

## PEOPLE

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Southern

## VOICE

Vol. 2, No. 18

"Taking Pride in Our Culture"

October 26, 1989

## The Quilt Unites a Mourning Nation



LEE WILSON

The NAMES Project Quilt was displayed in its entirety for the last time over the Columbus Day Weekend. An estimated 400,000 people viewed the 11,000 grave-size panels on the Ellipse across from the White House as an endless stream of politicians, luminaries, activists and loved ones read off the names of those enshrined on the Capitol Mall.

"I wear this Quilt in triumph" founder Cleve Jones said hoarsely, "A dream that came true. A triumph of a people united." See story page 4.

## FACTS ABOUT THE QUILT

- First displayed 1,920 panels at National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights, October 11, 1987
- Toured 20 cities in the spring of 1988 raising \$500,000 for AIDS services in local communities
- Returned to Washington in October 1988 showing 8,288 panels on the Ellipse adjacent to the White House
- Visited 19 more Canadian and American cities in 1989
- Presented 11,000 panels as final display in its entirety October 6, 7 and 8; has grown too large to show in one location
- Will continue to tour in sections through 1990 and beyond targeting groups now hardest hit by AIDS: teenagers, ethnic and racial minorities and IV drug users
- Nominated for Nobel Peace Prize by Congresswomen Nancy Pelosi and Barbara Boxer; contains one of 20th century's largest collections of archival material

## Women's Resource Center Too Feminist For Dekalb Politicians

by Charlene Ball

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month nationwide, and ironically enough the Women's Resource Center of DeKalb County (WRC) and its executive director are under attack from local politicians.

Sherry Siclair, executive director of the WRC since it opened in 1987, has been under scrutiny since August of this year due to a series of events involving her staff, some members of the DeKalb County Commission and the Dekalb County Solicitor's office.

Effective October 4, 1989, Sherry Siclair, an 11-year champion of the movement to help battered women, resigned as Executive Director of the Women's Resource Center. "My resignation does not give credence to any attacks against me or the organization," Siclair stated in her letter of resignation. "I am removing myself from the center of the controversy so that the Women's Resource Center can ... direct all its energies to serving battered women in DeKalb County."

Politicians and former employees have officially charged the WRC with having no men on its Board of Directors, and with being unable to raise sufficient funding or provide adequate services. Additionally, Executive Director Siclair was said to promote a "feminist agenda."

The events leading up to the resignation began with a walk out on August 2 by four WRC employees. They left their jobs and subsequently picketed the WRC office. The action came on the day after the same employees appeared unannounced at a meeting of the WRC Board of Directors requesting to read a statement of concerns. Their written statements were accepted, however, they were not allowed a place on the planned agenda. They were assured by the Board of the WRC that their concerns would be heard at a later date, but that they must follow procedure set forth in personnel procedures. Instead, the workers staged the walkout stating their dissatisfaction with both Siclair and the Board.

Both Yvette Robinson and Peggy Jones, two of the WRC walkout employees, told *Southern Voice* they they had disagreements with Siclair and that they had made a number of suggestions with which she had disagreed. Their primary objection, however, was the fact that Siclair held the amount of power that she did over administrative policy. Other objections

they made include the charge that the WRC Board had no formerly battered women on it, and that it wasn't racially diverse. There are two black women on the Executive Committee and the Board itself is about 50% black and white women. The staff of WRC was fired for walking off the job.

The unrest among the employees and their subsequent dismissal for abandoning their jobs was brought up at the August 15 meeting of the DeKalb County Commission by Commissioners Annie Collins and Robert Lanier. Lanier, the presiding officer, asked the Human Services Coordinating Board, a 17-member body consisting of department heads, to conduct an investigation. Collins was appointed an ex official member of the investigation by Lanier.

Collins is mainly concerned with the fact

Cont'd on page 11

## PWA Found Guilty of Attempted Murder

A Cobb County man infected with the AIDS virus was sentenced to ten years in prison October 20 for attempting to murder a police officer by biting him.

A jury of seven women and five men found Gregory Scott Scroggins, 27, guilty of aggravated assault with intent to commit murder at the end of three days of testimony. The diminutive Scroggins, who stands 5'3" and weighs 113 pounds, admitted in court that he bit Cobb County police Officer David Crook during a January 29, 1989 scuffle that occurred when Crook was called to Scroggins' home over a domestic dispute.

Scroggins testified, however, that he only bit Crook to make the officer release a "choke-hold" that was blocking his air supply. Crook testified that a Cobb County nurse later told him that Scroggins had told her that he had intended to infect Crook with the AIDS virus. Scroggins steadfastly denies this charge.

Scroggins attorney, Gregory Schroeder, immediately vowed to appeal the decision.

See *Southern Voice* next issue for a fuller examination of this story and the implications it may have for people with AIDS in the State of Georgia.

## AIDS Physicians to Telecast Program on PWA Empowerment

The Chicago-based Physicians Association for AIDS Care (PAAC) announced the addition of two telecasts of major interest to the PWA community. On February 14, 1990, PAAC will produce two 90-minute programs on PWA Empowerment and Long-Term Survivors. The telecasts will air back to back from 1:00 to 4:00 PM Eastern Standard Time on PAAC's recently formed AIDS Satellite Television Network (ASTN).

Gordon Nary, PAAC's executive director, points out that PAAC has taken a leadership role in addressing the full spectrum of AIDS issues in its new telecast series including topics often neglected in other educational programs. Upcoming programs include Women and HIV Infection, AIDS in the Prison Population, and Suicide in AIDS Patients. All telecasts are by satellite transmission to affiliated institutional members of PAAC who pay only \$200.00 for twelve consecutive months of programming.

Nary is encouraging local PWA advocacy groups to work with local institutions that have satellite reception capabilities to sign-up for the series and promote upcoming programs of interest to PWAs.

For a listing of the ASTN telecast schedule, contact PAAC at (312) 222-1326.

## Lesbians Sue for Insurance Benefits

San Francisco—National Gay Rights Advocates (NGRA) recently filed a petition in a Wisconsin Superior Court to obtain health insurance benefits for the lesbian partner of a state employee. Jerri Lynn Phillips, a Wisconsin State employee, attempted to add her life-partner, Lorri Tommerup, to her group health plan. Phillips' request was denied because the two women were not legally married.

NGRA staff attorney, Cynthia Goldstein, explained that Wisconsin has a statute barring discrimination based on an employee's marital status and sexual orientation.

"Wisconsin's anti-discrimination law is meaningless if Jerri Lynn and Lorri are denied employee benefits afforded to heterosexual couples," said Goldstein. "Equal access to family benefits is central to equal treatment."

NGRA Executive Director Jean O'Leary says that the organization is expanding its efforts to secure equal rights for lesbian and gay families including family partnership legislation and equal access to business accommodations and employee benefits.

Said O'Leary, "This case reveals the limits of our rights as lesbian and gay Americans when we have protections on paper, only to have them ignored in practice. Lesbian and gay families will be respected only when we demand equal treatment in every arena. This includes employee benefit programs."

## Fundamentalists and Gay Activists Collide in Australia

Sydney, Australia—While right-wing fundamentalists in this country were declaring a "war on homosexuality," an estimated 2,000 anti-gay Christians in Sydney took to the streets October 2 to "cleanse Sydney of sin and immorality" in an attempt to close down Australia's largest and most popular gay-pride parade, the annual Gay Mardi Gras. The fundamentalist protesters were, however, overwhelmed and outflanked by more than 5,000 gay men and lesbians who staged a counter-protest that turned into a yelling and shoving match between the two groups.

Fred Nile, the fundamentalist minister and New South Wales member of parliament, who organized and led the anti-gay protest march called Sydney's substantial lesbian/gay community "the sewer of the Pacific."

The fundamentalist protesters were escorted

by police patrols to Australia's Parliament House where they held a prayer for a "return to Christian moral values in the country," and then proceeded down Sydney's Oxford street, using the same route the popular Gay Mardi Gras takes each year.

As the fundamentalist marchers neared the Taylor Square area, a heavily gay neighborhood, they were met by gay and lesbian counter-demonstrators and the confrontation turned violent as fundamentalist and gay activists began shouting and shoving one another. Police, who numbered less than 100 were unable to prevent the two large groups from confronting each other, and several dozen protesters on both sides were arrested.

No serious injuries were reported although a number of people were scraped and bruised during the melee before additional police officers were called in to disband both groups.

The Gay Mardi Gras is held annually in Sydney in mid-February, the Australian summer, and draws the largest crowd of any single event in the country, an estimated 150,000 people.

—Keith Clark

## Arista Records Hits the Right Note

In celebration of its 15th anniversary next year, Arista Records will host a benefit for Gay Men's Health Crisis and National AIDS Network. The celebrity-packed concert entitled "A Celebration of 15 Years of Joy to Help End These Years of Sorrow", will include Arista artists such as Whitney Houston, Dionne Warwick, Eurythmics, Barry Manilow, Exposé, and Hall & Oates.

This March 17th performance is not the first AIDS fundraiser for Arista. The hit single "That's What Friends Are For" which was produced by Arista has raised over \$1 million for AIDS research.

National AIDS Network is a coalition of 630+ community-based AIDS service groups. These groups will receive the benefit of the proceeds from the concert.

## AIDS: In Three Parts

San Francisco—Many socialites went to see the first performance of the San Francisco Opera Production on September 8th. Instead, they saw a much more dramatic performance. Over 50 members of Stop AIDS Now or Else (SANOE) bought standing room tickets and began their display as soon as the lights went down. The whistling, chanting and banners which read "AIDS = GENOCIDE, SILENCE = DEATH, FIGHT BACK" and "YOU HAVE THE POWER, STOP AIDS NOW OR ELSE" were meant to encourage the influential and wealthy to use their power and money to force changes in government AIDS policies.

It is not clear what impression was left on all of the opera-goers. Some applauded while others booed. The conductor started up "The Star Spangled Banner" in order to calm the madness. The audience sang along trying to outdo the relentless protesters to no avail.

Television news and newspapers covered the story and some coverage was declared inaccurate. Rumors about SWAT teams and police arriving were said to be untrue by demonstrators who hung around to pose for pictures on the Opera House steps.

