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Page 7

SEPT 9 - SEPT 15 / 1993

NEWS

The house of a Willacoochee gay couple who were victims of harassment has burned down PAGE 3

The Atlanta Pride committee's financial problems may be headed to court PAGE 3

How do Cobb's lesbians and gays feel about where they live? PAGE 3

Decatur Mayor Mike Mears puts out the welcome mat for gay men and lesbians PAGE 10

SOUTHEAST

Gays, lesbians on the Miss. Gulf Coast plan to march for their rights PAGE 4

Is Columbus, Ga. the next target of the religious right? PAGE 6

MILITARY

A recently-released report on the military ban blows the doors off the Pentagon's arguments for it PAGE 15

HEALTH

Texas case documents HIV transmission among lesbians PAGE 13

OUT AND ABOUT

MUSIC
A new season of sound from the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra PAGE 19

PREVIEWS

Hollywood Hots, the cabaret under the stars, is coming Saturday PAGE 22

The Arts Festival of Atlanta is still fresh at 40 PAGE 25



Michael Horne and Palmer Wells of Theatre in the Square in Marietta

Caught in the storm

Palmer Wells and Michael Horne are a gay couple who just wanted to live quietly and build their theater. Suddenly, they find themselves at the center of a nationwide debate over morality and censorship.

by MICHAEL KAPE

Marietta—As in any drama, a subtext runs beneath the human rights battle triggered by the Cobb County Commission.

The whole issue supposedly started when Theatre in the Square produced a play, "Lips Together, Teeth Apart," that its detractors said had an overtly gay theme, prompting the commission to cut off arts funding and to pass a resolution saying that Cobb opposed the "gay lifestyle." But the play in question hardly mentioned gays, and Commissioner Gordon Wysong, the leader of the anti-gay campaign, hadn't seen the play.

So perhaps the Christian right had another target—or targets.

While they have never made an issue of it, Palmer Wells and Michael Horne, who started Theatre in the Square 11 years ago, are a gay couple who have been together 15 years. Both used to work for IBM in public relations. They share a house close to the Marietta Square. And until this maelstrom, they had been quietly building their theater into one of the most successful in the metro area, with Horne serving as artistic director and Wells as managing director.

"When all this came up, we were reluctant to say anything about our relationship," says Horne. "We didn't want this to be branded as a theater run by two gay men, which would further inflame the religious right."

"We're certainly not trying to cover that we're gay, but we're not playing games up here. We're not activists, for better or worse. We're not apologizing for that or bragging about it. We've always thought our best contribution would be in just doing our work and living our lives quietly, peacefully and showing ourselves as good people. So we've never waved flags or spoken out. We really have not been identified as gay, but I think everyone is pretty aware."

"We don't even make any pretense," says Wells. "We just live our lives, do our work and hope people accept us as human beings. Along the way, if they want to make some assumptions, who cares?"

"No one has ever asked us [if we're gay]," says Horne. "Certainly Mr. Wysong has never asked me. He's never talked to me about my lifestyle or opinions."

I think some assumptions have been made. I think part of that is just that we are determined to try to push Cobb County into the 20th Century. They're making it harder for us every day."

"I do think there is an attack on anyone who is different in this community right now, be they gay, Jewish, Black, Muslim, Asian or just politically in the minority. I think it's the fact we have been willing and determined to attack tough social issues and been progressive."

Ironically throughout the summer as the controversy raged, Theatre in the Square has been running "Smoke on the Mountain," a musical set in a fundamentalist Baptist church that was denounced by one reviewer who said it crossed "the line between entertainment and preaching. It runs over it, stomps on it, and flaunts it in our faces. It completely offends, infuriates and disgusts."


"I loved that review because we were able to cite it to the Cobb Commission," says Horne. "And frankly, it was fine with me because ["Smoke on the Mountain"] is no more something we're advocating than "Lips Together, Teeth Apart." But we would fight for as much the right to do this play as we did for "Lips Together." We cite that review as an example that you cannot please everyone. And if you spend your time trying to do that, you never really do theater."

The controversy has cost Theatre in the Square the appearance of a Broadway star. Daisy Egan, a 13-year-old who won a Tony for her role in the musical "The Secret Garden," was scheduled to appear in the theater's next production, a musical version of Carson McCullers' "Member of the Wedding."

"[Egan's father] saw all this on television, and he just called and said, 'We're not chicken, believe me. We are social activists. But it would be too upsetting for Daisy. She'd be on the front lines screaming with you all, and that would really upset her,'" says Horne.

"It was a real blow, of course. We'll recover. We've got a wonderful new star. She was the understudy. If I'd never had Daisy, I would have been thrilled with this

CONTINUES ON PAGE 14



Oy vey, my father's gay!



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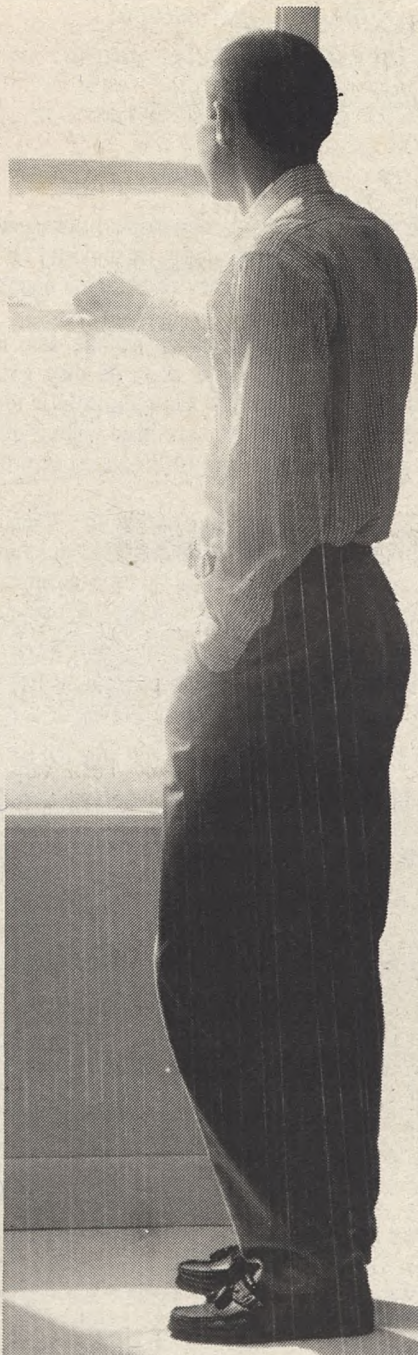
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Cobb's gays and lesbians face an unsettling future

Marietta—Life hasn't changed much for lesbians and gay men living under official condemnation in Cobb County—except for a little more caution in their day-to-day lives and an increased drive to activism.

"It used to be that I didn't do things like jump when there's a strange noise outside the house," said Noel Lytle, a systems analyst who has lived the past seven years in northeast Cobb near the Cherokee County line, with his partner of 8½ years, financial analyst David Mayersky. "In the last five weeks I've not slept as well. I've had feelings of uneasiness, insecurity, and I've been more sensitive to other people's comments."

Lytle said he has received crank calls and had one man "volunteer" to him his opinion "that being gay is immoral and all sorts of other adjectives."

"I don't feel as welcome as I did," he said. "I used to feel more comfortable."

Cheryl Pittman, a south Cobb resident for six years who was born in Smyrna, agreed that the atmosphere was more chilling now that the Cobb County Commission has passed its anti-gay resolution.

"I am more cautious now," she said. "I have stickers on my [car] bumper, and I am just more conscious of the fact that people who pull up beside me may know what the rainbow flag is."

Pittman's partner of 3½ years, Marietta criminal defense attorney Jean Miller, said that she's not experienced any adverse reactions in her home county.

"I've not noticed anything different at all," she said. "I've had a 'Stop the Hate' sign in my car window for two weeks, and the only responses I've gotten have been people with the thumbs up."

But Pittman and Miller are leaving Cobb County, although the move was planned before the commission's action. Pittman works in marketing at IBM, and the company is transferring her out of state.

"We're already planning to move to North Carolina," she said. "But believe me, even if that weren't happening, with all the things that have happened in Cobb County, the house would still be on the market."

Lytle and Mayersky say they've thought about moving, but the pros of staying outweigh the cons.

"We moved here for the same reason a lot of people do—affordable housing, low taxes, low crime," Lytle said. "We found a beautiful house on a wooded lot that we fell in love with."

"We've been here several years," Mayersky added. "The location is really nice, and I would hate to leave that. But at the same time I am really irritated that my tax money goes to support these charlatans."

So Lytle and Mayersky, for the time being, will stay. In the meantime, they intend to do everything they can to show Cobb County that lesbians and gay men are not the monsters that Gordon Wyszog and the rest of the Cobb Commission has made them out to be. And they are having some success.

"I'm encouraged by the outpouring of support," Lytle said. "I can't tell you how many calls we've gotten from people saying how dismayed they are."

Pittman, too, wants to reach out to those who do not understand that the "gay lifestyle" is no different from other Cobb County lifestyles.

