilishly funny as Roy's tough-as-nails traveling companion. Texas thespians Joe Berryman and Libby Valari offer solid cameos as, respectively, a bewildered undertaker and a flirtatious waitress.

Characters leap from family to stage

continued from page A1

body daughter-in-law; Matt, the druggie grandson; Ashley, the Valley Girl granddaughter; and Windsong, Margaux's lesbian sister, a veteran of 12-step programs. Sound like characters from a TV sitcom? Actually, they're more parodies, but Nash gives them life by finding the pathos in their absurd behavior. Windsong, who has a therapist and a spiritualist, swears in a 'politically correct' way: instead of goddamn, she says "goddess-damn." Matt, the drug-user, after coming out of a coma suffered in a car wreck, recommends thorazine to his sister if she should happen to be in a recovery situation like himself. For Christmas, Matt and Ashley give their gay uncle a "starter kit" to a Time-Life series of Bette Davis films; the kit consists of three well-known Davis pictures including *All About Eve*, a 'staple' for any gay man's video library.

The play's plot revolves on the deaths of two unseen characters, Mildred's alcoholic ex-husband, Harvey, and Bill, Margaux's recovering alcoholic husband. The deaths accelerate a process of disintegration already in progress in Margaux's family. It also provides an



Nash in a wild and crazy moment

opportunity for each character to re-evaluate their relationship with the others, to 'choose' a family that will nurture and not suffocate them. This is as much a description of the premise as the plot. It may come off a little pat, but so does Nash's ending. That's the chief weakness of the piece, which

takes its satirical inspiration from television sitcoms, but then falls prey at the end to the same glib artificial resolutions of sitcom comedy. It's hard to believe that Margaux, traditional home-maker that she is, would give up her two children to her mother-in-law.

Outside of the weak second act, Nash has a lot going for him, including wickedly funny dialogue and an hilarious parody of 12-step programs, television talk shows and the current Iron Man mystique. His rapport with the audience is remarkable, and he shifts easily from character to character; though towards the end, accents became a little muddled. This was just a read-through, yet Nash made it seem as if the whole stage was alive with his characters' interactions. The finished product should be well-worth seeing.

[12 Steps to a More Dysfunctional You (the original play) will play a limited run this weekend at Curtains Theatre, 3733 Washington Ave. at Heights Blvd. in Houston, on Fri. and Sat. at 8:00 and Sun. at 2:00 and 6:00.

12 Steps to a More Dysfunctional Christmas will open Dec. 3 for twenty performances closing Dec. 26. For information on both plays, 713/862-4548.]

O | N | S | T | A | G | E

Austin Lyric *Turandot* visually stunning

By Rick Brown
TRIANGLE Staff

AUSTIN—Stunning sets, well-paced pageantry and some truly fine orchestral playing were the hallmarks of a grandly mounted *Turandot* at the Austin Lyric Opera last weekend.

If the vocal performances weren't quite up to the same level, that's ... okay, as Stuart Smalley, *Saturday Night Live's* perennial 12-stepper, says — the sheer spectacle of it all was enough to carry the show.

Anthony Burgess, the discerning British novelist and music critic, said *Turandot* is one of the three greatest operas in the repertory — along with Mozart's *Don Giovanni* and Purcell's *The Fairy Queen* — and part of that greatness lies within the exotic narrative itself.

This production opened arrestingly with a dense representation of old Peking and a set bathed in scarlet. The 80-some-odd-member Lyric chorus filled the Bass Concert Hall stage, kneeling in prostrate unison before a huge brass gong whose chilling rings would bring down the first act curtain.

By that point, unknown prince Calaf will have caught his first vision of ice princess Turandot in a moment gorgeously portrayed by the Lyric's Deco-esque set, which opera companies in Miami, Dallas, Houston and San Francisco commissioned jointly in 1981.

Clouds part to reveal a wide and

shining pearl moon glowing brighter with the spirit of *Turandot* as Calaf's blood runs hotter with desire. Calaf is inspired to cast aside his exiled father Timur and the slave girl Liù, dash to the gong and virally swing the mallet three times: Like tens of bewitched princes before him, Calaf has announced his willingness to risk death to win the prize of *Turandot*.

The brilliant pearl moon — the primary focal point under the proscenium in all three acts — provided an effective send-up of the evening's central dichotomy, which found words in the third of three riddles Calaf must answer: "What is the ice that sets you aflame but grows still colder from the heat of your heart?" The answer of course is *Turandot* herself.

There's no question Giacomo Puccini was up to composing to this level of passion. The man who set to broad, primal melodies the frail pathos of Mimi in *La Bohème*, the deep religious faith of *Tosca*, the romantic longing of *Butterfly*, didn't let us down here, and neither did the Lyric orchestra.

Clear articulations among the winds, expressive strings — especially in tremolo passages — and horns and trombones with a real depth of fortitude were my initial impressions.

Another aspect of Puccini's art is the expressiveness with which he advances the action with soundtrack-like incidental music. Under the baton of conductor

Chris Nance, the Lyric orchestra proved a quick and graceful commentator to what was happening on stage.

In addition, the regally costumed Lyric chorus acquitted itself admirably both in song and in the extensive Oriental hand motions and other choreography members were called on to perform.

Special kudos go to the unlucky executioners, whom Hebert had sharpening their blades while barely covered by sumo-style loincloths. Some exhibited quite a corpulence, but nevermind fellas, it all went to the greater good of the production.

After correctly guessing three riddles to win *Turandot's* hand, if not her reluctant heart, Calaf is determined to warm her to his love and offers a riddle of his own. If *Turandot* can discover his name by sunrise, he will submit to the blade.

