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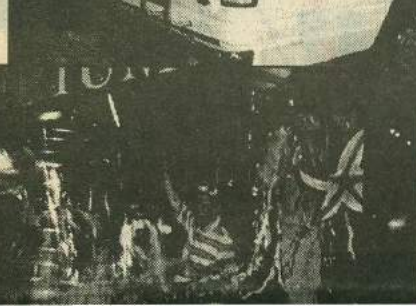
Lighting the night with pride

Members of Parents, Friends and Families of Lesbians and Gays march in Saturday night's Houston Gay and Lesbian Pride parade. Thousands of people lined the Montrose-area route to watch more than 100 lighted and brightly decorated en-

tries in the parade, whose theme was "Glowing With Pride." From Paris to Mexico City, homosexuals and their supporters commemorated riots in New York in 1969 that galvanized the gay rights movement: **Metropolitan, Page 33A.**



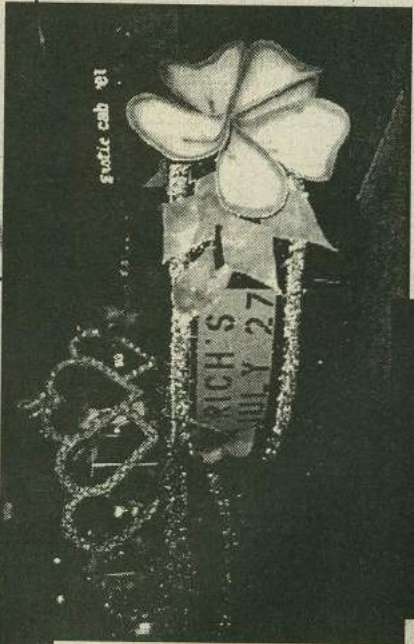
Franki Lee Love
97 Ms. Montrose,
Linda Owens, and
Barbara Walker Ms.
Gay Pride 97 -
PWA Coalition at
Chances.



GREATER
GAY COMMUNITY
OF HOUSTON



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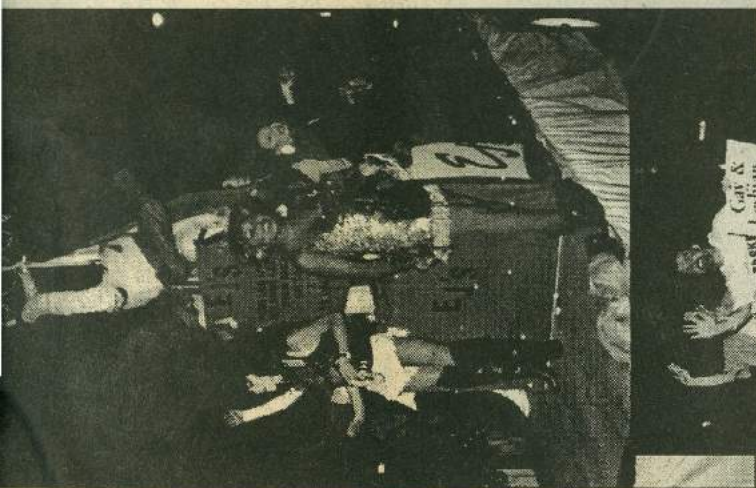
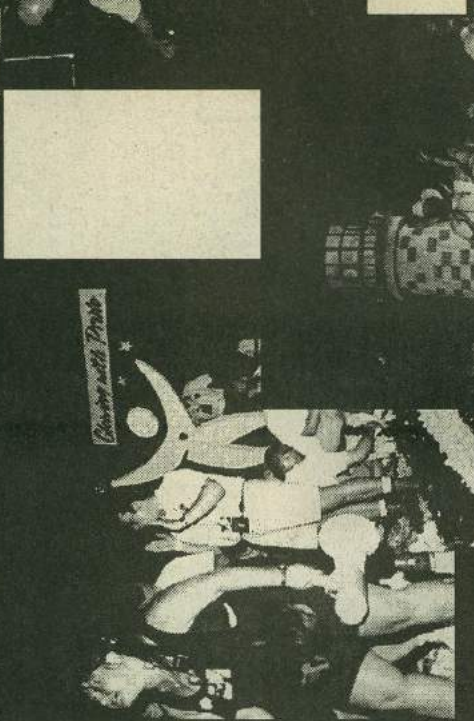
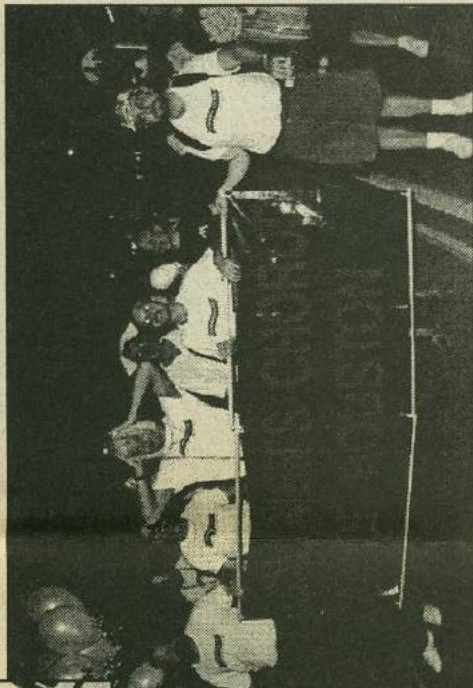


◀ Don Dowden, Glen Barns, and Ruby Stone - PWA Coalition at Chances.