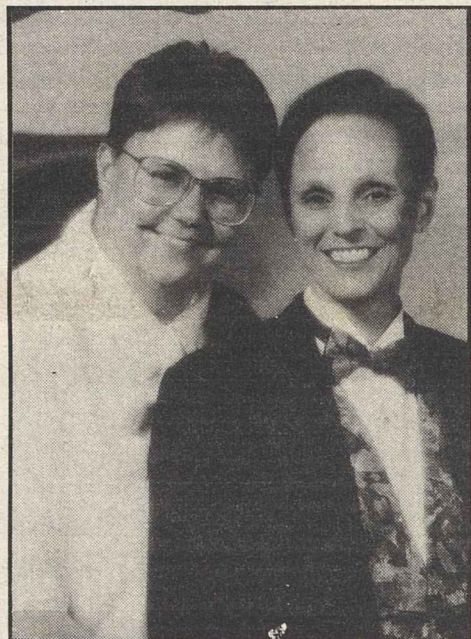
"I served on the May/June grand jury in Cobb County," she said. "They tell you they get the names [to serve on the grand jury] from the 'upstanding citizens' of the community. I really want to let those officials know who I am. I represented us on that grand jury."

"When I had to serve for this county, I was told I was an upstanding citizen," she continued. "But when it comes to my life, I'm told to get out. That makes me angry."

Gary Spahn, a seven-year Smyrna resident, takes another approach.

"Do I feel different? Not really," he said. "But there is something different, although I'm not sure I can identify it. Conversations about [gay and lesbian] issues are a lot easier now. I work in a convenience store, and I hear much more incidental conversation than I did before. And it's positive, mostly, about leaving gays and lesbians alone."

Spahn said the commission's action has made him more active, but that he feels still more comfortable talking to fellow Cobb Countians one-on-one about the issue. He re-



Cheryl Pittman (left), with her partner Jean Miller, says she is more cautious since the Cobb gay controversy started.

lated this tale about an experience at the Queer Family Picnic on Aug. 22:

"I talked to one man who was standing out on the fringes. He said 'No, I don't like this.' I asked him what it was he didn't like. Do you see something offensive? He said 'No.' I said is it because they identify as lesbian and gay? And he said 'Yes.' Then we talked about a half an hour about a lot of things. He asked if I was afraid of AIDS, and I told him that question meant he was making an assumption about my life that wasn't necessarily true. It was a good, low-key conversation. There are opportunities to break down walls, but it takes a particular mindset to do that."

Lytle and Mayersky, who both work with the Cobb Citizens Coalition, would agree with Spahn, and they are actively seeking out Cobb's gay and lesbian population to join them and others in the struggle for lesbian and gay civil rights north of Atlanta.

"As Jon Greaves (another member of the Cobb Citizens Coalition) has said for years, it's better to light a candle than to curse the darkness," Lytle said. "I'm trying to light a lot of candles."

KC WILDMOON

Pride committee faces suit

Atlanta—An Atlanta T-shirt company that says it is still owed \$65,000 by the Atlanta Lesbian and Gay Pride Committee is planning to take the committee to court and may go after the financial assets of the group's officers.

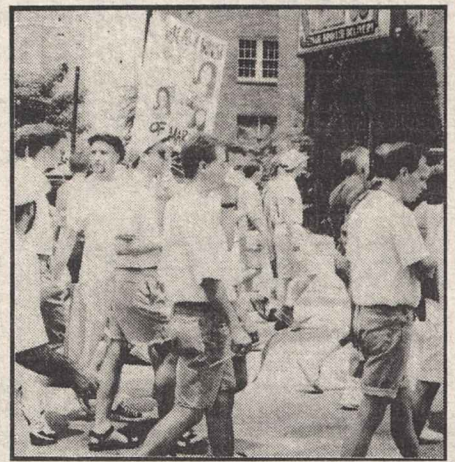
"This is the last thing we really wanted to do," said Bart Hardison, co-owner of Screenpeace, which made the official Pride T-shirt. "But [the debt] is about to sink us."

After trying to negotiate a way for the Pride committee to pay back the money, attorneys for Screenpeace have sent a letter to the committee demanding immediate payment. Hardison says the company decided to pursue legal action because, despite repeated requests, the Pride committee was not forthcoming with a repayment plan. A lawsuit is already in the works, although it has yet to be filed, he said.

"We don't have the money," said Ken Gallups, a Pride board member. But Gallups said the committee still hopes to come up with a repayment plan that would satisfy Screenpeace and erase its deficit by the end of the year. Several fundraisers are being considered, although nothing definite has been set at this point, he said.

While the Pride committee, in substantial debt after staging June's celebration, has no assets, Screenpeace's attorneys plan to go after the personal assets of the officers of the Atlanta Lesbian and Gay Pride Committee in order to recover both the \$65,000 and the company's legal bills.

Meanwhile, the Pride committee is still struggling to raise money to erase its deficit. It's "Circle of Friends" campaign to retire the



Pride weekend left a \$65,000 T-shirt bill, which may put the Pride committee in court.

debt has raised \$6,000, about a tenth of what's needed to pay Screenpeace.

Screenpeace took out a personal loan to pay for production costs of the T-shirts because the Pride committee did not have enough cash up front (most of the money to pay for Pride is raised during the celebration itself). Hardison says the company decided to take that risk after calling past creditors of the Pride committee, who said they had no problem being repaid. "We felt it was a pretty solid account. We were comfortable that they would pay."

Donations to help the Pride committee erase the debt should be sent to ALGPC, P.O. Box 54024, Atlanta GA 30308-0024.

RICHARD SHUMATE

Gay couple's house burns down

Willacoochee, GA—The home of Roy Kirkland and Doug Sebastian—two gay men who found a burned cross in their front yard last month—burned to the ground on Aug. 29, shortly after Kirkland left the house frightened because someone had come by the house yelling.

"[Police investigators] think it was faulty wiring," said Kirkland. "That's what they're saying. There's some walls left, but it's all charred. Everything inside is destroyed." Insurance investigators have also been at the scene, sifting through what's left.

Kirkland moved into the house, willed to him by his father, with Sebastian last February. The two reported no problems with neighbors

until the July 21 cross burning. Since then, the couple has had their mailbox trashed and received a death threat on their answering machine, which prompted them to consider leaving Willacoochee, in south Georgia near Tifton.

On the same day the house burned, Kirkland said two other gay Willacoochee residents were the targets of vandalism—one had mothballs put into his car's gas tank and the other found a dead dog on his car.

Kirkland and Sebastian are currently staying at the hotel in Tifton where Sebastian works.

"I don't know what we're going to do now," Kirkland said. "All this has happened so quickly."

KC WILDMOON

AIDS Walk distribution settled

Atlanta—Proceeds from the AIDS Walk Atlanta on Oct. 17 will go only to full-time AIDS service organizations, diffusing a controversy over how the money raised by the walk will be distributed.

As Southern Voice reported last week, some AIDS service organizations were concerned that distribution of part of the AIDS Walk money had been turned over to the Metropolitan Atlanta Community Foundation's AIDS fund, which in the past has given money to organizations that are not primarily designed to provide HIV/AIDS services. For example, several youth organizations—the Boys Club, the Girl Scouts and Campfire—received money from the fund for HIV/AIDS education.

After getting input from a number of the full-time AIDS service organizations, foundation officials have decided that walk proceeds will go into a "totally separate pot of money," said Ava Diamond Suber, director of the AIDS fund. She said only past recipients of AIDS Walk proceeds and full-time AIDS service providers will be eligible to receive grants from the special fund.

The foundation will distribute 25 percent of the money raised by the walk, after expenses.

Sixty percent goes to AID Atlanta and 15 percent to Project Open Heart. In the past, AID Atlanta, the walk's sponsor, had distributed the money to other AIDS service organizations but decided this year to turn that duty over to the foundation.

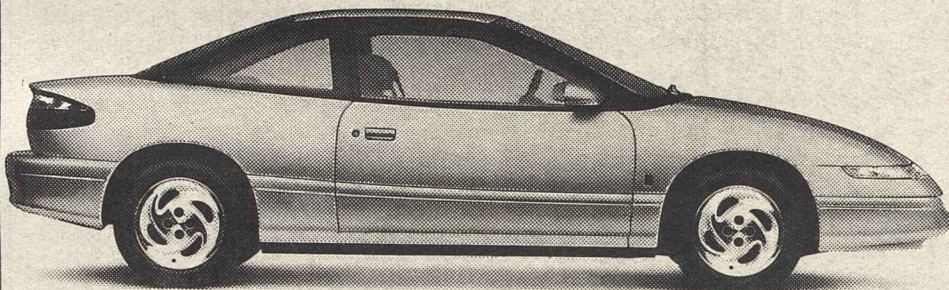
The foundation will distribute the money through a competitive grant system, Suber said, which means that organizations that have been guaranteed AIDS Walk money in the past might not necessarily benefit this year. Foundation officials also pledged that the AIDS Walk grants would not replace monies that organizations already receive from the AIDS fund.

Because the foundation's AIDS fund does not give money for research, there was also some concern that the AIDS Research Consortium of Atlanta, a past beneficiary of the AIDS Walk, might be ineligible for any of the money. But Suber said the foundation has decided that the prohibition against money for research will not apply to the special AIDS Walk fund.