Some responses of disgruntled socialites included an elderly woman who clawed at a protester. During the confusion an opera back-up singer was maced by a bejeweled audience member.

SANOE had anticipated that news about the action would overshadow the original motive so they produced a program of their night at the opera. The program listed three acts which outlined the intentions of the group including their declaration of the AIDS crisis as a "state of emergency". SANOE also denounced increased violence against homosexuals.

One columnist summed up the situation when he said that from the lack of action from the government and the capitalist intents of drug companies "Yes, I sympathize with the frustration that led SANOE demonstrators to act up."

—From Gay Community News

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## Vaid Speaks at AALGA Awards Dinner



EVETT BENNETT

Sandra MacDonald of Outreach, Inc. (center) received a Certificate of Appreciation for her organization.

"We funky little political activists don't get enough respect," said Urvashi Vaid, Executive Director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. Ms. Vaid was the keynote speaker at the African American Lesbian and Gay Alliance's second annual Marquis D. Walker Humanitarian Award Dinner held at the Lanier Plaza Hotel and Conference Center on Saturday, October 21.

In her speech, Ms. Vaid mentioned how being gay was being political, how the New Right was attacking lesbians and gays, and what can be done to counteract that threat. "You must be counted, build strong political organi-

zations, and realize that non-gay allies are crucial to success.

In the award ceremony, Rev. Renee McCoy received the Marquis D. Walker Humanitarian Award. Certificates of Appreciation were given to Outreach, Inc., (Fulton County Commissioner) Michael Lomax and Loretta's Disco. Duncan Teague, "Womanstance" (a choral poem by Carol Tucker), and Joyce & Jacque provided entertainment for the evening.

The African American Lesbian and Gay Alliance is a political and social organization for lesbians and gay men of color.

## Repeal of Sodomy Law Discussed

by Matt Montgomery

The Gay and Lesbian Rights Chapter of the American Civil Liberties of Atlanta discussed during its October 18 meeting possible strategies for supporting a repeal of the 156 year old Georgia Sodomy law in the 1990 session of the Georgia General Assembly.

"Mobilizing constituent response" is the major role that Cathy Woolard, Gay ACLU president, foresees for her group in the coming repeal efforts. Hers was one of several possible roles that were discussed at the meeting. While all those present had the same goal in mind, several contrasting plans were discussed.

Representing one end of the spectrum, Chip Rowan, Legal Coordinator for the Atlanta Chapter of the AIDS Coalition To Unleash Power (ACT-UP/Atlanta), presented an invitation to ACLU members to attend what he called "a national action to repeal a law which criminalizes consensual sexual conduct." Some members expressed concern that an ACT-UP sponsored demonstration would not reflect the broad range of support the repeal effort has among both heterosexuals and homosexuals.

Although Rowan did not feel it to be a determining factor, the consensus of those present was that heterosexual interest in the topic would make or break the repeal effort. "[Now is the time] while public opinion is in our interest" to act, Woolard said.

Rowan, who defined the sodomy law as "society's expression of hatred and contempt for gay and lesbian people," said that the quiet response surrounding the Supreme Court's 1986 *Hardwick* decision showed a lack of interest by heterosexuals in the issue.

Attorney Judd Herndon agreed with Woolard and Rowan that the upcoming General Assembly session is when the Gay ACLU should coordinate efforts to get reform. Herndon said that the recent *Moseley* case made a strong statement to the heterosexual community about the potential destructiveness of the sodomy law.

While no definite action was decided on, Gay ACLU members encouraged and consulted with Rowan on the national action demonstration and made plans for future meetings and discussions concerning the Georgia General Assembly and possible repeal efforts of the sodomy law.

Georgia law defines the crime of sodomy as when "a person ...performs or submits to any sexual act involving the sex organs of one person and the mouth or anus of another." Sodomy is punishable by a sentence of "not less than one or more than 20 years."

In the past decade there have been two sodomy convictions that have received great public attention in Georgia. The 1986 case of Michael Hardwick, a gay Atlanta man went to

Continued on page 11



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## OBITUARY

### Daniel Lyon

Atlanta Realtor

Daniel Lyon, a realtor with REMAX Intown, passed away from complications due to AIDS October 12.

Born May 12, 1956 in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, Lyon attended Bob Jones University where he earned a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration. Lyon lived in Raleigh and Durham, North Carolina before moving to Atlanta. First working for Larry Lucas & Co., Lyon handled both residential and commercial properties for REMAX.

A dedicated spiritual student, Lyon devoted himself to understanding and practicing the principles of Religious Science. He was a member of a group led by Dr. Jackie Damgaard, successfully coping with AIDS for over three years. A memorial service was held in Atlanta October 11 at the home of Eli Saleeby.

Contributions in Lyon's name may be made to Project Open Hand, whose services Lyon felt very strongly about and appreciated.



Daniel Lyon

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# The Quilt: A Final Look at the Activism, the Pain and

by Dave Hayward

## "History will recall you did nothing at all"

I came straight from Union Station to besiege the White House. The train from New York predictably arrived late, and marchers were already flailing up Pennsylvania Avenue as I approached the Quilt. Reporting more than protesting, I scribbled the excoriating of George Bush: "History will recall you did nothing at all," "Open your eyes and see it's a state of emergency," and wagging fingers through the White House bars, "Shame, shame, shame!"

On Saturday evening approximately 60,000 would pass the same place and raise their candles amid random booing.

Friday there were 300 people tops in the melee before 1600 Pennsylvania. "Are you the media?" Linda of the Washington group Oppression Under Target inquired as I asked her count of the demonstrators. "We have 3,000!" she beamed.

Allegiances were clearly more with the candlelight vigil than politicking. Whitman-Walker Clinic Administrator Jim Graham announced we were the largest AIDS march ever in America as we huddled around the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool, and each of our 60,000 candles symbolized someone who died of AIDS.

Quilt founder Cleve Jones declared we were the 1,000 points of light and railed, "In the 10th month of your administration and in the 10th year of the AIDS pandemic time is running out Mr. President!"



LEE WILSON

Frankie Agnone: "When Kenny was sick his sister would bring him these ... cookies. And he was the Cookie Monster."

Later Jones said the "magnificent" weekend "is marred only by the callous indifference displayed by the President flying over us in his helicopter (on his way to have his cyst removed). "He was just yards from the Quilt, he'd been invited. He sent a form letter declining. There was no response at all from the First Lady's office."

The person with AIDS who spoke at the vigil was an anonymous woman not shy about her fury. "Bristol-Myers is allowed to hold our lives hostage!" she thundered. "We don't have the luxury of time the executives of Bristol-Myers have...I demand that I be treated with dignity and respect by the government that I support with my tax dollars. I know what's best for me. I want DDI now and not in November."

She was right. There wouldn't be close to 11,000 panels sprawled on the Ellipse if promising drugs were open and cheap in 1982.

"What other disease ever struck a nation that's killing it's youth?!" a man at the Quilt turned and demanded of his companions. "Killing people in their 20s, 30s and 40s?"

A panel addressed it all. "If we were one big family no one

would have to beg to eat / If we lived in a world of dignity no one would have to live in the street / If I tell you you're a part of me there's no reason for disbelief."

"I never had any problem finding Steve in a bar."

If AIDS had to decimate gay men, it picked a resourceful populace. I was amazed at our dance around death and the brilliant swath we slapped on sudden loss.

A life-size Donald Duck beckoned "Lord Love This Duck" on Donald Erickson's day-glo panel, and another blurted "Mickey Mouse Lived in the Fast Lane." Peter Geffken had "Gone Shopping" indefinitely with bags from Macy's, Bloomingdale's, etc. on his panel and another affirmed "Life Is A Beach" with a beach chair, a Michelob and a Budweiser recalling him.

The Tapdance Kid was off to infinity in a black bomber jacket emblazoned with a yellow sneaker trailing a rainbow plume, and Cleve mentioned rhinestone Quilt Queen pins which became the emblem to own. Straight people joshed along, Rubenesque Virginia howling "I'm just a walking comfort station" as she consoled emotional support monitors, and my photographer Lee exclaiming if Bette Davis had a panel in the Quilt it would read "What a dump!"

Two gay uncles gave their nephews piggy back rides on the sidelines and a male couple sauntered by hand in hand. My friend John trotted up to me and grinned, "I couldn't find Steve's panel. I never had any problem finding Steve in a bar or anywhere else. I can't seem to find him today!"

"What a caterpillar calls death the master calls a butterfly"—David Cooke, The Quilt.

"Thank God for video."

Frankie Agnone patted her son Kenny's kaleidoscopic quilt. "My daughters gave Kenny's nieces their little paint squeeze bottles, let 'em do what they wanted." It was a project for Kenny's entire family she explained, pointing to the Cookie Monster. "When he was sick he couldn't eat too much, his sister Carol would bring him these chocolate chip cookies. And he was the Cookie Monster."

Looking at Kenny's Michael Jackson glove Carmine Agnone chuckled. "Always something for a laugh," Frankie finishing, "but always thoughtful of other people."

"Yeah, even when he was sick he was bothered with how it was gonna hurt us," Carmine rasped. "He felt guilty about the fact that he was sick, what it was gonna put us through."

I told them about my friend Virgil's concern as he lay dying in Grady that a girlfriend survived the flooding in her neighborhood. Virgil's panel shone in the afternoon heat



JIM MARKS

"We slapped a brilliant swath on sudden loss."

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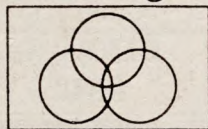
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# the Comfort It Has Brought To A Mourning Nation

"Happy Birthday July 20, 1953-July 20, 1989."

Stephen Tate's mother plopped flowers on his panel gushing tears as she bustled about the square aiming her camcorder. Joanne Perry linked arms with Grant Nichol as he read from the podium "my lover and my life partner," Joanne completing "and my son Christian Perry."

One man's sister gazed at her brother's Barbary Coast Dancers title. "He's also in the Gay Men's Chorus panel, he's one of the waves."

"Did you ever see him dance?" I wondered.