Houstonian's Glow with Pride!





Shining turnout



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Matt Mitchell, left, of Omega House, an AIDS hospice, marches in the Gay and Lesbian Pride Parade in Montrose Saturday night.

Looking on at right is Gary Jarvis dressed as the Statue of Liberty.

Montrose 'Glowing with Pride'

By **STEVE BREWER**
Houston Chronicle

Floats adorned with blinking lights, flashlight-toting and neon-bracelet-wearing marchers and shimmering sequins on the gowns of drag queens lit up Montrose Saturday night as the gay community celebrated in colorful fashion at the Houston Gay and Lesbian Pride parade.

The bright procession of about 100 floats — more than half of them illuminated with all forms of lighting — made its way down lower Westheimer and through the heart of Montrose. About 50,000 people were expected to attend, 20,000 more than last year.

It was the first time in the event's history that it was held in the evening, and the dark skies and cooler weather fostered a party atmosphere that parade organizers said was good for attendance.

"The energy of this crowd is phenomenal," said Darren Armstrong, one of the co-chairs for the Pride Committee of Houston. "There's been no other parade like it in the past."

The side streets in the area were jammed with parked cars as parade-goers made their way to the event. Cheering and enthusiastic onlookers

Gay parade has first night event

lined the route. A Houston police presence could be felt, but the mood remained light despite a smattering of vocal anti-gay protesters.

Susan Guerrero, a Pride Committee co-chair, said members of gay communities from Washington, D.C., San Francisco, New Orleans, Dallas, Austin and San Antonio were in Houston to enjoy the event.

One of the visitors was Julian Harris — "Mr. Gay Pride 1997" from Fort Worth. He said the Houston display was impressive and that he liked the idea of having the event at night.

"I think it's wonderful, and I think the night gives it the right mood," Harris said.

The half-mile parade caps the end of Gay Pride Week, a 10-day celebration that included 31 events. The parade, with the theme of "Glowing With Pride," came on the heels of similar celebrations Saturday in Europe. Gay Pride Week events are occurring in cities throughout the weekend. New York, San Francisco and Toronto had parades scheduled for today.

"I feel like Cinderella at the Disney World parade, all lit up for the ball," said a large smiling man decked out in a sequined party dress who called himself Stella. "I'm ready for it."

The decision to hold the parade at night has breathed new life into the event, parade participants said.

"There's a whole lot more enthusiasm because it's at night. It's something new and different," said Katy Caldwell, executive director of the Montrose Clinic, which had a float in the procession. "This (the parade) brings unity to the community and makes everyone feel proud."

Caldwell said that, to her, the parade not only is an expression of pride, but also a reason to celebrate the gay community's fight against HIV and AIDS.

"It makes everyone aware of what our community has accomplished," Caldwell said. "This community pulled together, and we're taking care of our own."

Andy Weber, a Montrose resident, watching the floats line up, said the nighttime event also allowed HIV and AIDS patients to come out and enjoy the parade without having to face the heat of the day.

But the agreeable climate didn't cool

See PARADE on Page 41A.

Parade

Continued from Page 33A.

some tempers at the parade.

Behind a police barricade, holding signs decorated with slurs and taunts, were 40 protesters from two different churches who jeered and shouted insults at parade participants. One group of about 30 came from Heritage Baptist Church in Mount Enterprise, near Nacogdoches, and the other 10 came from Grace Baptist Church in Houston.

"We're out here to say that they should still be in the closet and not out here parading around," said Pastor Aubrey Vaughan, of the Houston church. "We're trying to send a message to the city of Houston that we

should not be condoning the sodomy and the disease."

Pastor W.N. Otwell, from the Mt. Pleasant Church, agreed and said his group thought AIDS was God's judgment on the nation.

But aside from the occasional verbal jab, the parade participants paid little mind to the protesters and even supported their right to express their views.

"It just makes everyone all the more proud," Weber said as he eyed the protesters. "But if they want to protest, why don't they go to the neighborhoods where they live instead of coming to an area where (homosexuality) is accepted? We're all smiling, and they have frowns on their faces, but everyone has a right to say what they want to say."

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Night Parade Draws Largest Crowd in History

Last week's 'Glowing With Pride' Parade drew the largest gathering of spectators in the history of gay pride parade's in the Bayou City. This year's parade saw some of the most imaginative floats in years. Thousands of people - gay and straight - lined up Westheimer on both side of the street to view the elaborate spectacle.

According to Robin Duncan, this year's awards went to *Outsmart* (Glowing Award); Garden Party (Spirit); PFLAG (Stonewall); Cheer Dallas (Gypsy); AVES (Edison); Community Gospel (Rainbow); Texas Commerce Bank (Ruby); Astro Rainbow (Houston); and Outrage2 (Texas).

The parade had more than 100 entries.

Gay and lesbian pride was evident throughout the parade and after at many of the nightclubs and at OutRage, the official Pride Parade after party. Many of the spectators were from out of town and it is estimated that the event added more than \$2 million to the cities coffers.

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Houston was "Glowing With Pride" last week as they celebrated gay pride in their first ever nighttime parade. The event was a huge success.