The goal of the walk is to raise \$1 million, with \$750,000 of that going to benefit the AIDS service groups.

RICHARD SHUMATE

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Hate flares on Mississippi coast

March set in Ocean Springs in response to protests over gay/lesbian group

Ocean Springs, MS—Residents of Ocean Springs, a tiny community on the Gulf coast of Mississippi, are up in arms about a gay/lesbian advocacy group formed in their small town, and the outcry of opposition has spawned an activist group.

The Mississippi Gay and Lesbian Task Force/Gulf Coast Chapter has called for a march and rally in Ocean Springs on Saturday Sept. 18, after church leaders and city aldermen in that town condemned the formation of a gay/lesbian group, G.L. Friendly.

Todd Emerson placed a small ad in the community announcement section of the local newspaper announcing formation of the new group. Within a week, the First Baptist Church of Ocean Springs had organized against G.L. Friendly, with pastor Paul David Aultman urging his congregation to call Emerson and his partner, Luis Cintron, and tell them "that God loves them, but such a lifestyle is unacceptable and an abomination in the sight of God."

On July 20, city residents, led by Aultman, packed a meeting of the Board of Aldermen to present petitions asking the legislators to "assist us as we try to create a wholesome, moral climate in Ocean Springs" and prevent their town from becoming "a microcosm of what has happened in San Francisco."

While the aldermen could legally do nothing to stop the meetings of the organization, they accepted the petitions and agreed to step up police patrol of the area near Emerson's home during the meetings.

"We're a group of citizens—heterosexual and homosexual. We're a community organization," Emerson said. "People are so afraid that we will do something out of the ordinary."

Emerson, who grew up in Ocean Springs, moved away and returned with Cintron last February, pointed out that the reaction of the townspeople has strengthened the group, and increased attendance at the meetings from a handful to nearly 150.

"Their petition called us a militant group," he said. "The city feels we're being unfair, that we started all of this. We're not griping now [about the opposition] because the bad



Luis Cintron (left) and Todd Emerson have been harassed since starting gay group on Mississippi's Gulf Coast.

publicity has made us stronger. We're not gonna go away."

Rev. Tam Shult, pastor of the Metropolitan Community Church in Gulfport and a G.L. Friendly board member, agreed. "It seems the First Baptist Church did us the greatest favor in the world," she said. "There's this defiance. Sometimes our community needs a kick in the pants."

After the board of aldermen meeting, G.L. Friendly called for a boycott of businesses supporting First Baptist Church's petition. The task force was formed as harassment against G.L. Friendly—and Emerson and Cintron—escalated.

The task force has put out a call to area groups to fill Ocean Springs on Sept. 18.

"[A lot of people] want to attend the parade, but they won't out of fear," Emerson said. "They're afraid for their jobs. That's why we're looking for people to come from other communities, maybe places where they can't be out at home. In return, if they need us, we'll do the same for them."

KC WILDMOON

G.L. Friendly hopes to start lesbian/gay community centers in Gautier, Bay St. Louis and Biloxi and start a Pride celebration for the Gulf Area. For information on the group, and the Sept. 18 march and rally, call (601) 875-3335.

Gay phobic man convicted of murder

Clarkesville, TN—A jury has found a Clarkesville man, whose attorneys claimed had a fear of gay people and believed his male neighbors were sexually harassing him, guilty on two counts of murder for a shooting spree that left two people dead at a 1991 Halloween party.

Lester Peavyhouse barged into the apartment of Robert Huff firing a shotgun, killing Misty Harding, 17, and Billy Hembree, 23. Huff and another man were wounded, while 10 other guests escaped. Prior to the attack, Peavyhouse had called police to complain

about loud music at the party.

"Some time later on during the night they had some type of dispute," Clarkesville police detective Charles Denton told Query, Tennessee's gay/lesbian weekly, in 1991. "At that time he took his shotgun and went over to the apartment and started shooting people... He tried to kill every one of them. I'm convinced of that."

Peavyhouse was sentenced to two life terms for the crimes.

QUERY

Community fails to back teen club

Alexandria, VA—Prospects look dim for a proposed club for gay teenagers because of a lack of support from the gay community, the leader of the venture said.

"The frank reality of the matter is, within the course of almost a year we've been working on this, the support ended up not being incredibly powerful," said Gordon Vivace, a human resources consultant who has been pushing the idea. "It turned out to be—from the organizations we thought were supporting

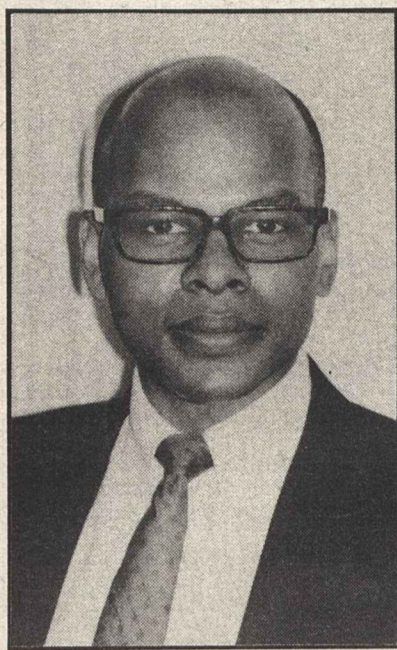
us—a lot of lip service."

Organizers had hoped the club would draw young people away from bars and the streets, offering non-alcoholic beverages and dancing three or four nights a week.

"We're talking about a major investment here to get this thing going and, if the [gay] community doesn't want it, we're not going to dump money into it," Vivace said.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Ousted DC AIDS Chief Fights Back: Caitlin Ryan, former chief of the District of Columbia's Agency for HIV/AIDS, says she didn't interfere in a grant process to deny money to an Islamic-run AIDS clinic, a charge which led to her removal in July. Ryan, an early director of AID Atlanta before going to Washington, told the Washington Blade that she never said "Muslims hate gays," nor did she try to change the grant-making process to exclude the Abundant Life Clinic run by the Nation of Islam, a black Muslim group headed by Louis Farrakhan, who calls homosexuality a perversion that has "no place" in the Muslim faith. Ryan said she will fight her discharge in court if she is not reinstated.



Log Cabin president Abner Mason

Gay/Lesbian GOP Group Elects African American President: The Log Cabin Federation, a gay/lesbian Republican organization, has chosen Abner Mason of Boston as its national president, replacing Richard Tafel, who resigned to head up a Log Cabin lobbying office in Washington. Mason, 31, is a graduate of Harvard and is employed by the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority. He is a founding member of the Massachusetts Black Republican Council and served on Gov. William Weld's commission on gay/lesbian youth. "As gay and lesbian Republicans, we are engaged in a battle that...is about intolerance in the Republican Party," Mason said in a speech following his election. "Fundamentally however, this battle is not just about us. It is about the rights and responsibilities of every American. It is about who we are and what we believe."

Marky Mark Faces New Accusations Of Anti-Gay Blas: Rapper Marky Mark Wahlberg allegedly made anti-gay remarks while assaulting Maverick Records executive Guy Oseary on July 31, leading three anti-bias groups to cancel a public

service spot in which Wahlberg had agreed to appear to quell protests over his 1988 attack on two Vietnamese men. Wahlberg had agreed to finance and appear in the spot after GLAAD/NY, the Committee Against Anti-Asian Violence and the Anti-Violence Campaign protested the attack and homophobic remarks attributed to him. The three groups, who also called on Calvin Klein to drop Wahlberg as a spokesperson, said in a statement that "the latest incident made it clear that [Wahlberg] has yet to change and would make a poor model for an anti-violence message." Oseary said in a police statement that Wahlberg made anti-gay remarks during the attack.