What follows at the opening of Act III is *Nessun Dorma*, one of the most famous arias in all Puccini and a virtual calling card in recent years for Luciano Pavarotti. As sunrise approaches, Calaf is exultant in his impending victory as city dwellers shudder in fear, for *Turandot* has decreed none shall sleep until the stranger's name is known.

Tenor Thomas Booth's rendering of the famous passage was his finest moment on stage Friday night, but a reviewer can't help wishing Booth had brought the same conviction and vocal power to the rest of his role, particularly

Non Piangere Liù at the end of Act I.

Following *Nessun Dorma*, the mob finally discovers blind Timur, Calaf's exiled father, and the gentle Liù, the slave girl who guided the deposed king out of danger because Calaf, she said, once smiled at her.

Turandot herself appears for the interrogation, but selfless Liù will not reveal Calaf's name, telling her rival, "You too will love the prince, and I will die before dawn so that he may win."

Ai-Lan Zhu as Liù achieved some affecting pianissimos in both this passage and her first act aria. Hers is the only character in the opera Puccini allows such a state of pathos, but her vocal quality wasn't always true. The obvious audience favorite at final curtain, Zhu graciously accepted the rebel whoops the Texans offered.

But this reviewer had to mentally reserve some of that praise for the character of Liù, for how else can one explain the tepid applause the audience later tendered Ruth Falcon for her well-sung *Turandot*?

Falcon essayed the role with accurate clarity at the fortissimo level for most of the evening, and never did she verge on the shrill, even as she sailed above the huge Lyric chorus with sheer vocal power.

The moral here for my money is that no one likes a cold-blooded bitch, however much she warms up later.

Vance parlays basic skills into empowerment

continued from page A1

pal School. Music teacher Liz Hansing has seen him inspire even the most reluctant middle-schoolers.



a black performance ensemble while building audiences for African-American theatre and music in Austin. [See

Turning to lighter topics, he recommends the holiday revue *Merry Christmas, Baby!* [See

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Vance parlays basic skills into empowerment

continued from page A1

pal School. Music teacher Liz Hansing has seen him inspire even the most reluctant middle-schoolers.

"He's able to make them comfortable enough to try singing when they might not feel they can. I have this image of all eyes fixed on Boyd, almost all [the students] singing ... They lose that self-consciousness," she explains.

Vance graduated from St. Stephens, and was a cheerleader when his twin brother played football at the school. He credits his teachers and parents with giving him the confidence that he could be or do anything he envisioned, even organizing an all-school parade before a football game.

At thirtysomething, Vance still is an irrepressible cheerleader. His performing arts and educational missions have led him to area theatres, clubs, community centers, churches, university and school stages, as well as appearing in a video drama. Having completed a B.A. degree in 1983, he has integrated performance work into every job he has held since.

Vance considers his black heritage and open gayness to be assets in performance.



Vance soft soaps a seated Jeff Shaevel in a cutting scene. (Photo by Paul Bardagjy)

"I have some basic skills of bullshit and manipulation," he states. "If those gifts are gonna help empower or provide forums for gay people or black people or Hispanic people or 'crippled' people to perform art ... if they can have as great a time as I'm havin', then I'm gonna use those skills to do that."

In that vein, he co-founded The Progressive Arts Collective, to nurture

a black performance ensemble while building audiences for African-American theatre and music in Austin. [See sidebar.] Whether acting, directing or singing, Vance usually invests his own work with humor. Even at Inform-SIDA, his comic routine makes HIV prevention "more palatable." He uses satire, games and condom races.

Turning to lighter topics, he recommends the holiday revue *Merry Christmas, Baby*, which he directs annually, as fun family entertainment. Also, theatre buffs can catch him in the next Zachary Scott Theatre Center musical, *Once on This Island*, an African American tale set in the Caribbean.

Black performing troupe mulls next move

AUSTIN — Actor and director Boyd Vance has joined with avocational performers Dewey Brooks and Trina Scott to form the Progressive Arts Collective or Pro Arts in Austin. The group strives to develop an annual season of African American performance art for local audiences. Pro Arts also runs workshops where black singers and actors can hone their skills.

"There are a lot of issues that we can deal with in the theatrical forum, where people can start to analyze and really look at themselves, but we've got to get them in the house, and we've got to engage them," Vance says. "Part of that is empowering the actor and letting them know what talent they have."

The collective produced *A Soldier's Play* at Austin Community College and cosponsored well-attended tributes to Duke Ellington and Nat King Cole this past year. Vance is reviewing scripts for an Athol Fugard play and the women's drama *Long Time Since Yesterday* for staging in 1994.

On Dec. 5, the collective will present African American achievement awards in the arts. The 7:30pm benefit program at Esther's Pool on Sixth Street will follow an Ebony Connection reception at 6:30 to honor the gay and lesbian award winners.

[For more information about the Dec. 5 programs, call Ebony Connection at 926-DRUM. To contact Pro Arts, call Dewey Brooks at 447-5343.]

O | N | S | C | R | E | E | N

Moyers views Christian right's 'Ground Zero'

By Paul-David Wadler
Special to the TRIANGLE

In "The New Holy Wars," last week's edition of *Bill Moyers' Journal* on public broadcasting stations, the liberal Texan examined the Christian right in Colorado Springs, Colo., the virtual Ground Zero of anti-gay political movements.

This city is home to over a dozen large conservative Christian organizations, as well as Pike's Peak, where apparent lesbian Katherine Lee Bates penned the poem "America the Beautiful" one hun-

dred years ago. Moyers wryly explains. Clearly he is on our side throughout.

Moyers presents the issue as one of competing fears. Christian rightists fear their children will be lost to the so-called homosexual agenda. Gay men and lesbian women fear for their basic human rights. Although it seems clear the seminary-trained Moyers finds the arguments of the Christian fundamentalists unconvincing, he seldom confronts their faulty logic, embarrassingly inaccurate data, and bad theology.