"Oh yeah," she sighed. "Fortunately I have footage of him dancing and singing. Thank God for video! And photographs."

"I'm sorry," I said.

Her body heaved. "Me, too."

"I wear this Quilt in triumph"

I was struck by the matter of fact way many lovers conducted themselves. Unlike the emoting of families, the lovers seemed to cordon off their grief to take care of whatever had to be done. It was as if having endured being second class



JIM MARKS

"We were the largest AIDS march ever as we huddled around the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool."



LEE WILSON

"People formed circles around him encompassing his agony."

they were inured to any further suffering—not unmoved but steeled.

Chuck Egger finished sewing a letter to Dick O'Doniel "I'll remember the life we built...the good times and the bad." Egger shrugged, "It's a relief, it's a final. It helped me...we bought a home together and I'm hoping to keep that if I can, just depends on the insurance and the bills and all that I might lose it."

"I've been diagnosed for over two years, two years in November with AIDS," Egger continued. "I'm plugging along. I volunteer quite a bit with the task force, I helped out today with the Quilt, things like that."

Mike from Atlanta said he wept most of the afternoon after submitting Chuck's panel to the NAMES Project. Yet he was nonchalant about assuming Chuck's care for 27 months, laughing about Chuck's toxoplasmosis wreaking havoc in the hospital.

One man was beside himself endlessly stroking his mate's quilt. His lover's parents had taken his body away for unknown

disposition. In the closing ceremony, people formed circles around him encompassing his agony.

At times exhausted by so many short-lived lives, I felt alien and outside of the mourning around me. Then I saw David's panel and my knees buckled. I petted the rainbow squares and marveled 1951-1986, hadn't I just stayed with him overnight in New York like I always did? God, I miss you crazy man!

At Ray's square I wanted to tell everyone, everyone who walked by, "He was a great guy!" Let me tell you about my friend!

In the closing ceremony small pieces of the Quilt were distributed to everyone gathered, a little U.N. finally of gay, straight, black, white, young, old, male, female.

Cleve Jones leapt to his feet and held his patch high.

"I wear this Quilt in triumph!" he told us hoarsely. "A dream that came true. A triumph of a people united. I wear this Quilt for you!"

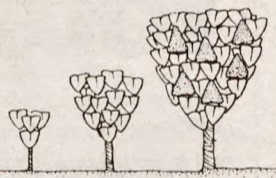
This article is dedicated to David Dopp and to his parents.

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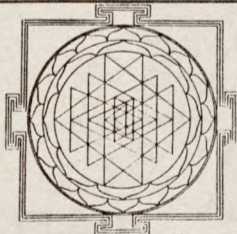
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# Barney Bashing Is Gay Bashing

by David Scondras

During the last month, there has been an unrelenting stream of Barney Frank bashing, without benefit of a context for Barney's behavior. To understand both Barney and the kinds of attacks made on him, it is necessary to begin with a discussion of the America in which Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual people live.

On July 8, 1988, Diana Holmes, an openly lesbian candidate for a seat on the county council of the island of Hawaii, and an outspoken advocate of lesbian and gay civil rights, was attacked in her home, after numerous anti-gay threats, by a machete-wielding assailant. She suffered brain damage and went into a coma.

On April 9, 1988, Jim Brinning, a gay man, was called "faggot" by two teenage males who then punched and kicked him, breaking his nose and causing multiple cuts, contusions and bruises. He was a Boston victim of hate-motivated violence.

On August 8, 1988, two lesbians were beaten unconscious. One of the women sustained five skull fractures. Before the attack, the assailant sprayed anti-lesbian graffiti on their house and smashed a car window.

Nationwide, there were 7,248 incidents reported to the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force of hate violence against lesbians and gay men. Among them:

- 4,835 reports of verbal abuse, hate mail and telephone harassment against gay people.
- 713 threats including death threats, intimidation with objects and being chased.
- 70 gay and lesbian people murdered.
- 885 reported physical assaults.
- 54 bomb threats, 9 cases of arson, 449 cases of vandalism.

A 1987 ABT Associates report, financed by the National Institute for Justice, concluded that the gay and lesbian community is the minority group most frequently victimized by hate-motivated violence.

In spite of all this, there has never been a Congressional Investigation into the violence and hate against the millions of gay and lesbian Americans, nor has there ever been an acknowledgement of the social apartheid that characterizes the experience of gays in the United States.

These statistics are the easiest to document outcomes of the oppression of gays and lesbians. The damage to the psychological health of the gay community is perhaps more important and pervasive, but difficult to document. Depriving Gay and Lesbian and Bisexual children of approval during their formative years, teaching them to hate themselves by surrounding them with messages that gays are sick, sinful, illegal, defective, and hated causes immense damage. It is a testament to the resilience of the human spirit that so many of them survive at all. It is also an explanation of the need for the closet, the tenacity of the closet and the origin of the closet.

That Gays, Lesbians and Bisexuals have survived at all is partly because they can hide their identities from their parents, their friends and sometimes from themselves. The safety of the closet is not a choice but a survival mechanism.

The closet protects gays by allowing them to be invisible, but it exacts a tremendous price. Each gay person faces a unique dilemma: to come out and attempt to cultivate a positive self-image by undoing the damage caused by social apartheid at the risk of losing one's job, the support of the family, and at the risk of being the victim of hate violence - or - to stay in the closet and live a double life, feeling constantly frightened about exposure, and bearing the burden of living a secret life with the feelings of guilt, however inappropriate, that accompanies the secrecy. The closet protects and the closet suffocates. It demands gay people be invisible to others; to friends, co-workers, family and society, to be non-people. It fosters not only depression, alcoholism and other addictions, but also anxiety and loneli-

ness. Those who must live as a hated people, who nevertheless have needs like all people, are subject to exploitation.

Gays are familiar with victimization. The criminal justice system victimizes gays in a number of ways: the "homosexual panic" defense, used most successfully in cases where a gay was murdered, in which lenient sentences are given by arguing that the gay person somehow deserved it. And there is victimization that roots itself in financially exploiting the emotional pain that gays and lesbians have, or exploiting their vulnerability to exposure. Gay bars found a ready market for alcohol among those who wanted to drown their socially created pain in booze. (There have been exceptions to this, bars who have stood up for the community but the underlying historical reality is clear.) There is also victimization which uses and feeds anti-gay sentiment to build congregations, political bases and to get votes: Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell being the most well known and well financed.

From their understanding of the dynamics of victimization, it should be clear to the gay community that Barney Bashing is surrogate gay bashing - that most of the bashing does not come from a concern that a lonely man three years ago paid Gobie for some affection, but from a continuation of the victimization that gays are familiar with. Barney bashing allows people to surreptitiously bash gays - no longer allowed as an overt pastime in polite company. Barney bashing on the part of right-wing politicians is essentially a hustle to convert the pain of his private life into votes - an activity not different in kind from exploiting gays' pain to sell booze or exploiting gays' fear of exposure to extort money.

The bashings have degraded the press, politicians and those members of the public that have engaged in it.

Most disturbing is the contrast of a national debate on the ethics and morality of events in Barney's private life with the national silence on the immorality of violence against gays, of death squads in El Salvador, of homelessness and hunger in a nation wealthy beyond imagination, of the destruction of our environment, and of lack of health care for all our people. Barney has spent his life fighting these immoralities. As conservative columnist George Will pointed out, we have a Savings & Loan scandal and a HUD scandal and yet we are wasting time on a private event in Barney's sex life that took place over two years ago, that hurt no one, and that cost the taxpayers nothing.

It is time to stop the Barney Bashing. We must be blunt with those who insist on imposing their notion of morality on Barney. They are the cause of Barney's trouble when they refuse to allow a place at the table for Gays, Lesbians, and Bisexuals and then have the arrogance and hypocrisy to feign surprise and disgust at gays eating secretly in the cellar.

Over the past twenty years, the Gay community has moved forward - but not far enough. The treatment of Barney Frank is a lesson to us that we need to continue to fight for equality - to put an end to the social apartheid that has characterized our existence in America, and to work with our brothers and sisters until the children who are destined by nature to be lesbian, gay and bisexual can finally live free from the fear of violence.

It is time to tell Washington that the real scandal, the real obscenity is the Congressional silence while right wing Americans and societal institutions engage in the brutalization, humiliation, and murder of Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual citizens.

It is time to get tough.

David Scondras is an openly gay city council member in Boston, Mass.



## Gwinnett County Needs To Be Educated

To the Editor,

Regarding the consideration of a serious illness disclosure policy (a.k.a. AIDS disclosure) in Gwinnett County, unless the county's public safety employees are performing their jobs in a most peculiar manner, such a policy is blatant harassment and intimidation.

It is very difficult to believe in an "enlightened" Gwinnett Co. commission that truly wants to help when a discussion of the subject is fraught with sexist, homophobic and AIDS-phobic dialogue.

Why is Ms. Webb "repulsed" by AIDS? Is she repulsed also by cancer? Hepatitis? Heart disease? What's repulsive is the unfounded fear that ignorance breeds in some of our elected officials. Perhaps Ms. Webb and her cronies should have taken time out on one of their New York trips to educate themselves on AIDS issues.

ACT UP/ATLANTA

## Rutherford's Death Brings Double Reason to Mourn

To the Editor:

The news of Roger Rutherford's death saddens me. I met him but once and am only vaguely familiar with his work, but he seemed a decent and talented human being.

That said, something in Dave Hayward's article set my internalized homophobia alarm to buzzing big time. During our one meeting Rutherford and I spent some time discussing his concern about protecting his aging mother by not using his real "prominent Atlanta family" name on his erotic/nude photographs. All well and good perhaps, especially considering his age and the times in which he came out.

But then here's Rutherford's executor taking other gay men to task for not buying and hanging nudes because "Mama might come see them".

Admirers of New Age reasoning might suggest that Rutherford's understandable inability to be totally open created his conundrum. Christian adherents could suggest there is some "as ye sow, so shall ye reap" at work here. Not totally accepting of either explanation, I just sit and mourn the havoc that internalized rage makes of so many of our lives.