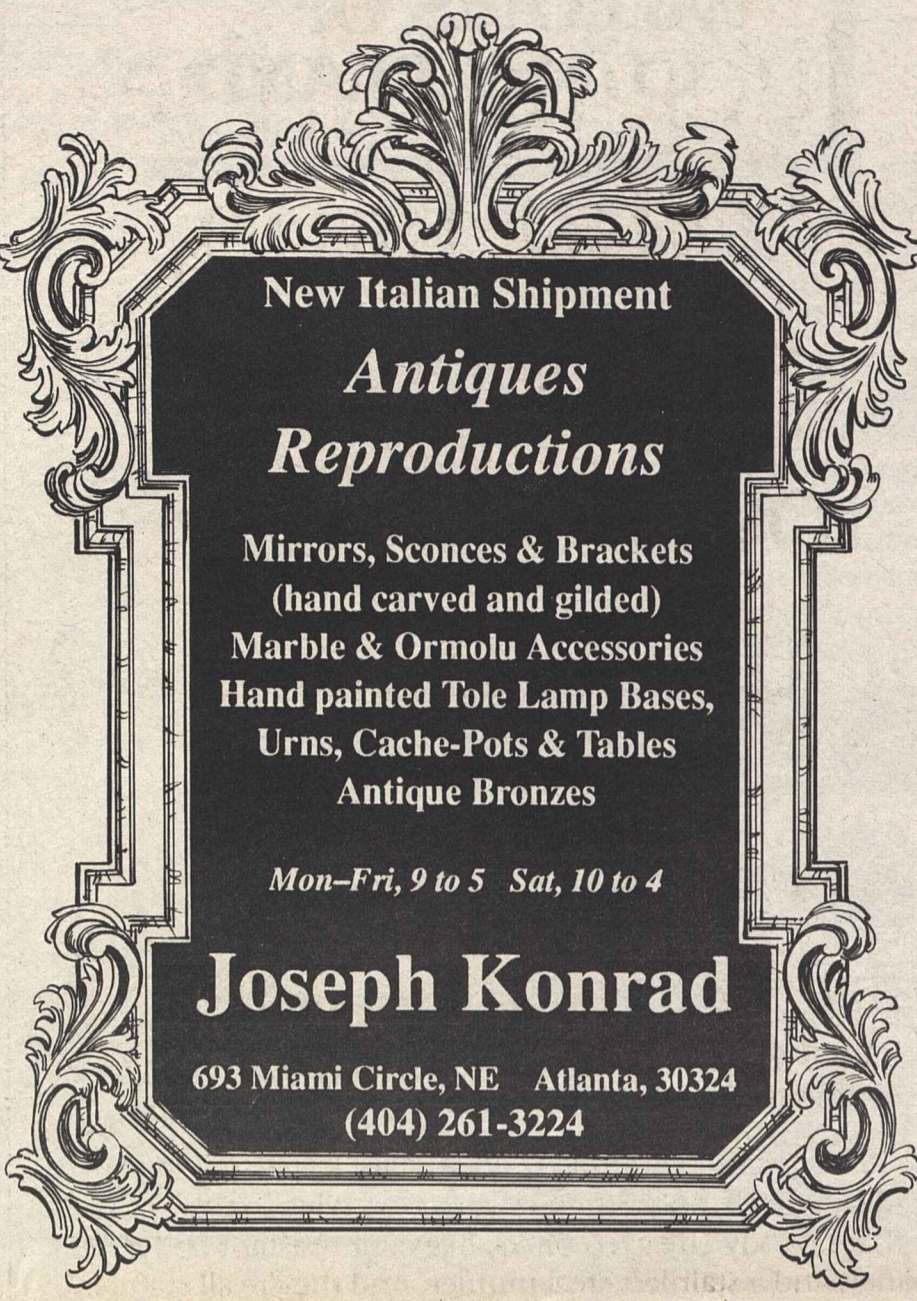
California Man Who Allegedly Ran Marine Porno Ring Jailed: The man who allegedly ran a Camp Pendleton gay porn video ring has been arrested on an unrelated parole violation, but is refusing to cooperate with naval investigators trying to identify Marines in photos and videos. Luciano Ceballos, 42, also known as Bobby Vasquez, was being held without bail after his arrest at his Oceanside home. The arrest came shortly after Ceballos gave two interviews in which he said he was planning to move to San Francisco because he feared Marines implicated in the scandal might kill him.

Activists Say Charges In Colorado Graveyard Case 'Trumped Up': ACT UP/Chicago has formed a "nationwide defense committee" for four gay and lesbian activists accused of defacing tombstones in a Catholic cemetery in Denver. The charges lodged against the four carry a sentence of up to 30 years in prison and were announced the day Pope John Paul II landed in Denver. "The charges themselves are extraordinary," said Debbie Gould, a spokesperson for ACT UP/Chicago. "It's disproportionate to the events they are supposedly charged with." Authorities accused the four of putting spray-painted plastic bags on more than 300 gravestones, with messages such as "Jesus Died of AIDS" and "Virgin Mary Sez: No Latex, No Sex," as well as causing \$3,600 in damage to a stone crucifix during an action last Jan. 14. The four are charged with two felony and two misdemeanor counts. Two of the four arrested are former Denver residents who now reside in Chicago.

Producer And Host Of Texas TV Program Indicted For Sex Scenes: The producer and the host of a late night public access program in Austin that showed graphic gay sex scenes as part of an AIDS education program have been indicted on criminal charges. A Travis County grand jury handed down indictments against Terrell Johnson and Gareth Rees on misdemeanor charges that they violated the Texas obscenity law and exposed minors to sexually explicit materials. Those crimes are punishable by up to a year in jail and a \$2,000 fine. Austin Community Television, the non-profit organization that manages the three public access channels for the city, earlier suspended Johnson and pulled the program, "Infosex," indefinitely from its lineup.

Washington Anti-Gay Computer Network Had Mabon's Name: Oregon Citizens Alliance chair Lon Mabon's name appears as a member of a virulently anti-gay computer bulletin board system in Seattle that lists names and addresses of lesbian and gay activists and contains a manual on how to make bombs. Mabon denies any knowledge of the Gay Agenda Resistance Network, according to the Seattle Gay News, saying someone else put his name on the network's list. The network contains inflammatory articles about gay and lesbian issues and calls for piracy of software made by the Microsoft Corporation because that company bans discrimination based on sexual orientation. The FBI is investigating the network.

Cincinnati Gay Rights Group Threatens Boycott: If Cincinnati repeals its gay/lesbian rights ordinance, a group called Gay and Lesbian March Activists says it may lead a tourism boycott of the city. Last fall, the city adopted a human rights ordinance that includes a provision barring discrimination based on sexual orientation. A conservative group, Citizens for Community Values, is trying to get a measure on the ballot that would prohibit the city from adopting or enforcing gay rights ordinances. "If the lies and rhetoric of the anti-gay extreme right succeed in taking away equal protection for gays and lesbians, then we are prepared to set a national boycott in motion," said Gregory Gajus, spokesman for the 1,200-member group.



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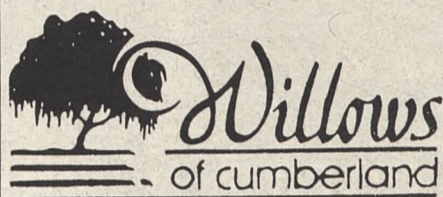


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Right rising in Columbus?

Columbus, Ga.—Fresh on the heels of its assault on Cobb County, the next target of the Christian right in Georgia may be Columbus, the state's second largest city.

A showing of "The Gay Agenda," an hour-long video produced by a small fundamentalist church in Lancaster, Calif. that features the most sensational aspects of gay pride celebrations, drew an audience of 200 on Aug. 3 after an ad appeared in the Columbus Ledger-Examiner warning that "the homosexual curriculum... will be in our public schools by 1994, beginning at K-4."

And Cobb County Commissioner Gordon Wyson, who authored that county's anti-gay and anti-arts resolutions, went on a Columbus radio talk show, equated gays with child molesters and claimed the gay agenda was on its way to "every jurisdiction in the state."

"From Marietta to Blairsville to Hahira, they are moving from one jurisdiction to another," Wyson said.

The showing of "The Gay Agenda" in Columbus was organized by Fred Marshall, Jr., a local man apparently acting on his own. According to reports from people in attendance, he told the gathered parents that the film they would see was an "overview" of some of the homosexual curriculum's course material.

Past and present Columbus-Muscogee County school board members were surprised to hear such a charge, and Meryll Penson, a current board member and head librarian at Columbus College, attended the showing and told the audience that such material was not now in the schools "and it's not going to be."

Marshall also handed out a flyer at the showing with statistics on the "homosexual lifestyle"—the same type of disinformation used by the Christian right across the country to argue against "special rights" for lesbians and gay men.

"It reeks of something anti-Semitic where they've changed the words," said Jack Schiffman, a former member of the Columbus-Muscogee County school board who resigned last year when he moved to Atlanta. "The flyer says things like 'They have more money, they're better educated, they don't need special privileges.'"

Schiffman, who is gay and lived in Columbus with his partner for 14 years, said the only controversial curriculum issue he dealt with on the 15-member board was sex education.

"Board members like me were in favor of teaching the facts," he said. "But these right-wing groups are against even that."

Penson told Southern Voice that she was

concerned so many people would come to a showing of "The Gay Agenda," and not to a meeting discussing other school issues.

"There were over 200 people there, a lot of parents, people who genuinely have concerns about the values their children should have," she said. "[I attended the meeting] to encourage them to be concerned about their children as a whole, to participate in the school process, to be involved."

Despite Penson's encouragement, she said that no parents attended subsequent school board or curriculum committee meetings, and the board received no calls or complaints about the issue.

"There are people who like to take some-

*"I hope we don't get into
that stuff that Cobb County
is in. We have our own prob-
lems and we don't need
that," said Meryll Penson,
member of the Columbus
school board.*

thing and turn it into something ugly when it wasn't meant to be," she said. "I hope by my being there that they understood that the people on the school board... will listen to their concerns... [But] I hope we don't get into that stuff that Cobb County is in. We have our own problems and we don't need that."

Wyson, appearing on a 40-minute interview on WRCG-AM with on-air personality Doug Kellet, blasted the "hostile" media for its coverage of the Cobb County controversy, and he said that 90 percent of his mail and phone calls were supportive.