That doesn't stop him for letting oth-

ers poke fun, however. The local pastor of the United Church of Christ, a live-and-let-live Christian, recalled listening to the notoriously anti-gay Colorado University football coach explain the basis for his aversion, which is Leviticus' injunction that "man shall not lie with man."

A few lines farther down in Leviticus, the pastor explained, the Bible declares it is an abomination to touch the skin of a dead pig. "Uh-oh" he said, grinning. "Looks like there goes football at CU."

Through such vignettes, the documentary makes it clear that the Christian right agenda against equal rights for gay and lesbian Americans depends upon three perceptions.

First, homosexuals are demons who live far outside the boundaries of society and wish to "recruit" others to join them. The corollary here is that whatever ills befall homosexuals we bring upon ourselves; society's innate bigotry and oppression is not at fault. The second central perception is fairly paranoid — that homosexuals operate under a monolithic political "agenda," and the third perception adherents themselves probably would deny, but Moyers makes it

clear that the Christian right isn't a religious movement at all, but a political one.

We also see that few of the rightists could be called scholars. They blithely quote ridiculous statistics that, for example, 92 percent of gay men practice anal-oral sex — so-called "rimming" — that gay men have an average of 20 to 106 sexual partners per year and that a gay man's average lifespan is 41 years.

Even forgetting that these statistics of self-destructive behavior should provide evidence of oppression rather than an excuse to limit rights, it is easy for us to dismiss the numbers as patently absurd. Sadly, there is no evidence that the Christians concern themselves with the sociology of oppressed groups or that they care about the source or accuracy of their figures, so long as they sound "scientific."

Moyers provided a prime example of the greatest danger of the fundamentalist movement with film of Kevin Tebedo, who recently visited Austin to organize right-wing Christians as part of "family values defense conference." Tebedo actually makes the shocking statement that the Christian Bible — or what actually is the modern English translation of the texts put together at the fourth century Council of Nicea — should provide the basis for the entire American civil legal code. Jesus is, after all, "the King of Kings," he said.

Overall, the message that Moyers had for the lesbian and gay community is that we must confront forthrightly a homophobic culture which encourages us to practice a furtive, occasionally sexual lifestyle rather than integrating our sexuality more intimately and openly into our lives.

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O | N | S | C | R | E | E | N

Monkey Zetterland is Antin's auspicious debut

By Steven Alan McGaw

Special to the TRIANGLE

Daily Variety describes *Inside Monkey Zetterland*, an appealing comedy drama playing at selected (and selective) theatres around the state as "stunning ... a humanistic vision with a magnetic cast and inspired writing."

Whew. Director Jefery Levy (*Drive*) has indeed crafted an engaging, disarmingly loose little film, but one wonders if such a, well, slight work merits the likes of *Variety*'s windy prose.

Still, there's a lot to be said for Levy's film. It was written by its star, Steven Antin, an actor best remembered for his roles as a teenage Lothario in 1982's *The Last American Virgin*, and as one of Jodie Foster's rapists in *The Accused*. He plays Monkey, a luckless would-be screenwriter who, if he weren't so distracted by the comings and goings of his loud, eccentric family, might discover he's just a wee bit deficient in the talent department. As it is, Monkey only gets to peck away at his pet project (a

shrill opus about a 1930s conspiracy to prevent mass transit in Los Angeles) when he's not listening to ceaseless criticism from his soap-star mother (Katharine Helmond), love-lorn laments from his lesbian sister (Patricia Arquette), or having his hair, er, done by his bitchy hairdresser brother (Tate Donovan). The colorful Zetterland clan enjoys a complete reunion when Dad (Bo Hopkins), a free spirit who refuses to accept that the '60s are gone, returns from Mexico for an extended visit.

Monkey's tumultuous life is further complicated by the intrusion of several memorable strangers. Martha Plimpton and Rupert Everett (*Another Country*) play Sophie and Sasha, mysterious newlyweds who rent a vacant apartment in the Zetterland's Melrose compound. She's a foul-tempered bulimic who can't stop talking politics; he's a genial British gay who only married in order to get his green card. Sandra Bernhard plays Imogene, Monkey's lovestruck neighbor (she tries to woo him with photocopies of her

feet), and Ricki Lake makes a brief, violent cameo as one of Mrs. Zetterland's more intense fans.

Variety was on target in praising *Monkey*'s cast. Antin anchors the quirky, rambling piece with his lovable portrayal of Monkey, a young man so earnest in his pursuits one almost feels guilty at realizing his script is woefully bad. Helmond gets ample opportunity to demonstrate the talent and ability she kept largely under wraps during the nightmare years of *Who's the Boss*. Donovan is hilarious in his portrayal of the narcissistic Brent, and Debi Mazar is a gum-popping gem as Daphne, Monkey's restless former girlfriend.

If only the film's construction was as deft and precise as the acting it features. At least twice before the actual finale, the film seems to arrive

at an ending, both in storytelling terms as well as cinematic grammar. But no, there's more, it turns out, and the latter half of the movie seems disjointed and hastily assembled. And the funny bit about Monkey's missing curtains gets lost halfway through; when it's revived in the final moments, it's hard to remember the joke at all.

But the film is commendable in its lack of cynicism and the way in which all the characters (even Sophie) are treated with a modicum of affection and respect.

The real winner in this movie is writer/star Antin. As his scripting debut, *Inside Monkey Zetterland* shows true promise. And as the hapless Zetterland himself, Antin creates one of the most flat-out adorable movie characters in many moons.



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A Gay Holiday Romance
December 3-4, 9-11, 16-18 8 PM
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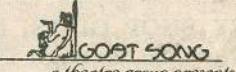
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CAPITAL CITY COMMUNITY CENTER 1994 Board of Director Applications

The Capital City Community Center, Austin's Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual community center, is accepting applications for appointment to the 1994 board of directors.