Sincerely,  
Geoff Scott

VIEWPOINTS is part of a continuing effort to provide a forum for the lesbian and gay community. We invite your ideas, comments and feelings and your responses to opinions expressed on these pages.

Submissions should be typed, double-spaced and no longer than four pages. We reserve the right to edit for space. Mail your letters to:

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The opinions expressed here are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of Southern Voice.

# Sure of You Brings Maupin's Family of Characters Full Circle

by Gary Kaupman

"It was a generic valley, a dark bowl twinkling with porch lights and undistinguished by landmarks. There was neither bridge nor bay nor pyramid to tip you off that this was San Francisco, but— Brian, at least—it couldn't have been anywhere else in the world."

Like Brian, fans of Armistead Maupin and his *Tales of the City* series will recognize the terrain without need for further landmarks.

Brain and Thack are sitting on the deck behind Michael's and Thack's home. Brian's bummed out because wife Mary Ann is leaving him, their daughter and San Francisco to host a big time syndicated talk show in New York City. And because he's afraid that he was too rough on Michael (his friend and business partner) when he brought Jon (Michael's ex, who died of AIDS) into an argument between the two.

(Michael, you see, is HIV positive. He's healthy and active so we might just forget that fact. Might. But can't. Because just when we do there's that insidious, insistent beep-beep in the background—Michael's AZT timer.)

Listen.

"Brian asked: 'Doesn't it scare you?'"

"What, Michael?"

"Yeah."

Thack seemed to sort something out for a moment. "Sometimes I watch him when he's playing with Harry (their dog) or digging in the yard and I think: This is it, this is the guy I've waited for all my life. Then this other voice tells me not to get used to it, that it'll only hurt more later. It's funny. You're feeling this enormous good fortune and waiting for it to be over at the same time."

Not unlike us *Tales* fans. The quotes are from *Sure of You*, the latest, most polished and most human of Maupin's books. It is also the last in the series.

Art's imitation of life and vice-versa has seldom been keener than in Maupin's *Tales*. In '78 he introduced us to Mrs. Madrigal, owner of the whacked out house of apartments at 28 Barbary Lane and neo-mom to Mary Ann, Brian, Mouse (Michael) and Mona—kids who had fled their birth-places and families in search of their souls and a radically different kind of family. Every two years or so after that we got updates: *More Tales...*, *Further Tales...* *Babycakes* and *Significant Others* kept us in touch with Mona's angst and confusion, Michael's libidinous adventures, Mary Ann's and Brian's romance and Mrs. M's continued wise counsel.

Along the way there was a wondrous panoply of characters. Their stories were sometimes bizarre, but always somehow believable. And usually, despite faults as wide as the San Andreas, they eminently were lovable.

As if these labyrinthine stories and characters weren't enough there was always right-on social comment. Often hilarious: the



ARMISTEAD MAUPIN

"Maupin's wondrous *Tales of the City* are a rambunctious classic document of (Michael Toliver's) growth in what may well be the most important decade in lesbian/gay history."

cannibal cult at Grace Cathedral. Sometimes scarily prescient: the movie star who we all *knew* was Rock Hudson. And those elegant, yet devastatingly funny, descriptions of lesbian and heterosexual male-male relationships in *Significant Others* that left us wondering what Maupin could possibly do for an encore.

That encore is *Sure of You*, filled with rage, yet brimming with love. It brings us full circle, back to *Tales* original family. Yes, archetypes DeDe and D'or, Prue Giroux, Father Paddy, Arch Gidde

and others wander in and out. And a few new faces appear: A couple searingly modeled on Calvin Klien and wife. Larry, a man with six T-cells, and his lilac-haired, seventy-plus mom who judges Bare Chest contests at the Eagle. And (though only through letters and phone calls) Michael's (birth) Mom.

It's a family in crisis: Michael carries the virus that killed his lover Jon. Brian and Mary Ann really are splitting up. Mrs. Madrigal and Mona are vacationing on Lesbos and Mrs. M's found herself a man.

But Mrs. Madrigal has been one hell of a mom and this family has grown tremendously in the 11 years we've known them; individually and collectively they are capable of facing crisis with strength and compassion. These paragraphs from Michael's letter to his Mom regarding his cremation and other affairs comes near the end of the book:

"I don't know how much time I have left—whether it's two years or five or fifty—but I don't want to be taken back to Orlando when it's over. This is my home now, and I've asked Thack to make arrangements for my cremation here in San Francisco."

"This wouldn't be so important to me if I didn't believe in families just as much as you do. I have one of my own, and it means the world to me. If there are goodbyes to be said, I want them to be here, and I want Thack to be in charge."

"If you still want to do a memorial service in Orlando (assuming you can't come here), Thack can send you part of the ashes. I think you know I'd prefer not to have a preacher involved, but do whatever makes you comfortable. Just make sure he doesn't pray for my soul or ask the Lord's forgiveness or anything like that."

The once wild and confused Michael Toliver has grown into a man that any parent should be proud of; a man capable of honesty and love. Maupin's wondrous *Tales* are a rambunctious, classic document of that growth in what may well be the most important decade in gay and lesbian history. There can be little joy in acknowledging the end of a chronicle so potent, but knowing that the kids have grown up and are alright makes the loss at least tolerable.

We can but trust that Maupin has not laid down his pen forever. But if he has, it is doubtful that he could have done it with more grace, wisdom and good humor than is evident in *Sure of You*.

Armistead Maupin will read from *Sure of You* and autograph copies of the book at Renaissance Bookshop, at 5PM and at Oxford Books at 8pm on Friday, November 3.

## MEET

### ARMISTEAD MAUPIN

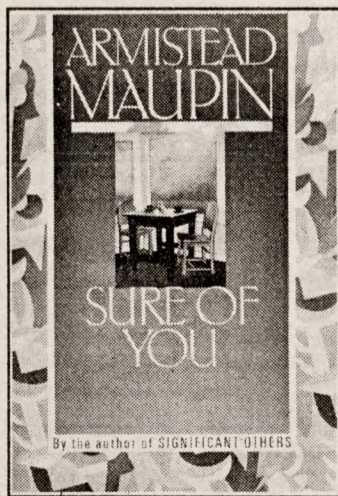
### READING & SIGNING



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Charis Books Turns 15

Feminist Bookstore Is Atlanta Institution

by Amanda Gable

Atlanta - Charis Books and More will turn fifteen on November 4th. Among the oldest feminist bookstores in the country and certainly the central feminist store in the South, Charis is a presence we may not fully appreciate because we are so used to it. Much goes on at the 419 Moreland Avenue, Little Five Points store above and beyond selling books. The books themselves are important enough. Charis's selection is racial ethnically diverse, addresses concerns in the lesbian and gay community, and provides information, entertainment, and solace to all sorts of women, children and men.

Providing the printed word, particularly women's words, that other bookstores don't have is not the end of the Charis vision, but the beginning. As owners Linda Bryant and Sherry Emory put it, everything about the store (including the selection of books) is "filtered through the lens of feminism." A vision of the store is to promote peace, justice and equality in the world. Charis's part is to encourage and empower individual women in particular, and in general, all people who are moving toward change.

To this end Charis often functions as a community center, providing support, information, and referrals on anything from where an ACOA group meets, to how to contact the battered women's shelter. In the back room next to the t-shirts is a table with resource notebooks full of different listings ranging from apartments for rent, classes offered, to groups that

are meeting and political rallies. Charis is a haven for people who need it—a space that is safe.

A big part of Charis's service to the community is the Thursday evening series (always at 7:30 PM). These programs—free, accessible, once a month interpreted for the hearing impaired—include readings by local and national women writers, music, issue discussions, politics, and learning new skills. Look for the brightly colored flyers that list and explain the month's programs. (If you want to get more involved with Charis you can volunteer to help Thursday evenings with this series. Involves coming early, staying a little late and moving chairs.)

Charis's feminist principles affect what they do in all sorts of ways. The tickets they sell will be events held in wheelchair accessible locations; the t-shirts they carry will come in sizes up to XXXXL; and the jewelry is made by women.

When you're in the store you'll notice sections that other bookstores either don't have or pay scant attention to. "Recognizing violence," "Global concerns," "Black studies," "AIDS awareness," "Jewish studies," "Lesbian and gay concerns," "Recovery," and more. Where else can you find on a regular basis periodicals like *Sinister Wisdom*, *Gay Community News*, *Conditions*, *Amethyst*, and *Tradeswoman*? Also you can rent feminist lesbian videos at the store. Though Charis mostly carries books by and about women, there is a "For Men" section



Charis employee Carolyn Mobley (L) and owners Sherry Emory and Linda Bryant invite you to the bookstore's 15th birthday party on Saturday, Nov. 4

EVETT BENNETT

containing primarily gay male fiction and non-fiction, as thoughtfully chosen as the rest of the sections. Of particular note is the children's section which has been a prominent feature of the store since its opening. The children's books are extensive, and Charis is the only store in town that provides anti-racist and anti-sexist children's books.

My favorite part of Charis is talking to people...no, my favorite part is the whole wall of fiction—all by women...no, the whole wall of feminist theory...the cards, the calendars...oh, well, obviously I can't make up my mind.

That's usually my problem in Charis; I sit on the couch and try to narrow down my stack of twelve to a stack of six or so.

As some of you know Sandra Lambert left Charis in April and moved to Gainesville, Florida. She is much missed. The two new full time workers who have joined Linda Bryant and Sherry Emory are Dee Liston and Carolyn Mobley.

The 15th Birthday Party—everyone invited—is November 4th. The Party is 1-6 PM. All day on November 4th (10:30-6:30) most everything in the store is 10% off.



No Easy Crowds!

by Matt Montgomery

Kate Clinton, feminist humorist, has had her share of difficult audiences. Starting out as a high school English teacher in her home state of New York, she went from some of the toughest teens in the country to women's centers, gay festivals and college campuses. Leaving behind many admiring fans who have bought her albums which are produced on her own label, WhysCrack Records.

The lesbian feminist humorist who does what some comedians consider professional suicide confronts issues which range from

sex to politics. Clinton describes feminism as "a recognition of the oppression of women and trying to stop it." Her acts are not in direct competition to stand-up comedians who pray for the big break, a group which Clinton calls "a dime a dozen".