"[Cobb County] is more representative of the people of the state as a whole [than Atlanta]," he said.

So are Columbus and Muscogee County on their way to becoming the next San Francisco, as the right-wingers suggest, or are Gordon Wyson and Fred Marshall needlessly creating fear where there should be none?

"There are gay people here," said Meryll Penson. "I know gay people. I know straight people. And I don't see any organized effort on the part of the gay community to do anything or not to do anything. You just hope you can encourage people to be involved, and then they don't have to be afraid of things."

KC WILDMOON

Alcohol or Drug Problem?

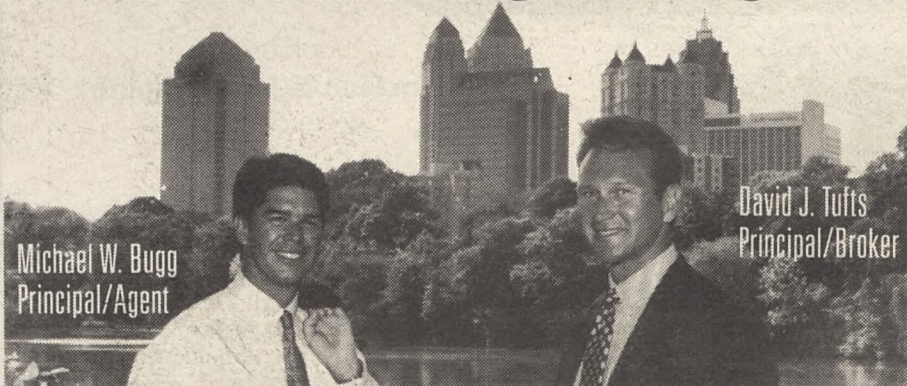
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ONE MILLION MEALS SERVED

Project Open Hand celebrates milestone on Saturday

The idea behind Project Open Hand—fighting AIDS “with broccoli, carrots and casseroles”—hasn’t changed since that first day five years ago when Michael Edwards cooked hot meals for 14 people in need.

But as the face of the AIDS crisis has continued to change, so has the project. The one long cafeteria table that used to suffice for food preparation has been replaced by three even longer tables. Currently, some 1,500 volunteers help to prepare and deliver meals to 800 clients. With 42 routes—each calculated down to stops and turns—it takes from 300 to 400 volunteers to complete deliveries each week. And about 80 new clients are added every month.

This Saturday, Project Open Hand will serve meal number 1,000,000.

“It has been a tremendous challenge to deal with that kind of growth, but we’ve somehow been able to do it,” says development director Aubrey Bowie. Though it is still volunteer driven, Project Open Hand now has an administrative staff of 20 people.

While the gay and lesbian community continues to be the foundation of the project, the number of corporate teams and churches involved is growing every day. “Volunteers come from all over metropolitan Atlanta,” Bowie says. “They’ve become very diverse.”

“A lot of the volunteers have lost adult children [to AIDS], and they can come here and do something that makes them feel good and that is tied to the AIDS community,” says executive director Karen Boyles. “They can get the support here that they may not find in their traditional areas of support. Some days it looks like a senior center in here.”

“We have a gay son and a gay daughter,” says Gretchen Manetta, who, with her retired husband, has volunteered one day a week for the past four-and-a-half years. They drive in from Stone Mountain every Monday morning to pack meals and deliver a route on the way home.

“I think they do a terrific job here,” Manetta says, “But I don’t know how they do it. I don’t know how they ever get enough volunteers.”

Five years ago, Edwards realized the need for a feeding organization while doing work for AID Atlanta. He saw people with AIDS becoming unable to prepare food for themselves, not to mention financially strapped to the point that they couldn’t afford it. He spent several months researching the original Project Open Hand in San Francisco and got permis-

sion to bring the name and logo back to Atlanta. With a few volunteers, he began cooking in the kitchen at St. Bartholomew’s Episcopal Church in September 1988.

In April 1990, Project Open Hand moved to the basement of Bass High School in Little Five Points, where the operation continues today.

After working on every possible facet of the organization, Edwards left last year to focus on his original occupation as an artist. Headed by executive director Karen Boyles, Project Open Hand continues with the original mission of two meals a day, seven days a week and no waiting list. “That’s what’s important to me,” says Edwards, who will return to personally deliver the millionth meal.

The true test came last year, when the number of meals served doubled. Of AIDS/HIV food-service organizations around the country, only San Francisco’s serves more meals to more clients than does Atlanta’s Project Open Hand. However, while some other organizations have gone to supplying PWAs with pre-packaged meals delivered in bulk, Project Open Hand continues to serve only freshly-prepared meals delivered individually.

“We have stayed with sending out meals that are already ready because we have such a wide range of clients, from folks who just can’t prepare their own food to people who look perfectly healthy,” says Boyles.

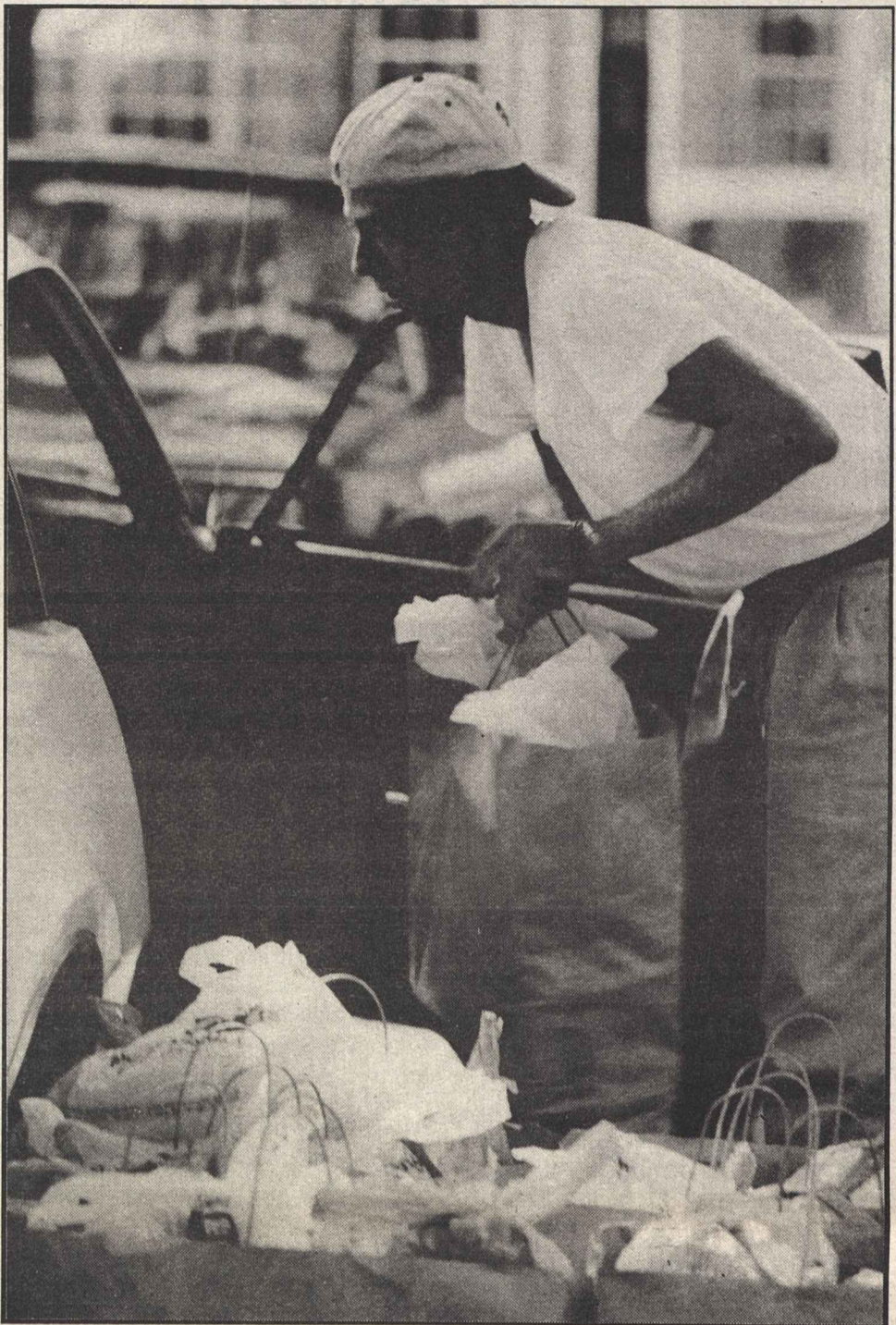
And why are people who look perfectly healthy eligible to receive food? “Because they’re HIV-positive,” Boyles says. “We make no judgment on that.”

There is no waiting list. If a person calls to receive meals today, he or she will be added to a route by tomorrow. As long as HIV-status is provided within two weeks, delivery is continued. The organization reports that client characteristics closely resemble demographics of the disease for Atlanta and the state of Georgia, and that 90 percent are living below the poverty level.

The menus and methods of service are developed out of direct response from clients. Special meals, such as bland, vegetarian or liquid, are also available.