We are seeking appropriate representation from the Austin community at large in terms of age, ethnicity, gender, orientation and points of view. The Center is rapidly moving forward with future planning and needs firm commitment of time and interest from any applicant.

Applications can be obtained from Liberty Books, Book Woman, Celebration, The Peace Organizations Building, or you can have a packet mailed by calling 487-CCCC, extension 8. Applications are being accepted until 5:00 PM, Monday, December 6, 1993. Interviews will be held Wednesday, December 8, 1993 at 6:00 PM. Directorship terms begin January 1, 1994 with an initial orientation meeting on Thursday, January 6, 1993. Questions, comments and/or completed applications may be directed to:

Capital City Community Center
Attention: Sean Thompson
227 Congress Avenue, Suite 390
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AUSTIN

ART

A DAY WITHOUT ART, a very special collaborative installation created by regional artists honoring those who have died of AIDS, Dec. 1-12, at Laguna Gloria ArtMuseum, 3809 W. 35th, 512/458-8191.

BEYOND PINK AND BLUE, a juried exhibition exploring the imaging of gender definition and presentation, through Nov. 26, at West Third Gallery, 910 West 3rd Street.

CONTEMPORARY MEXICAN PHOTOGRAPHY, three generations of Mexican photographers, through November 28, Laguna Gloria ArtMuseum, 3809 W. 35th, 512/454-9408.

FACES BEHIND ART, a show and sale with the artists present, Fri., Dec. 3 from 11am-9pm and Sat., Dec. 4 from 9am-9pm, at the Courtyard by Marriott, Salon A, 5660 North IH-35, 512/458-6970.

THE GALLERY SHOP GIFTS, unique art for show and sale, Nov. 26 through Dec. 23, 10am-6pm, at Women and Their Work, 1137 West Sixth Street, 512/477-1064.

HOLLY DAZE, a show and sale featuring spirited gifts for the season, Nov. 26 through Dec. 23, at Women & Their Work gallery, 1137 West Sixth St., 512/477-1064.

HUMAN NATURE/HUMAN FORM, figurative dimensions in bronze, clay, stone and wood, through Dec. 12, Laguna Gloria ArtMuseum, 3809 W. 35th, 512/454-9408.

IN RESPONSE TO NATURE, outdoor educational event, through Jan. 9, at Laguna Gloria

NERVE, a dance performance about smashing into what you don't want to look at, Dec. 5 and 12 at 7pm, at Synergy Studios, 1501 W. 5th, 512/472-5582.

MUSIC

DAYNA KURTZ, Fri., Dec 3rd from 8-10pm with Kris McKay at Antones, 512/472-7465.

JUDY COLLINS, Holiday Show, Nov. 29 at 8pm, at the Bass Concert Hall, 512/471-0632 or 512/471-0634.

LOURDES PEREZ AND SISTER, MIRIAM PEREZ, Austin-based singer/guitarist performing original & folkloric songs from Puerto Rico, Sundays through Dec. 31, at Seis Salsas, 2004 S. 1st Street, 512/442-5986.

MRS. FUN, a Milwaukee-based duo of keyboardist Connie Graver and drummer Kim Zick, Wed., Dec. 1 at 8pm at Mama's Attic, 619 Congress Ave., Sat., Dec. 4th at 10pm, at Chances, 900 Red River, and Wed., Dec. 8 from 8:30-10:30pm at The Continental Club, 1315 S. Congress, 512/472-7465.

THEATER

ANDROCLES AND THE LION, presented by the Drama and Dance Department of Austin Community College, Dec. 3 & 10 at 8pm and Dec. 4-5 and 11-12 at 2:30pm, in the Main Theatre at the Rio Grande Campus, 1212 Rio Grande, 512/495-7320.

FORBIDDEN BROADWAY, lampoons your favorite Broadway shows and stars in an outrageous evening of song and dance and satire, Tues.-Sat. at 8pm and Sun. at 3pm, Dec. 1-18 and Dec. 28-Jan 22, at Capitol City Playhouse, 214 West 4th, 512/472-1855.

HALCYON DAYS, presented by Frontera Productions, Thurs.-Sat., through Dec. 4 at 8pm & a

Dec. 19, at Vortex, 1921 East Ben White Blvd., 512/448-2299.

WOYZECK, George Buchner's pioneering drama kicks off the premiere season for Public Domain theatre company, previews Thurs. through Sun., through Dec. 5, at the Vortex, 1921 E. Ben White Blvd., 512/459-5686.

DALLAS-FORT WORTH

ART

HOECOMING: WILLIAM H. JOHNSON AND AFRO-AMERICA, capturing the artistic, political and cultural accomplishments of African-Americans, through January 9, 1994, at the Amon Carter Museum, 817/738-1933.

CINEMA/FILM/VIDEO

A WELL SPENT LIFE, tribute honors the late Texas songster Mance Lipscomb, considered one of the greatest guitarists of all time, Nov. 24 & 27, at the Amon Carter Museum, 817/738-1933.

MUSIC

JENUFA, this opera depicts the tragic lives of two women motivated by love and exploited by the expectations of those around them, Nov. 26 at 7:30pm, Nov. 28 at 2pm & Dec. 1 & 4 at 7:30pm, in the Music Hall at Fair Park, 214/443-1081.

THEATER

CEMETERY CLUB, through Dec. 4, at Theatre Arlington, 305 W. Main, metro 817/261-9628.

A CHRISTMAS CAROL, Nov. 30 through Dec. 26, Arts District Theater, 214/522-TIXX.

3809 W. 35th, 512/454-9408.

FACES BEHIND ART, a show and sale with the artists present, Fri., Dec. 3 from 11am-9pm and Sat., Dec. 4 from 9am-9pm, at the Courtyard by Marriott, Salon A, 5660 North IH-35, 512/458-6970.