Kate Clinton will perform at The Buckhead Roxy on Saturday, November 14. Opening for Clinton is local group, Bandshee.

For more information on the comedian with a cause, call (404) 525-3821. Tickets are \$14.00 in advance and \$16.00 at the door.

Clinton's language is as clean as Eddie Murphy's is foul, but her material is as challenging to this country's political and social fabric as Lenny Bruce's once was."

- San Francisco Bay Guardian

"Being in her audience reminds me of the wild pleasure of being with slaphappy girlfriends."

- Ms.

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# Halloween, The "High Gay" Holiday

Why We Play Dress Up

by Candace Wiggins

Halloween. The very word conjures up traditional images of witches and pumpkins and goblins and ghouls. And emotions range from delighting in the season to experiencing a sense of fright or dread at this time of year.

With the recent popularity of mythologist Joseph Campbell's "Power of Myth" and "Hero" series of books, lectures, and TV interviews, people are beginning to delve deeper into the origins of mysticism and festivity and ritual.

Called the "High Gay Holiday" by

many, Halloween is celebrated most (bodaciously) by the gay/lesbian community. Reports are that it is *the* most celebrated holiday—with the exception of New Year's Eve—for bar events, parties, contests, and private gatherings.

Why? What is the drawing power of this day?

Halloween was once considered the *original* New Year's Eve. Harvests were in, seasons had turned, animals were either in hibernation or had grown their winter coats while birds had flown South for the winter.

In other words, everybody had

done their duty and it was time to celebrate. There was an acknowledgment that balance was necessary—or, all work and no play makes Jack a dull dinner party guest.

Franklin Abbott, an Atlanta therapist, puts forth the (recognition) that many men have traditional 9-5 jobs and it is one of the few times of the year that gays can do their drag, express the feminine part of themselves and "be totally outrageous without being arrested."

A fascinating concept when one discovers that, in the original "nature" religions such as Wicca, the male religious leaders—called shamans, medicine men, priests—usually wore long hair and dressed up in female clothing. These transvestite priests also worshipped the cycle of the seasons and understood and respected the Mother figure; the original "Queen of Heaven" was not Mary, the Mother of Christ but a woman who gave birth and was the goddess of the harvest and the hunt. Some queen, huh? She did it all.

These priests were in every culture, tribe and country all around the world.

The most comprehensive accounts known on the magical role of gays in nature/matriarchal societies concerns the early Third World invoking Native American Prairie tribesmen. They were called "berdache," named by the white Frenchmen who first encountered them. The word is from the Arabic and means "slave." The berdaches were not slaves but transvestite healer-priests, (scandaliz-



ing) the homophobic whites who met them. Their openness regarding their sexuality and its role in their religious duties were not held in contempt until after the natives adopted white "values."

Until then, until the invading whites encouraged the suppression of these people, they were viewed with religious awe and genuine love and respect.

For a man to dress up like a woman was not considered sick in a society—unlike ours—where women held high status. Women—and this includes lesbian shamans—had political, religious

Continued on page 16

The Staff of *Southern Voice* wishes you a happy Halloween



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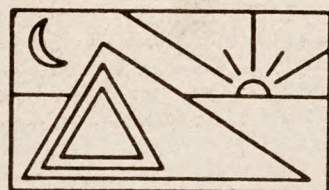
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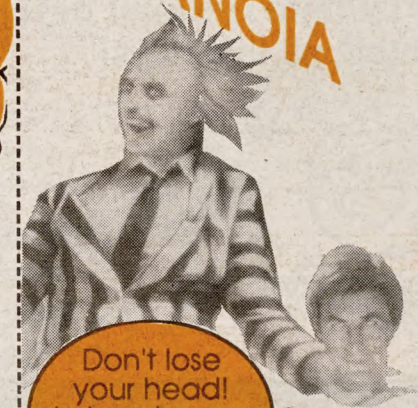


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# High Gay Holiday

Cont'd from page 13

and sexual equality, even filling the role of warrior.

If women were truly seen as the equals of men, no man would feel threatened by a drag queen, or an effeminate man.

It is only through the inequality of the sexes in our culture that transvestites and gay men are ridiculed, viewed as degrading the considered higher status of being male in a society that basically hates women and gays.



This is an important and tragic point in gay/lesbian history.

Once the patriarchal belief system turned militant, once the royal families and privileged classes deemed it politically incorrect to be gay, the witch hunts began.

The matriarchy and nature religions were hounded and harassed, its members—gay and straight routed out, tortured, and murdered by the new order who realized that in order to rule, they had to destroy. Besides, there was money in it.

And the name of this new order? Christianity.

"Women — particularly lesbians and/or feminists — have been oppressed by the patriarchal religion for so long, they have had to find a wellspring of their own spirituality," Abbott states.

And what about gay men? Whether they be out or not, they must contend with the knowledge that our culture's fundamental mentality also oppresses and denies them *their* way of life and love.

Abbott says that there are some gay men who are totally "cynical" about religion, which is understandable. There are others who still make an effort to be involved in a traditional religious order because, Abbott says, "they believe they have to be or they believe they should be (involved)."

Some *have* become involved in the Episcopal Church which is more lenient regarding previous structures concerning homosexuality. These



Berdache Dance

men, Abbott remarks, "seem to like the ritual, the pageantry, the pretty clothes."

This statement is not to make transvestites or gay men sound like fashion slaves, whose spiritual solace depends on what trendy priests are wearing this season.

It is, instead, pointing out again the need for festive joy and celebration, feeling good because you're looking good and vice versa. It is a point in favor of primal memory — transvestitism was once just another way of expressing one's celebration of life and love, paying homage to the Mother Goddess by not only being her priest but dressing like her and other women, her physical representatives.

"There *are* gay men, like the Faeries, who are reclaiming that spirituality," Abbott says. He recommends a book, an anthology, entitled "Gay Spirit" by Michael Thompson for men and women who are interested in

exploring the spiritual side of their nature in a positive, supportive environment.

There are also gays and lesbians who are not into reclaiming any spirituality — yet they are devoted to their friends. They are not involved in any politics — yet they support their favorite bars with their presence and their money, bars where they are welcome to be themselves. They are not interested in history — yet they have made family events out of picking the best costume and a favorite cafe to frequent before going out.

After all, it's Halloween! Time to dress up, go out and dance with lovers and friends in an environment they consider fun.

It's time to totally decorate the house or apartment for the onslaught of friends and relatives for a party or for the quiet joy of reclaimed rituals.

Whatever — and however — Have a ball, *everyone*.

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## The Fabulous Baker Boys

by Terry Francis

Michelle Pfeiffer is resplendently beautiful in "The Fabulous Baker Boys", Steve Kloves' melancholy comedy about a pair of Seattle-based pianists whose bookings have begun to slide after thirty-one years of working together.

In an attempt to revitalize their act and give it a sexy luster, the Bakers, brothers Frank and Jack (Beau and Jeff Bridges) test a string of would-be singers before a red-lighter named Susie Diamond slinks in an hour-and-a-half late for her audition.

The Bakers are spell-bound by the contrast between the plaintive sultriness of her singing and the disheveled radiance of her beauty. And Michelle Pfeiffer plays her to the hilt.

Susie Diamond, whose professional experience includes having been "on call for the Triple-A Escort Service" for the last couple of years, speaks in the tough, slangy vernacular of a woman who's lost her illusions but hasn't yet grown a chip on her shoulder. She's direct in her dealings with men and warns Jack not to go soft on her and louse up their business relationship.

As Michelle Pfeiffer plays her, Diamond is a woman who's seen the crappy side of life and made the conscious decision to protect herself with a willfully tough veneer that doesn't completely cut her off from emotional vulnerability. She deliberately stylizes her own behavior in a way that allows her to save her soul.

But Jeff Bridges' Jack Baker is drifting into a noxious malaise. A man whose heart beats freely only to the free-form rhythms of jazz, he's become numbed and disgusted by playing the likes of "Feelings" and the phony audience flattering banter Frank spouts between their sets. To make matters worse, Jack has fallen — harder than he knows — for Susie.

When a family emergency takes Frank out of town, and Jack and Susie must perform a New Year's Eve show alone, Susie gets the chance to express her own new longing for Jack through her music, and Michelle Pfeiffer's talents are realized.



Beau and Jeff Bridges (left and right) in their first film together portray Frank and Jack Baker, piano-playing brothers whose lives are disrupted when a beautiful singer named Susie Diamond, played by Michelle Pfeiffer, joins their act and revitalizes their failing career, in "The Fabulous Baker Boys."

Draped in clinging red velvet, Pfeiffer sings "Makin' Whoopee" while writhing sensually atop Jack's grand piano before the rapt ballroom audience. It's one of the crystalline moments in movie comedy: a classic fusion of pure sexual ardor and comic phrasing, and the effect on the movie audience is heady and palpable.

Pfeiffer awakens something in Jack that he must have believed long dead — a wish to belong, a need for involvement. The rest of the film centers on his wrestling with the idea of abdicating his role as merely a jaded observer in life for the more risky commitment of being one of life's collaborators.

Among the many reasons "The Fabulous Baker Boys" will be remembered is that it marks the debut of the writer-director Steve Kloves (his script for "Racing With the Moon" was produced when he was twenty-two), whose work here is remarkably sustained for a director only twenty-nine years of

age. Technically and emotionally, "The Fabulous Baker Boys" is the work of a rich and surprising intellect.

Kloves appears to have recognized, understood and utilized purposefully the effects on him of such disparate filmmakers as Truffaut (especially his "Shoot the Piano Player") and Jean-Jacques Beneix ("Diva"), as well as forties Hollywood glamour.

In terms of its sound recording and photography, the film is a feat of the imagination. It was photographed by Michael Ballhaus ("The Last Temptation of Christ"), who helps establish the film's temperament through his expressive use of damp blues and smoky grays.

Kloves even uses silence eloquently, and his work with Pfeiffer, Jeff and Beau Bridges, suggests a director of assumed artistic maturity. There's a hell of a lot of talent in this movie, and the pleasure is all ours.