“We say we do three things—we say we cook, we deliver, we care. But we really do two things—we send the food out and we try to raise the money to pay for it,” jokes Bowie, who directs the highly successful fund-raising efforts.

In 1989, the organization operated on



Five years ago, volunteers delivered meals to just 14 people. Today, Project Open Hand has more than 800 clients, served by 1,500 volunteers.

\$184,000. This year’s budget is \$1.7 million, 80 percent of which goes to direct client services.

“People respond to what we’re doing,” Bowie says. “It’s something that’s easy to understand—and we make it look easy.”

Besides growing support from individual donors and corporations, Project Open Hand does a variety of innovative fundraisers. In November, during a benefit called “Dining Out For Life,” area restaurants will donate 20 percent of an evening’s profits to Project Open Hand. Bowie says that 60 restaurants have already signed up, ranging from Wendy’s to Buckhead Diner.

As for the future of Project Open Hand, the client base is expected to reach 1,000 by the end of the year. Bass High School is on the market, so the location could change if it sells. The board is currently in the process of completing a five-year blueprint of future service. Whatever changes may come, the people at Project Open Hand say they’ll be up to the challenge.

“We never say no and we never say we can’t,” Bowie says. “And we continue to believe that love and compassion for other people is what we’re here for.”

JAMES FITCH

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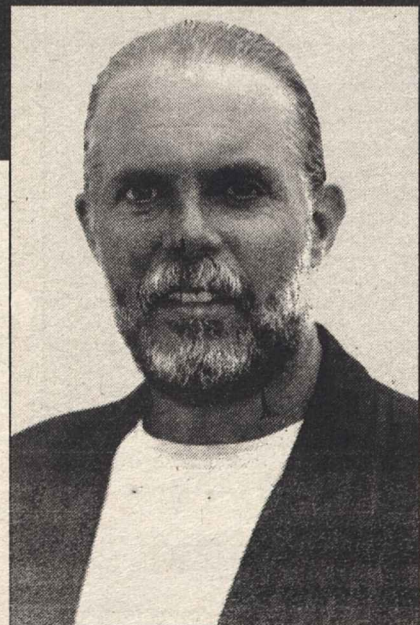
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NEXT WEEK

The Summer That Was

From domestic partnership to the military compromise to bigotry in Cobb County, the summer of 1993 marked a turning point for Atlanta's lesbian/gay community. A look at how it changed us and the city in the next Southern Voice.

VIEWPOINTS is intended to provide a continuing forum for the lesbian and gay community. We encourage you to share your ideas, comments and feelings on these pages.

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

Submissions should be typed, double-spaced and no longer than two pages. We are happy to offer anonymity when letters are printed, but all submissions must be signed. Please also give us your phone number in case we have questions. We reserve the right to edit for space.

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SOUTHERN VOICE

EDITORIAL

The Journal/Constitution's double standard

In the midst of the anti-gay hysteria in Cobb County, the Atlanta Constitution ran a rather eloquent editorial noting that the Cobb commissioners, and those who support them, were fighting a losing battle against progress, like dinosaurs about to breathe their last and struggling mightily against the inevitable march of history.

That's pretty ironic, considering that four times a week, the Constitution pollutes its "Local News" page with Tyrannosaurus Lewis.

Lewis Grizzard, that is, who in recent weeks has been in a tirade against naked men gyrating in the streets of Atlanta (where, Lewis, where?) and said that if Cobb commissioners keep up their defense of family values, he just might have to move to Cobb County.

We had hoped that Grizzard's recent brush with mortality might have made him more compassionate, more cognizant of the value of other people's lives and struggles. But alas, his recent hatemongering convinces us that his surgeons must have used an electron microscope to locate his tiny little heart.

Let us say up front that we do not support censorship. Grizzard ought to be able to say and write whatever he wants, even if it is a vitriolic display of utter ignorance aimed at a group of people he obviously hasn't taken the time to get to know. We might even be able to put up with his rantings against us if they were undertaken in a provocative fashion or with a bit of wit. Unfortunately, his column most often drowns in its own mediocrity.

But Grizzard does illustrate a troubling double standard afoot in the halls of the Journal/Constitution. Can you imagine what would happen if a columnist for the Atlanta newspapers wrote a piece that said he was considering moving to Forsyth County because he sure did like the way black people were treated there?

We doubt the management of the AJ/C would ever allow such a diatribe to run. That is not censorship, per se. It is editorial judgment. Indeed, some of Grizzard's columns have

reportedly been spiked by editors, though given what has gotten into print, we shudder to think what he must have written.

The question we ask is why his editors let him take aim at gays and lesbians in a way that would be unacceptable if aimed at ethnic or religious groups.

The most obvious answer to that is Grizzard's popularity. The fact that gay bashing is commercially viable shows us how far we have to go. But the Atlanta newspapers' editors, who have been going out of their way of late to pay attention to the lesbian/gay community and serve that segment of their audience, need to realize that they are engaging in wholesale hypocrisy.

Do they really think they can make us believe that they have a commitment to provide fair coverage of the gay/lesbian community while at the same time running Grizzard's columns supporting our oppressors?

Commentary in a good metropolitan daily newspaper should contain a smorgasbord of viewpoints—conservative and liberal, progressive and traditional, religious and secular. It should contain things that aren't politically

correct, ideas with which everybody can find disagreement. Take those contrasts away and you have a pretty boring paper.

But on the other hand, a metro newspaper should not serve as a platform for hate, for advocating against basic human rights for a group of people who, by the way, make up a substantial portion of said newspaper's leadership. No big city paper would think of giving David Duke a newspaper column. When it comes to his views on gays and lesbians, Lewis Grizzard is David Duke without the nose job.

We don't pretend to be able to provide a perfect recipe for achieving a balance between promoting a marketplace of ideas and not promoting hate. No one can. It is a delicate balancing act that must be carefully and thoughtfully undertaken.

But we know hate when we see it, and we see it far too often in the columns of Lewis Grizzard. The management of the Journal/Constitution is being neither careful nor thoughtful when it allows him to keep getting away with it.

RICHARD SHUMATE

Michael Lomax commits hari kari

Fulton County Commission Chairman Michael Lomax employed an extremely strange bit of political strategy when he announced he'll keep Eldrin Bell on as police chief if he's elected mayor.

Let's review the political landscape. The Buckhead/Northwest Atlanta types, as well as some of the folks in the neighborhoods on the east side of town, were up to their eyeballs in the effort to recall Lomax after a tax revolt. And the last time he ran for mayor, Lomax had such a serious problem attracting African-American votes that he was forced to drop from the race. So about the only major community where Lomax still had a depository of

good will was the lesbian/gay community.

And he decides to flush it by supporting Eldrin Bell?

Either Lomax doesn't realize that support for Bell will likely be the kiss of death in the gay/lesbian community, where he needs votes if he is to have any hope of winning this race, or he is, as some of his detractors have said for a long time, just really bad when it comes to political nuance.

Whatever the case, he has made an extreme, perhaps fatal, blunder that gay and lesbian voters need to remember come November.

RICHARD SHUMATE

LETTERS

Raven says a thing or two to Grizzard

In response to Lewis Grizzard's Aug. 13 article in the Atlanta Journal Constitution, "Cobb Should Have Waited for Raven," his final quote reads: "What in the [expletive deleted] is this world coming to?"

I would like to take this opportunity to enlighten Mr. Grizzard, as well as any other ball scratching, tobacco spitting and retentive hun who dared to snatch a copy of Southern Voice when no one was looking.

First, it amuses me immensely that the

shared opinion of homophobes everywhere seems to be that a safe haven from homosexual people could actually be created, let alone exist for any length of time. My opinion, however, is that if everyone with even the slightest of homosexual tendencies were to turn pink for a day, some of their best buddies in the "good ol' boy network law firms, men's locker rooms of golf clubs, and hardware stores" might find themselves a stunning shade of fuschia.

Secondly, Atlanta, Ga. did not become an international city by reverting to the days of Nazi Germany where hatred, bigotry, and ignorance reigned supreme. Rather, it has established itself as a community tolerant of an endless array of cultures, beliefs and lifestyles, in keeping with those ideals that are the very foundation for this great nation.

Lest we forget, "...all men are created equal and are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

So let the paranoid conservatives of Cobb County construct that wall of hatred, and let them make it as enormous and as mighty as they like. But let them not be surprised when they look up and see this "fucking goddess," along with thousands of bright fuschia homosexuals, celebrating their independence atop that wall, because we will persevere.

And that, Mr. Grizzard, is exactly what this world is coming to.

Raven
Atlanta

No blind obedience to gay leadership

In recent letters to the editor [SoVo, Aug. 26], Brett Hamrick and Jim Bell chastise me and say that they too find Sam Nunn fascinating. I'm sure that they do. According to "The American College Dictionary," the word fascinating means "bewitching; enchanting; charming; captivating." Maybe they are bewitched, enchanted, charmed, and captivated by Sam Nunn. I am not.

Hamrick and Bell focus on my criticism of Cathy Woolard for calling Sam Nunn and the religious right fascinating. They conveniently leave out the fact that Woolard said that Nunn was not homophobic. This is my major source of concern.