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IN RESPONSE TO NATURE, outdoor educational event, through Jan. 9, at Laguna Gloria ArtMuseum, 3809 W. 35th, 512/458-8191.

POTTERS' GUILD show and sale, Fri., Nov. 26 & Sat., Nov. 27 from 10-5pm and Sun., Nov. 28 from noon-5pm, at Laguna Gloria ArtMuseum, 3809 W. 35th St., 512/458-8191.

SEVENTH ANNUAL SHOW AND SALE OF TEXAS ARTISTS, Fri., Nov. 26 from 5-9pm and Sat., Dec. 27 from 10am-6pm, at the Carillon, 2630 Exposition (corner of Exposition and Westover), percentage of proceeds benefit Laguna Gloria ArtMuseum, 512/477-6112.

STEVEN BERNARD JONES & DAVID KESTENBAUM present their work, through Dec. 4, at the Niendorff Art Gallery, 1017 East 6th, 512/474-6056.

A WESTERN DREAM, paintings by Michael Ciasullo influenced by Southwest imagery and the Texas State Fair, through Dec. 10, R.G.K. Foundation Gallery, 2315 San Gabriel, 512/474-9298.

DANCE

LES BALLET AFRICANAS: COLOR, RHYTHM, AND JOY!, Nov. 28 at 7pm, in Bass Concert Hall at UT, 512/471-1444.

Museum, 817/738-1933.

MRS. FUN, a Milwaukee-based duo of keyboardist Connie Graver and drummer Kim Zick, Wed., Dec. 1 at 8pm at Mama's Attic, 619 Congress Ave., Sat., Dec. 4th at 10pm, at Chances, 900 Red River, and Wed., Dec. 8 from 8:30-10:30pm at The Continental Club, 1315 S. Congress, 512/472-7465.

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HALCYON DAYS, presented by Frontera Productions, Thurs.-Sat., through Dec. 4 at 8pm & a matinee at 4pm on Nov. 28, at the Hyde Park Theatre, 511 W. 43rd, 512/452-6688.

HEDDA GABLER, the story of a woman's desire for power, presented by the UT Department of Theatre and Dance, Dec. 1-4 at 8pm, in the Theatre Room of the Winship Drama Building, 23rd and San Jacinto, 512/471-0632 or 512/471-0634.

INSPECTING CAROL, a wildly funny spoof of Dickens' great holiday classic, Wed.-Sat. at 8pm and Sun. at 2:15, through Dec. 19, at ZACH's Kleberg Stage, 1521 W. Riverside Dr. at S. Lamar, 512/476-0541.

ORPHEUS DESCENDING, directed by Royce Gehrels and presented by Different Stages, Thurs. through Sat. at 8, through Dec. 4 & one matinee at 2pm on Sun., Nov. 28, at The Acting Studio, 5811 Burnet Road, 512/867-3929.

SHEAR MADNESS, continues with the audience quizzing the actors each time and determining the murderer in a beauty shop romp, Thurs.-Fri. at 8pm & Sat. at 6 and 9pm, at the Zachary Scott Theatre Center's Arena Stage, 512/476-0541.

STEEL KISS, a hard-hitting drama that creates an intimate look at the society that turns average young men into killers, Thurs.-Sun. at 8pm through

CINEMA/FILM/VIDEO

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A CHRISTMAS CAROL, Nov. 30 through Dec. 26, Arts District Theater, 214/522-TIXX.

MACBETH, with the Shakespeare Festival of Dallas, through Dec. 11, Basement Space, 3200 Main Street, 214/520-ARTS.

MAN OF LA MANCHA, Nov. 30 through Dec. 10, at the Bob Hope Theatre, 214/768-ARTS.

NO TIME FOR COMEDY, presented by Stage West, through Dec. 11, at 3055 S. University, 817/784-9378.

ODD COUPLE, (Female Version), presented by Casa Manana, through Dec. 19, Theater on the Square, Fort Worth, 817/332-6221.

SUMMER AND SMOKE, the tale by Tennessee Williams, net sales will be donated to Artists Helping Artists (a non-profit that helps people in the Arts cope with catastrophic illnesses), Sat. evenings, through Dec. 4 at 8:15pm, by the Moonstruck Theatre Company, at the Hickory Street Annex, 501 2nd Avenue, 214/526-2700.

TWAS THE NIGHT BEFORE A LESS MISERABLE CHRISTMAS, a group described as being a cross between Saturday Night Live and The Carol Burnett Show, Fri. and Sat. nights at 11pm, Dec. 3-18, at the Pocket Sandwich Theatre, 5400 E. Mockingbird Lane, 214/821-1860.

A | T | T | R | A | C | T | I | O | N | S

HOUSTON

ART

DAY WITHOUT ART, many events at various locations, call for details: Museum of Fine Arts (713/639-7530), Seuall Art Gallery (713/527-4815), Wortham Theater Center (713/524-7601), Contemporary Arts Museum (713/526-0773), Delia Stewar Dance Co. (713/522-6375), DiverseWorks (713/868-7516), Alley Theatre (713/228-9341), Lawndale Art and Performance Center (713/528-5858), Blaffer Gallery (713/743-7529), and Community Artists' Collective (713/523-1616)

DANCE

THE NUTCRACKER, the enchanted tale of a little girl named Clara and her magical Nutcracker doll who comes to life and takes her on a journey through the Land of Snow and the Kingdom of Sweets, performed by the Houston Ballet, various dates Nov. 27 through Dec. 30, 713/227-ARTS or 800/828-ARTS.

FILM/VIDEO

BOY'S SHORTS: THE NEW QUEER CINEMA, a feature length program of six short films (Resonance, R.S.V.P., Anthem, Relax, Billy Turner's Secret, The Dead Boy's Club), presented by the Rice Media Center,

Sat., Dec. 4th at 7:30pm & 9:30pm and on Sun., Dec. 5th at 7:30pm, at Rice University, Entrance #8 at University Blvd. and Stockton, 713/527-4853.