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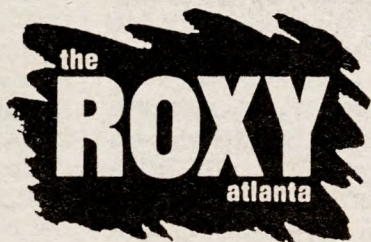
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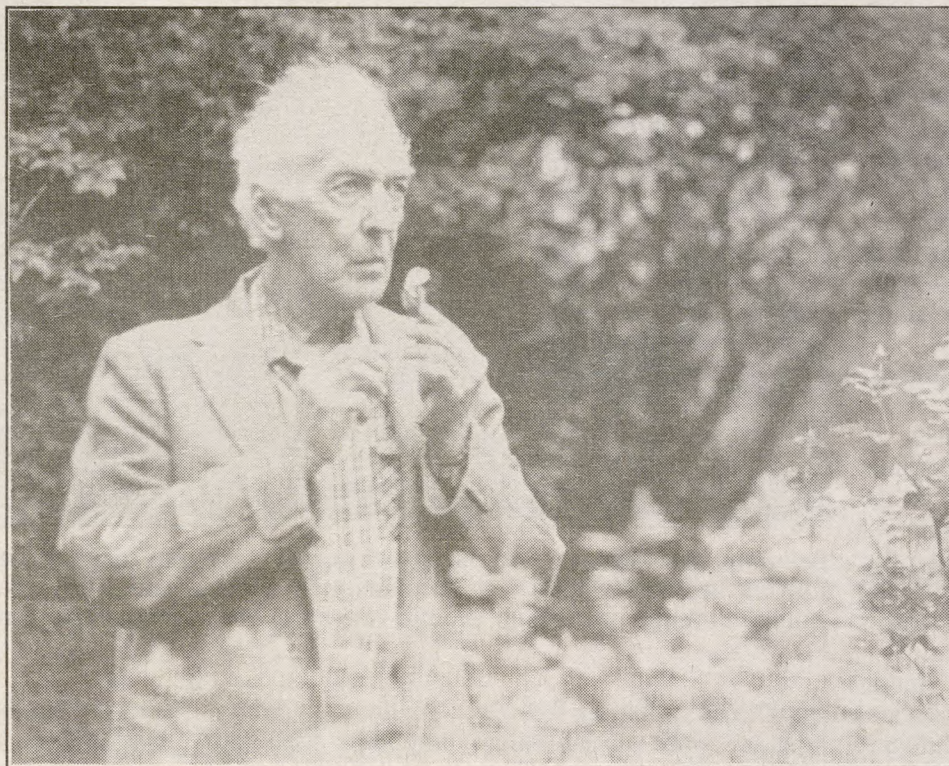


# Atlanta Gay and Lesbian Film Festival Coming in November

by Matt Montgomery

Gay and Lesbian film and video artists such as Barbara Hammer, Sue Frederick and Michael Wallin are not new to the silver screens at IMAGE Film/Video Center but November 10-12 will bring an organized tribute to such artists. IMAGE will host the Atlanta Gay and Lesbian Film/Video Festival co-produced and sponsored by the Southeastern Arts, Media and Education Project, Inc. (SAME). The weekend-long event will include works from Germany, Canada, England and all across the United States. The issues range from AIDS and loneliness to political issues. Ruby Lerner, Executive Director at IMAGE, says that one of the major for bringing this festival to Atlanta is some of the most important contemporary work that is going on now, not only because of the subject matter but also the aesthetic considerations.

This unique opportunity will feature films which already hold strong popularity such as "Looking for Langston" (see review next page) by Isaac Julien as well as other works which have not been screened in Atlanta before. Although Ms. Lerner has received



Veteran stage performer John Wylie is Bill Frayne, a solitary retired man driven by memories of his past in "An Empty Bed" to be screened at the Atlanta Gay & Lesbian Film Festival on Sunday, November 12 at 2:00PM.

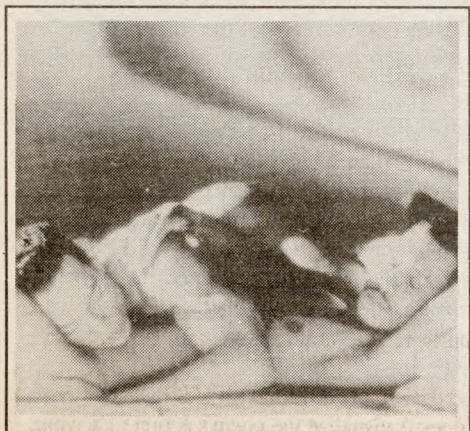
notification that this is not actually Atlanta's first Gay and Lesbian Film Festival, she feels that it will be unparalleled in the selection and quality of the pieces and filmmakers that are to be presented during the event. Stebbo Hill, Art Director for SAME, says that because of the strong interest received during the showing of films while the Quilt visited Atlanta in 1987, that the Festival will become an annual event like its counterparts in Chicago and Los Angeles and other major cities in the country.

While most of the artists are highly

respected in the filmmaking industry rarely do their works receive theatre space except as oddities. As the films, gays have also been treated as oddities in the film industry. Hollywood has created its own version of films about being gay like "Making Love". The gay character which appears in most movies are comical parodies of a stereotype or lonely suicide cases or sometimes lesbian vampires. Keeping the homosexual character too outrageous to be real provides a safe seat in the theatre for the audience that doesn't

want to deal with the issue. The greatest example of this is "Rocky Horror Picture Show". But with the emergence of films which bluntly deal with anti-homosexual violence, AIDS, and other issues, the film industry is being forced to admit the quality of the work by gay and lesbian filmmakers. One such filmmaker is Barbara Hammer whose award-winning film "Snow Job: The Media Hysteria of AIDS" will be presented at the festival.

Gay film festivals not only provide the opportunity for the audience to feel conformity and acceptance at the screening but also the chance to deal major issues which directly relate to them. The films at the Atlanta Gay and Lesbian Film Festival are made by gay filmmakers and festivals such as this one insure that viewers who are interested in the pieces for the subjects, struggles and issues which they address can view them in a serious comfortable atmosphere. Ms. Lerner stressed that while she is not sure of who to expect at the screenings she says that she wants the gay community in Atlanta to know that "this is your work, it is for you."



## Atlanta Gay and Lesbian Film Festival

Friday, November 10, 8:00 PM

"The Virgin Machine" directed by Monika Trent, Federal Republic of Germany, 1988. A journalist, Ina Blum explores gynecological issues and ends up in San Francisco where she meets a series of characters who introduce her to the delights of the city's lesbian community.

Friday, November 10, 10:30 PM

A TRIBUTE TO CURT McDOWELL

Program includes the following works by and about Curt McDowell:

"Confessions" USA, 1971. The filmmaker begins by confessing to his parents about his sexuality.

"Nudes (A Sketchbook)" USA, 1975. The artist uses this film to focus on his closest friends' lives. Contains erotic looks at characters in the artist's life.

"Video Album 5: Thursday People" by George Kuchar, USA, 1987. Kuchar made this film after the death of his friend, McDowell. Looks at McDowell's group of friends as well as a wonder in the filmmaking craft.

Saturday, November 11, 2:00 PM

CONSIDERING AIDS

"Survival of The Delirious" by Michael Balser and Andy Fabo, Canada, 1988. Voted "Best New Narrative Video" at the Atlanta Film/Video Festival, this production compares the present AIDS dilemma with the mythological Cree community and their starvation.

"Snow Job: The Media Hysteria of AIDS" by Barbara Hammer, USA, 1986. Hammer analyzes the repression of gays with AIDS by popular press in her award-winning piece.

"A.I.D.S.C.R.E.A.M." by Jerry Tartaglia, USA, 1988. Has AIDS been used to slowly slip civil rights away from the gay community? This is a question which Tartaglia deals with in order to present the viewer with the unpleasant facts of the situation.

"Bright Eyes" by Stuart Marshall, Great

Britain, 1988. Divided into 3 parts, this film deals with AIDS through comparisons.

Saturday, November 11, 8:00 PM

BLACK PORTRAITS

"Looking For Langston" directed by Isaac Julien, Great Britain, 1988. Julien calls it a look at "Black gay desire."

"Infidel" by Catherine Saalfield, USA, 1989. A black fashion model who is a lesbian deals with racism and sexism. This film confronts issues of identity and self-realization.

Saturday, November 11, 10:30 PM

"Urinal" written and directed by John Greyson, Canada, 1988. Returning from the dead, a group of deceased gay and lesbian figures research the policing of modern washroom sex.

Sunday, November 12, 2:00 PM

"The Place Between Our Bodies" by Michael Wallin, USA, 1975. Providing a positive look at sexuality with a blunt view, the film deals with issues which relate to gay and straight communities.

"Illegal Tender" directed by Paul Bettel, Great Britain, 1986. The work suggests that the modern world has no place for feelings like tenderness.

"An Empty Bed" written and directed by Mark Gasper, USA, 1988. With a main character in his mid-60's living alone in Greenwich Village, this film goes from past to present dealing with one man's life.

Sunday, November 12, 8:00 PM

LOCAL WORK

Local lesbian and gay activists are invited to contact IMAGE about screening their work. One of the films to be shown is "Promise of Life" which was produced by SAME. It is a positive look at some long-term survivors of AIDS from the Atlanta area.

For more information and to make reservations call IMAGE Film & Video Center at 352-4225.



### HOWARD FINSTER, STRANGER FROM ANOTHER WORLD

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By Howard Finster, as told to Tom Patterson

A backwoods Baptist preacher inspired by the Gospel, visitations from the dead, and visions of extraterrestrial life, the Reverend Howard Finster is an unlikely candidate for art celebrity. Yet his work has been shown in museums and galleries from Soho to Australia and from Los Angeles to the Venice Biennale.

He's done album covers for the Talking Heads and R.E.M., and he's painted Easter eggs for the White House. Collectors buy his works before the paint dries, sometimes acquiring them sight unseen over the phone.