Hamrick also says that Cathy Woolard has every right to be candid and give her perspective. I agree completely. The rest of his letter, however, implies that I should not have this same right. Hamrick says, "It's sad to see someone 'walking the walk' getting publicly trashed by so much 'talk.' Don't we all have better things to do?" I don't think that many things are more important to the lesbian and gay community than communication. I don't think we should trivialize communication in favor of blind obedience to lesbian and gay leaders.

Randy Fair
Atlanta

Carving out a safe corporate space

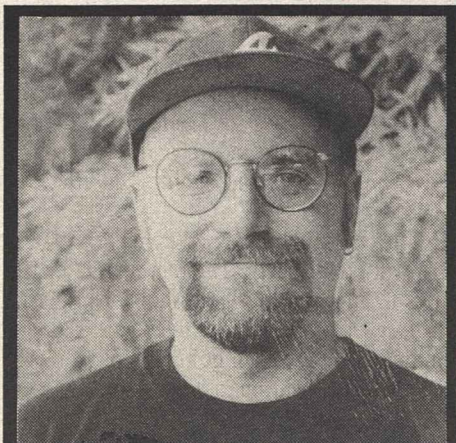
Frequent readers of this column may have noticed that I don't discuss my regular job in this space. Indeed, some of you may think that writing for Southern Voice is my primary means of support, that like columnists at other local papers, I have a palatial private office just off the SoVo newsroom where I while away the hours dishing with Dish and thinking up new and ingenious column topics, waiting for a sympathy-inducing heart attack to increase my popularity. Alas, such perks rarely trickle past the Rich and Bigoted down to the Poor and Politically Correct.

No, my place of employment is the law firm of Alston and Bird, where I am the evening supervisor of the secretarial support center. My primary task is to supervise the people who do attorneys' work after their secretaries go home. I've had this job for almost exactly one year, at which time I left a similar position at an organization I will call XYZ, which I held for more than four years.

It was there that I learned about corporate America's openness standard for homosexuality when I came out to a supportive female partner. She had no problem with it as long as it presented no problem for the firm's client base. Keep XYZ's name out of your activities, and whatever you do outside of work is your own business, she suggested.

This was 1985, the year after I came out, and little did I suspect how important that conversation would turn out to be. About two months later, looking for a way to validate my outness, I agreed to be interviewed by Georgia State's student newspaper about the impact of AIDS on the gay community. At that day and time, I was one of only three people quoted in the article who allowed our names to be published (the others were Charles Haver and Terry Anderson, Armistead Maupin's lover). I said something innocuous about having missed the exciting pre-AIDS days, and I forgot about it.

Forgot, that is, until the day after the paper came out, and someone found the article, Xeroxed it and gave a copy to every major partner of XYZ. When I finally discovered what was going on, for the only time in my life, I literally broke out in a cold sweat. Rumors were flying around the office like bats at Carlsbad Caverns. When my boss was called about it, she responded, "Yeah, I know about Al. So what?" In that moment, she single-handedly set a standard of tolerance that might



Southern Queer-ies

by AL COTTON

not have developed otherwise. In my mind, that qualifies as an instinctive act of courage, and I honor her for it.

And in the curious way that such things resolve themselves, because I was already out and hadn't been fired, I had strong incentive to stay there. I ended up changing jobs twice within XYZ, rather than give up my safe space.

It bothered me only slightly that I had tacitly accepted a modified corporate version of what has come to be known in 1993 as "don't ask, don't tell." I could tell at work (and did, quite often), and I could do anything I wanted outside of work (and did). I just had to make sure that the 'twain never met in print.

Because this was a compromise I could live with, I never questioned the logic of it. But when you think about it, the worst case scenario for XYZ goes something like this: Client X calls. "I'm sorry, Tom," he says, "I've done business here for 30 years, but if you employ 'those' people, I'll have to take my business elsewhere." Because large firms without gay employees are as scarce in Atlanta as three-legged chickens in boardrooms, what's the appropriate response to such an attitude? Politeness, of course. "We're sorry you feel that way. We wish you good luck in finding an Atlanta firm that accommodates your needs."

Now I don't want to cast too many aspersions in the direction of XYZ. They were be-

having in the manner that every similar firm in Atlanta would have behaved at that time. Nor do I want to paint myself as the simple victim of XYZ's homophobia because when gay people hang around and put up with stuff like this, we become the unindicted co-conspirators of our own oppression.

But as late as 1988, that article appeared on my prospective boss's desk when I changed jobs internally. She was told that certain partners "resented" me for that article. I was never told which partners they were, but I would bet they were the closeted ones. And I'll admit to feeling both elation and vindication two years ago when XYZ added sexual orientation to its non-discrimination statement.

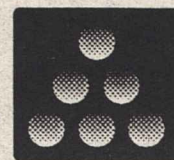
So how does a gay person change jobs nowadays? Carefully. Last year, when someone called and told me that a law firm was interviewing to fill a job similar to mine, I faced the issues that we always face when negotiating a path through straight society. Is this change safe? If I surrender this safe space, I'm going to have to create another safe space over there. Or maybe I won't be able to create a safe space at all. Do I want to take this risk?

Because I was happy enough where I was, I told the employment agency that I was out and if that was a problem, we should stop right now. The word came back the next day. "No problem." And after I heard that, I had permission to consider the reasons most people have for changing jobs—more money, better opportunity for advancement, the chance to escape a bad boss. I resigned within the month.

And as you might have guessed, the safe space has been successfully carved out. I just got a promotion at Alston and Bird. I am now the evening administrative services coordinator, which means that if an attorney needs some help after hours with anything, then I'm the person who's called.

And because I've been out from day one here, that promotion tells me is that Alston and Bird is as proud to have me working for them as I am to be here. And the reason I've chosen to write about it now is because times have changed sufficiently for it to be safe for me to do so.

Put very simply, I'm telling you this because, at long last, I can.



GLAAD

News

by CARL LANGE

Cobb County Campaign

On August 25, GLAAD/USA, in cooperation with the Cobb Citizens Coalition, launched a national Cobb County Campaign asking businesses and individuals to not hold conferences and meetings in Cobb and to speak out against discrimination.

Corporate conferences and business meetings are a major source of income for Cobb, and therefore the new Cobb Galleria Center, scheduled to open in January, has been specifically targeted.

Sprint has tentatively reserved space in the new convention center for an annual marketing meeting in January. Sprint has a non-discrimination based on sexual orientation for employees and is the carrier for the lesbian and gay Community Spirit Card.

Write to Norman Black, director of national media relations, Sprint, P.O. Box 725282, Atlanta GA 31139, Mail Stop MR.

Tell him if you are a Sprint customer. Let him know how you feel about the discrimination in Cobb. Encourage him to have Sprint take a public stand on this discrimination in light of their policy on non-discrimination based on sexual orientation. Ask him not to hold their annual marketing meeting at the Cobb Galleria Center. Or phone (404) 859-5000.

If you are a stockholder, write Greg Block, manager of investor relations, Sprint, 2330 Shawnee Mission Parkway East, Westwood, KS 66205. The phone number is (913) 624-3344. The fax number is (913) 624-3088.

Home Depot

Home Depot has publicly condemned the actions of the Cobb commissioners. Home Depot has told GLAAD/Atlanta that their position is based on what is right, despite threats of boycotts from fundamentalists. Unfortunately, Home Depot has financially committed to holding its annual shareholders' meeting at the Cobb Galleria Center in May.

Write Lonnie Fogul, director of public relations, Home Depot, 2727 Paces Ferry Road NW, Atlanta GA 30339-4053. Commend him for Home Depot's stand against discrimination. Let him know if you are a Home Depot customer. Strongly encourage him to move the company's annual shareholders' meeting out of the Cobb Galleria Center, whatever the cost. Or call him at (404) 431-2666.

Coca-Cola Enterprises

According to a source, Coca-Cola Enterprises will be moving to Cobb County in approximately five months. Coca-Cola Enterprises is the largest Coca-Cola bottler and currently is located at the international Coca-Cola headquarters in Atlanta.

Ask Coca-Cola Enterprises to take a stand against discrimination and not move to Cobb. Write Vicki Roman, treasurer, Coca-Cola Enterprises, 1 Coca-Cola Plaza, Atlanta GA 30313, CCE-1011. The phone number is (404) 676-7051.

GLAAD/Atlanta confronts defamation and seeks to destroy societal myths and stereotypes of lesbians and gay men. For more information, or to join, call (404) 605-7477 or write GLAAD/Atlanta at P.O. Box 55111, Atlanta, GA 30308. This column is a product of the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation/Atlanta, Inc.



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Come out to Decatur

Mayor says lesbians, gays are welcome to live in his city

Decatur—Mayor Mike Mears made headlines this week when, in the wake of Cobb County's anti-gay hysteria, he publicly welcomed lesbians and gays to move into his city.

While to some such an announcement might seem opportunistic, Mears tells Southern Voice that nothing could be farther from the truth. In fact, he questions why any city would think otherwise.

"Our city's always been open to anyone," Mears said. "It was never any question. Why should a city have to have a policy that it's open to everyone? That should just be a given."