SAN ANTONIO

MUSIC

SAN ANTONIO POPS, "An Evening With Burt Bacharach," with the San Antonio Symphony, Nov. 26-28 at 8pm, at the Majestic Theatre, 224 E. Houston, 210/554-1010.

THEATER

GODSPELL, through Dec. 31, Alamo City Theater at the Josephine, 339 W. Josephine, 210/734-4646.

THE I LOVE LUNACY SHOW/TEXAS TRINITY, the third chapter in the nationally popular saga of a small-town sissy boy, created and performed by Paul Bonin-Rodriguez, Nov. 26-28, Dec. 3-5 & 10-12, at the Jump-Start Performance Co., 108 Blue Star, 210/227-JUMP.

ELSEWHERE

MUSIC

THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO, presented by Southwestern University Opera Theatre, Dec. 5-6 at 7pm, in the Alma Thomas Theater on Southwestern's campus in Georgetown, 512/863-1479 or 512/863-1570

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THE NUTCRACKER, the enchanted tale of a little girl named Clara and her magical Nutcracker doll who comes to life and takes her on a journey through the Land of Snow and the Kingdom of Sweets, performed by the Houston Ballet, various dates Nov. 27 through Dec. 30, 713/227-ARTS or 800/828-ARTS.

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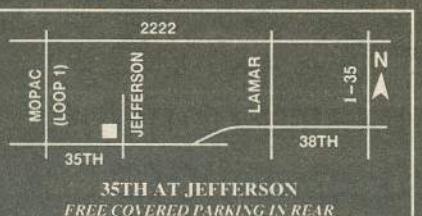
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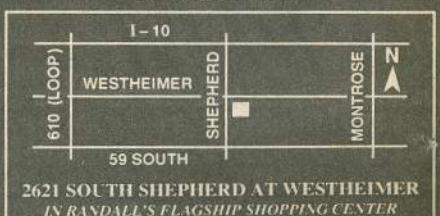
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"Table Talk"

Photos by Kenneth David Lockerman
Text by Barbara Wohlgemuth
& Rick Brown

— What is it about having people over? We queers certainly do like to put on a little dog, and here we have a few selected ways of doing it. Whether your upcoming holiday to-dos are intimate settings for two or a buffet for many, a little panache like these settings show will more than impress. It shows guests you really care.

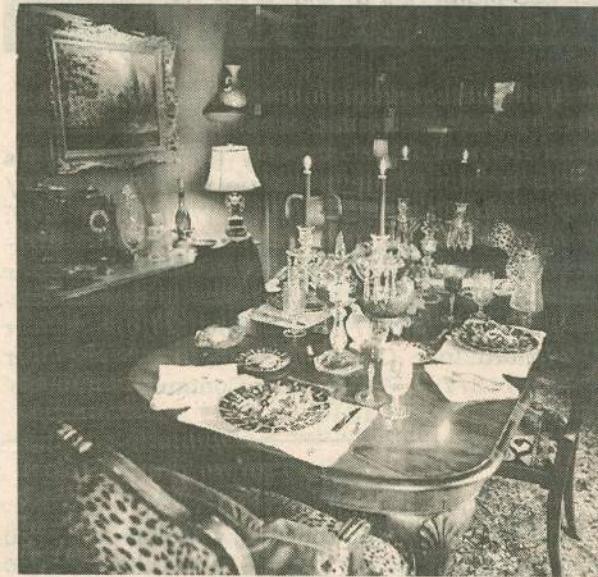
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Nancy Molleda

As a top General Land Office executive, Nancy Molleda doesn't have time for a lot of frilly folderol when she plans an intimate tete-a-tete, what with travelling and taking care of other state duties. Her centerpiece is a grab bag of easy supermarket purchases — gourds, candles and what have you — brought together by Nancy's artful hands. A fan of things oriental, Molleda sets her table with a combination of hunt themes and chinoiserie, the deep greens taking on a rich look against the black lacquer of her china cabinet, where she keeps her collectables.



Bob Emerson

Real estate investor and entrepreneur Bob Emerson, who used to manage the Cartier's in Beverly Hills, fills his dining room with an eclectic assortment of pieces large and small culled from years of collecting. The table features a center crystal bowl filled with pumpkin-colored mums, pine cones and other seasonal artifacts flanked by crystal pheasants and tear-drop candelabras. Wine and water glasses are floral-etched crystal from an old Georgia family, and the silver is Francis I, for which Bob's aunt paid a dollar per piece to a Chicago gangster in the 1920's.

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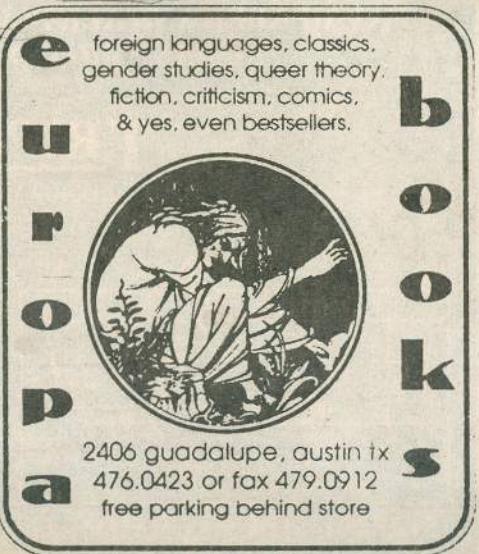
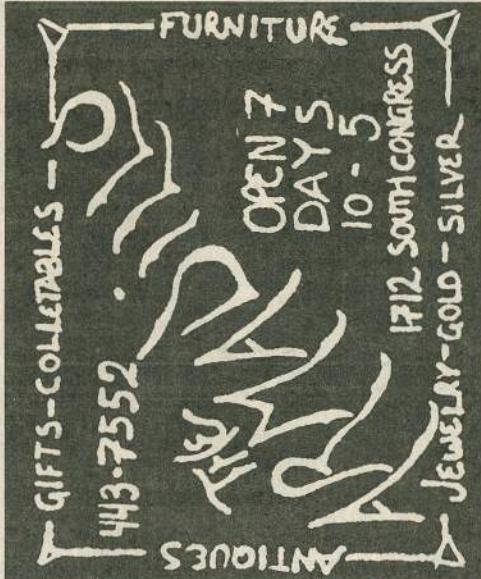
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Lee Manford