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## Review

# Looking for Langston

by Jim Marks

Twenty eight year-old English filmmaker Isaac Julien is not at all worried that "Looking for Langston", the pioneering black gay film that will be screened at the Atlanta Gay and Lesbian Film Festival in November, will cause him to be typecast. "This film comes out of a quest for truth, a very genuine search for desire, for my own desire, my own voice," he says, "and that kind of quest is more important than expedient questions of career. It's very important to be able to articulate one's self, and if one doesn't, one dies."

Given that kind of commitment, it's perhaps not surprising that "Looking" comes to the Festival trailing clouds of controversy and misconceptions. It's, alas, an American controversy. The film, originally commissioned for England's Channel 4, aired February 28th (introduced by Audre Lorde) to 750,000 people without stirring up more than the crank calls Julien says are to be expected. It's also been shown at film festivals in Berlin and Barcelona, where it won the Don Quixote award.

But in this country, the film was twice withdrawn from screenings, once at Washington D.C.'s International Film Festival this spring, and again at San Francisco's Gay and Lesbian Film Festival this summer. According to Julien, the executor of the late Langston Hughes's estate objected to the film's depiction of the black poet as gay, and refused to grant American copyright use for two poems (including the brief and haunting "I loved my friend") already in the film. So the film Americans get to see is the edited, if not expurgated, version.

The controversy has also fueled the misconception that "Looking" is a documentary about Hughes, a key figure in the Harlem Renaissance of the 20's, and perhaps the dominate black writer in America until the advent of James Baldwin, Imiri Baraka and the black power writers of the 1960's. Although the film includes information about major gay participants in the Harlem Renaissance (such as Countee Cullen, Harold Jackman, and Bruce Nugent) and includes a beautifully integrated framing section of Hughes himself performing his work with a jazz band, the film is subtitled "A Meditation" and is not about the historical Langston Hughes. Instead, as Julien says, "it's more about the looking", his East Enders accent rounding the vowels and clipping the ending.

In short, Julien says, "Looking" is about black gay desire; it's an imaginary search for a black gay identity." Not surprising, the main locale is a gay bar, where looks inflame and chill, where tangos are danced and champagne is drunk, and from which emanate various stories and encounters.

The scenes in the gay nightclub (strategically located beneath a church) were filmed in the Victorian Gothic splendor of London's St. Pancras Hotel. Julien says the architecture "enhanced the mythic quality" of the movie. "Because one's constructing a black and white film slightly old fashioned in its look," Julien says, "it obviously ends up with references" to other films. Critics will notice a myriad of influences: luscious, mysterious lighting reminiscent of Jean Cocteau; angelic boys and marshy wastelands out of Fredrico Fellini; an urgent sensuality recalling Kenneth Anger's "underground" gay classics; the layering of story within story as in Pasolini's tales of erotic adventuring.

Julien's "hybrid style" is put to the service of visualizing primarily the works of a contemporary gay American poet, Washington, D.C.'s Essex Hemphill. Those not familiar with Hemphill's work are in for a real treat. Julien says that he first encountered Hemphill's poetry at a reading in London in early



Dancers in the timeless dance hall from "Looking for Langston" which will be aired Saturday, November 4 at 8:00 pm as part of the Atlanta Gay and Lesbian Film Festival.

1987. Julien saw in the poems "a record of our experience". One of the reasons that the film exists in a timeless fantasy world - 20's fashions mixed with 80's poems - is because Julien "wanted to emphasize the historical connection between Essex [Hemphill], James Baldwin and Langston Hughes.

Especially in the American version, where Hemphill's poems replace Hughes, the film's mix of performed poetry (longtime Hemphill collaborate Wayson Jones contributes music) and visual daring could almost be described as an MTV visualization of Hemphill's poetry.

Not that this is your second grade school teacher's idea of verse. One of the poems, for instance, is "Le Salon." The name comes from a now departed gay porn palace in D.C.'s urban renewed 14th Street honky tonk zone. Surely, no one has described getting a blowjob in a porno cubicle as wittily as Hemphill, and it is difficult to imagine anyone bettering Julien's combination of brief snatches of film, amorous shadows and ecstatic faces for recapturing this strangley disembodied sex act. Then there are the scenes of two cruising leathermen embracing in a dark park, of the lovers on a narrow bed, and of the tease in the marsh, just to name a few, all as exquisitely attuned to the possibilities of black male beauty as, say, the three lovemaking scenes in "She's Got to Have It."

Was it a good idea, I asked Julien, to focus on sexual desire in the midst of the health crisis? "Definitely," he said, "it's the only thing we have got left. There's lots of closure going on, lots of silence, which produces no debate and lots of people dying. I want the movie to create a wedge to take the top off that silence."

In a sense, the film is a defense of the gay bar, which, in the movie is raided by skinheads and police - but no one is there except the gay angels, who rain taunts on the frustrated arms of the law. Julien views bars as "very important sites of resistance." There is no intent to criticize: "those places are very unstable, they can be taken away much more easily then erected. AIDS has forced different communities to talk to each other - we can't

be critical of our surviving sites of pleasure; we can't always be ideologically correct."

Take his handling of the issue of racism. Partly, he embeds the issue in the plot. One of the bar's habitués is a white gay man, more than a little unpleasant in the way he drinks too much, flashes his money too much, and plays putdown mind games with the black man who is handsome but not pretty. He is, Julien admits, "not very different from the characters in [Andrew Hollinghurst's] *Swimming Pool Library*," one example Julien says, that in England there is a "dialogue beginning around race and sexual identity."

But racism is also the subject of Hemphill's "If his name were Mandingo". Julien doesn't visualize the poem's action of a white man having sex with a black trick, giving him money, and then ignoring him in the daylight. Instead the movie's white man wanders among Robert Mapplethorpe images projected upon sheets blowing in a movie breeze.

"Actually," Julien says, "I'm an admirer of Mapplethorpe's photography. But these photographs are about white desire for black men. That is not the same as my desire. Those pictures are constructed through white desire: there is a lot of projection there; of what white men think black men are.

The discomfort a white viewer feels watching some parts of "Looking" is a reminder that this is very nearly as much a black film as it is a gay one. Julien doesn't regard his stance as that of a black Englishman examining black American culture. Rather, he sees a "sense of continuity" across the Atlantic, a "Black Diasporian sense", in which the shared sense of exile unites both cultures.

"Looking for Langston" is for all intents and puposes the first black gay male art film ever made, building a world out of bits and scraps, tiny clues to a hidden life. That it should prove so sophisticated, its director so talented and sure of his technique, promises we will have good reason for looking for Isaac Julien's work for a long time to come.

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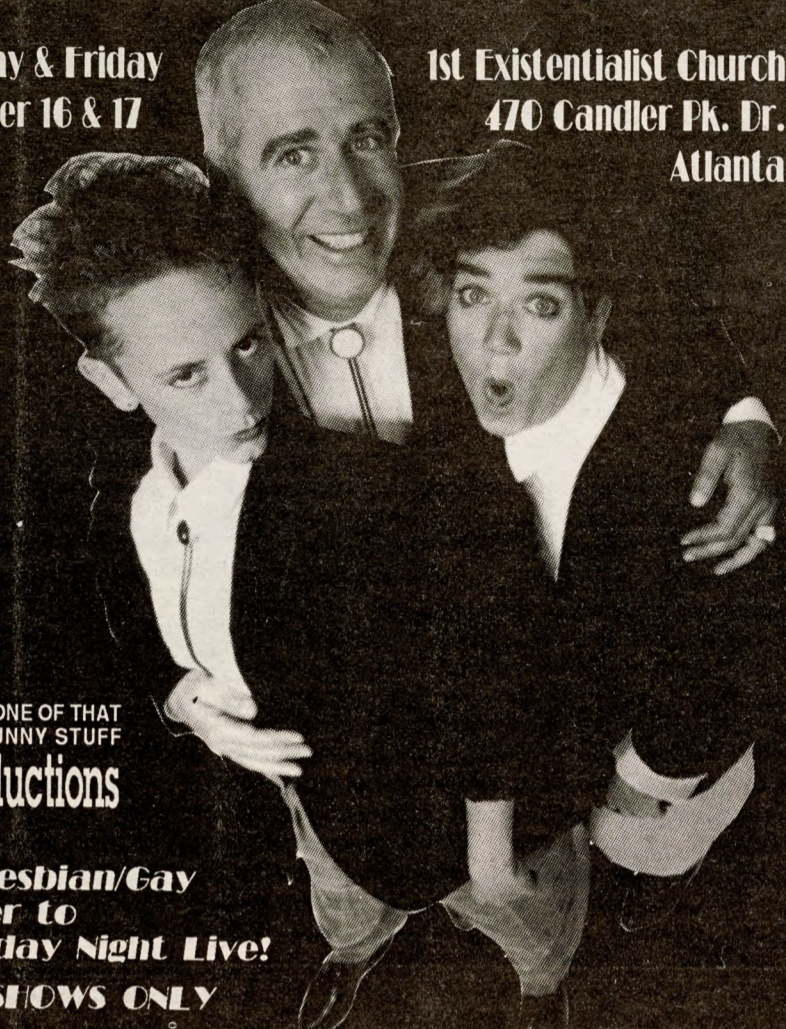
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## Ruling Planets

by Mary Bailey-Rule

October 26 - November 8

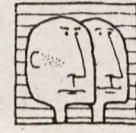
Happy Birthday, Scorpio! The Sun went into your sign on Monday, October 23 and is conjunct Pluto on November 7th. Conjunctions indicate concentrated and focused energy, so that should be a powerful day. The New Moon is on Sun., Oct. 29 in Scorpio, the same day we turn our clocks back to Eastern Standard Time.



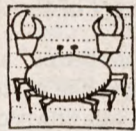
**ARIES** Mars is in your 7th house of personal relationships until November 4th bringing vitality to important associations. Balance is the key for the next two weeks.



**TAURUS** With the sun and Pluto in your 7th house of personal relationships, you may have an intense desire to find that special person. Patience will help immensely.



**GEMINI** Mercury is moving into your 6th house of responsibility and personal health, so take stock of your exercise and eating habits. Be sure to stay relaxed.