Banker Lee Manford's dining alcove is small and intimate, just right for the elegant table for two he created. Pastel blue fabric falls to the floor and balloons out under an ecru lace table cloth with matching napkins. At the center is an antique silver candelabra, with sprays of seasonal vegetables at its base. Lee peppered the veggies with small holes in which he inserted bright yellow mums. Place settings feature lovely china in Aynsley's Empress pattern with five crystal goblets and golden art glasses at each setting.

**James Armstrong**

As host to the Triangle On Stage/Austin Lyric Opera season opening reception, arts philanthropist James Armstrong set out a lovely buffet on a striking inlaid table by Baker. The stunning centerpiece was a three-foot high jardinere bursting with flowers and trailing with ivy. Crystal and silver serving pieces accompanied the flowers as 75-some-odd guests took part in festivities, helping themselves to crudites and dip, crackers and toast points with a wide variety of spreads, including a piquant jalapeno Texas jelly, and a delicious and deliciously pink salmon mousse.

**Gardens**

The upscale nursery and pottery purveyors Gardens joined Susan Eggert of Food, Food (located at the former Sweetish Hill on Exposition in Austin) to create a charming country holiday table. Colorful plates hand-made by New York potter Barbara Eigen — bright teal squares for dinner plates and lime green pear shapes for dessert — set off hand-blown Mexican vases filled with orchard sprays that decorate the center. Susan's holiday offering is cumin-crusted grilled chicken with cranberry salsa, grilled polenta, field green salad, and a mocha tart.

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Brown seduces us to believe the amazing

By Rachel V. L. Jones
Special to the TRIANGLE

"In the interest of security, we agreed to put out your eyes and burn out the insides of my ears. This made sure we were always together."

Terrible matter-of-factness is the trick up Rebecca Brown's sleeve. By stating the unbelievable in such a way as to demand belief, she is able to turn the fantastic into the realistic, the impossible into the actual. Her narrators speak with such authority that their audience is forced to be-

lieve them and to put aside their own conceptions of "truth" and "reality." Once this surrender is accomplished, Brown turns to the task of telling, or rather truth-telling, in her own symbolic language.

It is a testament to Brown's talent that her use of metaphor is never inappropriate, but rather both entertaining and purposeful. Annie Oakley time-travels to Manhattan to sell Western wear. Napoleon turns up as the heroine in a remake of King Kong. A couple mutilate one another for the sake of

greater intimacy and fidelity. The characters and situations of Brown's stories are disturbing and bizarre. Without the insistence of the narrators that "it is all real and happening to me," the discomfited reader might eagerly dismiss it all as fantasy, far removed from her own reality.

But the power of these stories is their ability to make us believe. Fantasy does not obscure reality, but instead renders it more visible. Brown uses symbols as a language with which the unspeakable can be spoken. In *Annie Oakley's Girl*, intuitions, half-thoughts, emotions, inner drives which are usually silenced are instead named and described. She invited her reader onto the minefield of intimacy and into the terrifying experiences of alienation, betrayal and aloneness. She speaks with honesty about what most of us hide — searing emotional pain.

In the title story, the unnamed narrator time-travels to the Old West to visit her heroine Annie Oakley. Annie is everything simple and pure; she has no concept of Creamora, Los

Angeles or betrayal in love. The narrator is more jaded — she has been to Los Angeles — and cannot trust Annie or herself. She resists loving Annie because: "There's a price you pay for having what you want. You pay with the wanting that stays after you stop having." Her fear and cynicism lead her to sell her own desires by turning Annie into the latest fad for chic New Yorkers. She solves her problems through commercialism: consumers suffer from desire, not her, and Annie just suffers.

In Brown's stories, love is an act of desperation provoked by loneliness, that ultimately leaves one more desperate and alone. To love is to lose: eyes, ears, voice and ultimately one's humanity. These are not stories easily told or listened to. But Brown sneaks up behind us, telling us the dreams and fantasies of unrecognizable others. She seduces us into listening, and tricks us into recognizing the description of our won hearts.

[Annie Oakley's Girl, by Rebecca Brown, San Francisco, City Lights, 1993, \$8.95, 154 pp.]

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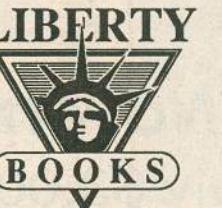
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Amanda in Montrose: Twisting the day away

By Amanda B. Recondwith
TRIANGLE Staff

Dear Fans, unlike most parts of the country where one expects Frosty the Snowman to be making delicate lace-like tracery upon our windows this time of year, we in Houston must look forward to Tornado Season!

We remember last year when a tornado ripped through western suburbs of the city. We were mesmerized by the sight of funnel clouds roaring through Yuppie neighborhoods, as pictured through the video cams of residents screaming: "Save the Volvo, Marge!" and "Oh God! There goes the Montessori school!"

Well, this year the tornadoes have been very democratic. After wreaking havoc in the conservative neighborhoods last year — just payment for their support of the Christian Right — the twisters decided to pay Montrose a visit.

Amanda had just donned her most austere Let's Go Talk Mortgage suit with the black cummerbund and twisted tulle micro skirt. Our hair was done up in an appropriate Downtown Do-Me Doo, with Mug-Me bangle earrings and our Earth Goddess sensible heels. When talking to the banker, Dear Fans, Amanda always tries to make things seem better than they are.

Sebastian fired up the Rolls, and we were heading into the city on Brazos, when suddenly the pouring rain became a blinding maelstrom! Before we could even ask why our ears were popping, tree limbs were flying past the windshield and we saw a man roll down the street past us!

Well, Amanda grew up on the Lone



The roof was ripped from the Westmoreland Square Apartments, 219 Marshall, and several units were gutted when a tornado struck suddenly in Montrose on November 16. (Photo by Amber Ratisseau)

years ago when a tornado came down right next to us at a bus stop. We were reading Cosmo when the magazine was nearly wrenched from our hands. We thought it was an anxious fashion wretch dying to see the article on Leona Helmsley, but when we looked up we saw nothing

but a dark cloud and a pair of shoes where the man next to us had been standing. The tornado of Montrose was not quite so polite, Dear Fans! This one came down and swept us into a heap inside the Rolls. Thank God the British know how to make a heavy car! Sebastian

pulled over and threw his massive hard body upon us to protect us from flying shards. We were lucky, Dear Fans. When it was all over in seconds, we looked up and saw the Brazos River Bottom just down the street with its top floor windows blown out and the front door shattered. Trees littered the streets, and power lines fizzed in the rain. Downtown, several blocks away, cars lined the streets with their windows blown out, and dazed office workers poured from the towers, sea sick from the rocking floors.

We ran into the BRB to use the phone and found ten men sitting around the bar, hardly noticing that the world had nearly come to an end around them.

"I thought I heard a pop," one of them said.

We called our banker and found that he had taken shelter under his desk and could not be disturbed, so Sebastian took us home again, where we collapsed on the satin chaise and had a hot cup of tea.

Life in Houston can be exciting, Dear Fans, but in such an unnatural place, it is always a shock to be reminded of Mother Nature's superiority.

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Well, Amanda grew up on the Lone Prairie, Dear Fans, and we know a tornado when we see one. The trouble with Houston is that the tornadoes here are not the bold phallic storms of the prairie that come roaring across the plains for miles, and can be seen for hours before hitting. In Houston, tornadoes are devous affairs, popping out of nowhere and darting back up again. We remember



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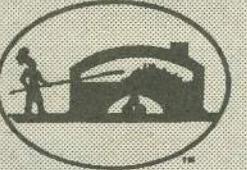
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Recently we have begun to see a new President Clinton: He put his presidency on the line to pass NAFTA, he preached family values through the words of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. to a black congregation in Memphis, and this past weekend he took time out from the Asian economic summit in Seattle to journey to the barrio in Los Angeles with a similar message for Hispanics, this time quoting Cesar Chavez.

While all of this has not escaped the national media, some of the roots of this new Clinton were missed by all but a few, one being *The New York Times'* Thomas L. Friedman. Friedman, in an article in *The Times* back on November 17 reported on an obscure but crucial meeting in the White House.

Back on November 5 a group of some dozen scholars from across the nation were invited to a private dinner meeting after which they were asked to participate in a no-holds barred discussion of the Clinton presidency.

On the crime issue they suggested that "fear of physical violence was not the root cause but rather that Clinton needed to attack the disintegration of the moral tissue that ties communities together." And that NAFTA was not just about trade and tariffs (issues which have never ignited the public "but about America's willingness and ability to tackle the future with confidence."

Most importantly, a couple of presidential historians urged Clinton not to view his role as a series of legislative battles "but a pulpit from which to exercise moral leadership."

Little else was acknowledged about the meeting, although George Stephanopoulos, a top aide, in a moment of understatement agreed that "the dinner was important."

What is clear is that Clinton came away from that meeting with a clearly defined agenda resulting, to date, in the fight for NAFTA and the two speeches noted earlier.

What was missed in all this, except to note that the gays in the military issue was one of the early disruptions of the Clinton program, is that it follows similar advice given Clinton when he approached gay leaders for support during the campaign. Then it was suggested that as president he could use Theodore Roosevelt's famous "bully pulpit" — the presidency — to give national leadership to the fight on AIDS.

In his now famous speech before that gay audience in Los Angeles during the campaign, Clinton acknowledged the gay and lesbian community and his desire to include our talents in the fabric of the greater American society.

In line with that earlier commitment and following the advice given at that select dinner on the presidency, we could suggest that Clinton could combine promises made with advice given. He could, after selecting the right place and the right time, (about the 25th or 26th of January) give a speech

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In line with that earlier commitment and following the advice given at that select dinner on the presidency, we could suggest that Clinton could combine promises made with advice given. He could, after selecting the right place and the right time (perhaps the 25th Stonewall celebration next June), make a national appeal for not only tolerance of homosexuality but inclusion in the American dream as well as an appeal for a broad-based American "Manhattan Project" effort to conquer AIDS.

Such an appeal could be made in the same manner as his efforts before blacks in Memphis and Hispanics in Los Angeles. He could even quote the vision and hopes of our own martyred dead, Harvey Milk and the tens of thousands already lost to AIDS. If, as in the fight for NAFTA, Clinton could take on such a force as organized labor, surely in the defense of our rights he should challenge the so-called Christian Right.

From our perspective, at least, such a move would be the watershed of a presidency still seeking its way. And it would give voice to not only our community but to all progressive elements of American society. Nothing less is needed if Clinton is to recapture our votes, our efforts, yes, even our hearts in 1996. Give us the leadership to show Clinton the way. Alas, we do ask a lot, but if we cannot dream what is left.

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