**CANCER** Venus is in your 6th house of personal responsibility bringing balance and harmony into working conditions and health matters. Resolve difficulties at work.



**LEO** The Sun joins Pluto in your 4th house of home and family, so pay more attention to matters involving parents and those you live with now. Take time to nurture yourself.



**VIRGO** The Sun, Mercury and Pluto are in your 3rd house of communications and transportation. Let others know what you are thinking and feeling. A good time for a tune-up on the car.



**LIBRA** The Sun, Mercury and Pluto are emphasizing your 2nd house of money, material resources and creature comforts. Consider a savings account or solid investments and buy for quality as well as appearance.



**SCORPIO** Happy Birthday! Your solar year is beginning, so take time to consider how you want this year to be. Focus on your desires and plan ahead, as you listen to your intuition.



**SAGITTARIUS** Your 12th house of higher dreams and visions is enhanced by the Sun, Mercury and Pluto so pay close attention to your inner guidance and trust your visions.



**CAPRICORN** If you are feeling bogged down with work and responsibilities, you may need to assess your alternatives and plan social time with friends or associates.



**AQUARIUS** Your contributions and efforts at work should be more obvious, so accept acknowledgement graciously, bring your resume up-to-date and watch for unexpected opportunities.



**PISCES** With the Sun and other planets in Scorpio trining your sign, you may feel an increase in energy, creativity, and self-esteem. Get moving on new project and don't worry.

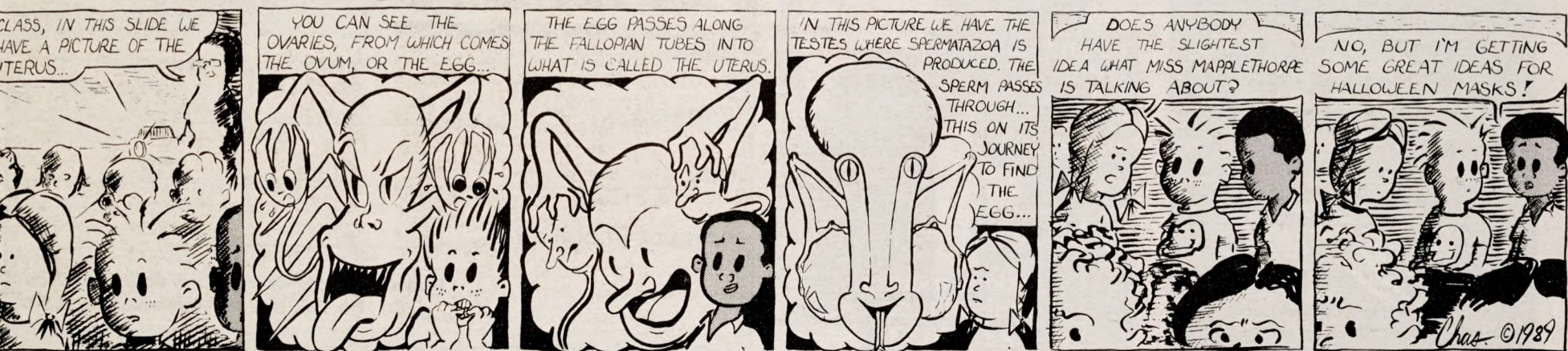
Mary Bailey-Rule is a professional astrologer who specializes in birth chart analysis, relationship charts, and career counseling. For more information or an appointment, call 250-8088.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY LIZA GOLLOBITH



## bittersweet

by Charles Haver





**FAMOUS FACES**

**Who Is k.d. lang?**

Nashville has not seen a twang like k.d. lang's, and k.d.'s not sure how they feel about her. The androgynous singer recently revealed she's not as well received in the country music capital as she would like to be. She confessed she wants to be accepted, even though she's had her share of labels like "weird." But k.d.'s talents are getting her serious recognition. After growing up in Canada with little exposure to country music, she eventually fell in love with the music of Patsy Cline, and recorded such favorites as "I Fall to Pieces." Now her ventures into country have resulted in the *New York Times* calling her one of the "most captivating" new voices. And her latest concerts have added stars like Liza Minnelli, Bernadette Peters and Debbie Harry to her growing list of fans.

**Boy George and Girl Connie?**

Fact is stranger than fiction, even in the world of entertainment. Believe it or not, shocker rocker Boy George has teamed up with Connie Francis for a remake of Frank and Nancy Sinatra's old hit "Something Stupid." The unlikely pair prepared the cut without ever meeting in person. With the aid of modern technology they recorded their parts separately. Francis, however, said she is anxious to meet the boy.

**Everybody Loves Julie**

The actress who brought the first flutters to young lesbian hearts as Mary Poppins and roused the applause of gay and straight alike as a female impersonating a male impersonator in "Victor, Victoria," has received high honors from the world of film. Julie Andrews received the Tribute Award of the Academy of Film and Television for her versatile, lasting and moving performances. During the award ceremonies in London, the English-born actress was described as a "special" ambassador.

**Knife that Mac**

The son of singer Bobby Darin is taking on the golden arches for its "Mac Tonight" campaign to sell burgers. Attorneys for Darin have filed suit in Los Angeles asking for \$10 million from McDonalds for copyright violations of Darin's 1959 hit "Mack the Knife." The suit claims the voice and mannerisms of the new Mac are too close to old Bobby's. Bobby's son feels he would be justly compensated with a big slice of the billion-burger-selling Mac.

-F.G.

**Tennis Anyone?**

Fall comes to North Georgia, an invigorating nip invades the northwest breezes, leaves begin to wear their brilliant colors and on cooler evenings the sweet, nostalgic aroma of burning fireplaces wafts through Atlanta neighborhoods. It's time to start thinking about winterizing cars, dusting off Halloween costumes, getting our cold weather finery to the cleaners and...tennis?

Yes, tennis. To those of us who are consumed by topspin, aces, volleys, backhands and lobs it's time for the Atlanta Team Tennis Association's (ATTA) annual Chattahoochie Autumn Classic to be held November 11-12. "The Chattahoochie Autumn Classic is a fun-filled, laid back climax to our regular season," explained ATTA President, Eric Keyes. "It's our way of getting everyone together at least one more time before cold weather sets in to say thanks for a successful season and to have a great time on and off the courts."

Keyes added, "The Classic is also our way of introducing ATTA to prospective new members since the tournament is open to all local tennis players, whether or not they are current members of the league. We're confident that once players see what a great bunch of guys make up ATTA, they'll want to join." ATTA regularly plays every Saturday afternoon at Glenlake Tennis Center in Decatur, sponsors teams in ALTA and USTA competition and travels to invitational tournaments all over the country.

ATTA Vice-President and Classic tournament chairman, Tim Mills, profiled the tournament. "We're planning for a minimum of thirty-two singles and sixteen doubles team entries, although we'll be able to handle as many people as want to play. Everyone is welcome to enter, regardless of their skill level, as we will have A, B and C level competition." Mills concluded, "We want every player to enjoy good serious tennis, but primarily to have a lot of fun and meet new friends."

A Draw Party is planned for the night prior to the tournament for all entrants. Applications for the tournament are available now. Entry fees are \$10.00 for singles and \$10.00 per player for doubles, in advance, with a November 7 deadline.

For more information, call the tournament chairman, Tim Mills, at 874-6102.

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**The Tower:  
Everyone's  
Neighborhood Bar**

Jill Darmer and the staff of The Tower challenge you to rediscover the comradery of a neighborhood bar. "When I took over the bar last year, people thought that only radically political women came to The Tower. I wanted people to continue to communicate and express themselves; but, I also wanted to create an atmosphere where anyone could find a diversity of ongoing activities - where relaxation, the meeting of new friends and the experience of fellowship would be the main focus of the bar."

Having won the 1989 Georgia Bar Award for Women's Bar of the Year, Jill and her experienced staff have worked hard to bring a Greenwich Village Feel to their business at 735 Ralph McGill. Nightly activities and occasional live performances have done much to satisfy even the most jaded of bar-goers.

"I find the most difficult task is to get new people to come into the neighborhood and try us out - perhaps because they're not sure of what The Tower is all about. But, this misconception evaporates once they come in and discover how comfortable and laid-back we are. We want everyone to have a special place in which to play, relax and enjoy a unique brand of neighborhood hospitality."



EVETT BENNETT

Jill Darmer, Owner of The Tower

**Affairs:  
Successful Partnership**

Harry Rubley and Patrick Talbot are successful partners in business and life. They own and operate Affairs, an upscale sparkling gift shop stocked to the brim with an unusual mix of contemporary and traditional accessories for the home. "Harry likes the contemporary stuff and I'm the traditionalist," explains Patrick.

Affairs is a neighborhood business. It is located between two high traffic and popular restaurants in the Morningside area. "We stay open late and we also get a lot of business from people walking in the neighborhood," adds Patrick.

Harry and Patrick seem to radiate a comfort not usually associated with the pressures of owning a retail business. "We live in this neighborhood and often walk to work," says Patrick.

Their success seems to come from a warm and sincere desire to offer their customers the best service and merchandise. "We travel to New York on buying trips but we have found that Atlanta is beginning to offer very good merchandise as well," says Harry, "and we employ the kinds of people that we would like to have if we were the customer."

Harry and Patrick are civic-minded and make contributions to Project Open Hand and Heartstrings. Their future plans include a second store in the coming year.

Affairs, 1401 N. Highland Ave. 876-3342.



EVETT BENNETT

Affairs' Harry Rubley and Patrick Talbot

**Travis Place:  
Comfy Clothes for  
Women's Women**

Six years ago the moon sparked a conversation between Carol Place, Ginger Travis and Georgann Eubanks regarding the difficulties in finding good undies.

Travis Place, the Durham, North Carolina based, women-owned mail order clothing company, started small, offering just two items: a vest undershirt and a stretch bra. Today, Travis Place features underwear and outerwear, socks, gloves, and even pet accessories designed for easy care and comfort. The shopper's catalog is as entertaining as informative - great for the Holidays - using women's women to model clothes that make sense.

Travis Place representative Nancy Kelly delivers the company's bottom line on price, "We like our clothes to be financially accessible to all women."

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