The city of Decatur, which has already attracted large numbers of lesbians and gays, will consider following Atlanta's controversial lead by adopting a domestic partnership proposal this month. Mears said he called on the city manager several months ago to draw up the legislation, which would extend benefits to the domestic partners of city employees.

"I think that people who form relationships, for whatever reason, need to have the same protection as other individuals," Mears said. "The traditional concept of family has been evolving for many years. We people in political positions need to be aware of the change and need to be prepared to make changes in policies, ordinances and laws that reflect the development of the concept of partnership and family."

Mears does expect opposition from some of the commissioners, but he said that his support for the idea would not waver, even in the face of an expected challenge from the fledgling DeKalb County Christian Coalition, of which Mears was not aware until its recent efforts to organize made the news.

"I certainly listen to all views," he said. "But I am absolutely committed to the idea that no

one's lifestyle should be an impediment to their full enjoyment of participation in the community."

Mears has been a resident of Decatur since 1970. Initially, he taught at Decatur High School. In 1977, he earned his law degree from the University of Georgia and set up a criminal defense practice. He has been mayor since 1985 and is currently the state's public defender for death penalty cases.

While he has spent a career involved in civil rights issues, Mears said that his support for gay rights came out of an evolution in his thinking and beliefs. "I think it's simply another vista of the continuing civil rights struggle in the country," he said. "It's a logical extension of the need for all of us to be prepared to protect the rights of our fellow citizens."

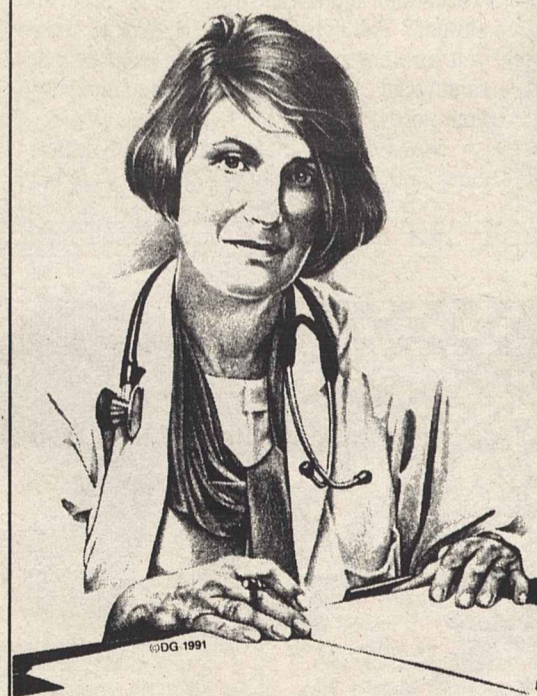
He attributes the problems that Cobb County is having to leadership. "To a large extent, political leadership does set the tone for the attitudes of the community," he said. "The old adage is that a good leader should be someone who's out [in] front of the group that they're leading. A politician, unfortunately, is usually behind the group, pushing."

Mears laughs when presented with the hypothetical situation that all Cobb County's gays and lesbians may decide to move to Decatur.

"The assurance I could give [to them] is that the city of Decatur tries to treat everyone, in the truest sense of the word, equally," he said. "And that the services that a local government provides should never be determined [by what a person is]. That includes police, fire protection and arts—the ability for an individual to express their lifestyle in the appropriate way that they feel it should be expressed."

JAMES FITCH

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Jackson's friends do him no favors with denials

"I have known Michael Jackson since he was 16, and I don't believe it," says syndicated gossip columnist Liz Smith.

The other Liz in Michael's life (Ms. Taylor) told Newsweek that Jackson would "rather cut his own wrist than harm a child. He worships children."

What exactly is it that Liz and Liz don't believe? That Michael Jackson, America's ultimate pop icon and one of its very strangest public figures, is capable of being a sexual predator who feasts on young boys?

I have personal experience with "I don't believe it." That's exactly what everybody in my family said when I told them that my mother had used and abused me sexually. And I know a



Michael Jackson in concert in Singapore as allegations of abuse swirl at home.

COMMENTARY

lot about adults who "worship" kids. That describes my mom to a T.

Nobody *wants* to believe that someone who they love, respect and admire is capable of sexual abuse.

Believe it.

Did Jackson actually have sex with a 13-year-old boy as charged? We don't know. And we may never know.

But here's what we do know. Michael Jackson befriends young men, showers them (and their families) with lavish trips and gifts and then invites those young men into his bed "slumber party style." They hug, they kiss. Would it be easy for such a blatant violation of boundaries to become sexual? Of course it would.

But that's the way it is with sexual abuse. Adults who prey on kids (and parents who would let their kids spend the night in the same bed as

an androgynous 35-year-old) frequently rationalize such behavior as acts of pure and pristine love. The boy who claims that Jackson kissed him on the mouth, masturbated with him and had oral sex with him says Jackson told him that their relationship was "meant to be" and "in the cosmos."

Sounds heavenly. But it isn't.

Do I believe that 13-year-old? Well, I trust him more that I do Liz Smith, who hid the fact that she was a lesbian for decades. Or Jackson himself, who has almost everything to lose if the charges are proven.

But what does that child stand to gain by inventing such a story? Sympathy? Love? Acceptance from his peers? A secure future in the job of his choice? Not this week. Nobody likes a snitch. Especially one who topples a god.

If you think the majority of our society views

victims of abuse with compassion and trust, you're dead wrong. Look at Anita Hill. Or at Eldrin Bell's recent blaming of a 4-year-old child and her parents for the fact that she was run over by a stolen car driven by 13-year-old criminals.

And what sort of support does this kid get from his parents? These folks sound like a pair of card-carrying slime guppies hellbent on using their child as a pawn in their own vicious divorce.

Did daddy go to the cops when his son told him about the abuse? Did he threaten to strangle Jackson? Nope. He marched upon Michael and his lawyers and tried to "settle out of court." Great dad this. His kid tells him he's been abused and, instead of having the abuser charged with a crime, he tries to extort money from him—money for a film production and financing com-

pany. When asked what impact his extortion might have on his son, pop replied, "It's irrelevant to me." Talk about family values.

Speaking of family values, to what sort of abuse must Michael Jackson have been subjected in order to grow into the strange man-boy who paraded before us on TV with Oprah Winfrey a few months ago? Who taught him that betrayal and coercion equal love? We don't come into this world thinking that way.

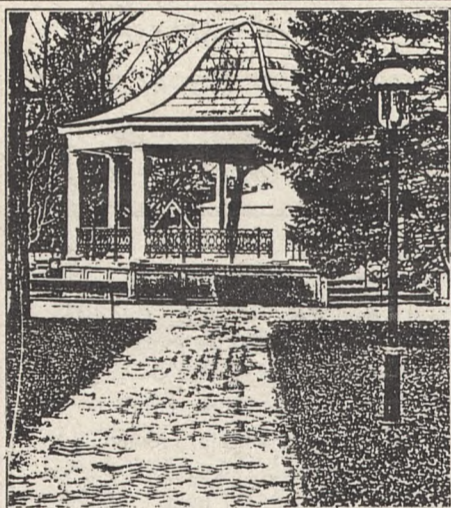
Then there's the political fallout. If Jackson's abuse is proven (and if it is true, we'd better pray that he is tried and convicted), he's given the fundies one hell of a platform from which to launch yet another attack on gays—with a strong subrosa swipe at blacks.

Most gay people I know have always assumed that Michael Jackson was gay. I have too, and I hoped that, like Elton John, he would eventually become sufficiently comfortable with that part of himself to integrate it into his life and be open about who he is. Gay kids need role models, and famous ones are especially welcome. Jackson has betrayed the trust of millions of kids—gay and not—by putting himself in a position where he could even be accused of abuse.

My hope now—whether Jackson is gay or not, whether he is guilty of the abuse with which he is charged or just incredibly confused about how it is OK to behave with kids—is that Liz and Liz and Brooke and all his other famous friends will get over their dangerous denial and demand that he confront the abuse he suffered as a child and how, in the name of love, he continues to perpetrate that abuse as an adult.

When push comes to shove, that's what friends are for.

GARY KAUPMAN



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LONG TERM SURVIVING

DAVID STANLEY

Reduce stress to absolute minimum

I recently finished a six-month contract, where I had to stay in St. Petersburg. It was the first time in my adult life where I had spent more than a week at sea level. Previously, I had lived, exclusively, in either Atlanta, at an altitude of something like 1,100 feet, or in Colorado at altitudes between 5,000 and 8,000 feet.

For the first time in years, I felt very lethargic. It was bad enough that I actually quit working out during the last two months. It's my theory that the air was too thick at sea level. I just felt like my body couldn't work as efficiently as when I am at some altitude. I don't think my skin could breathe at sea level.

I bring this up because most of the population, and therefore, most of the people with AIDS in the United States, live near sea level. Maybe it's just what I'm used to, but I wonder if some decent altitude might help relieve some stress in the body, particularly in the heat of summer. Summer at sea level is just oppressive.

My second week back in Atlanta, I resumed my workouts with no problems, except for the soreness you would expect after a two-month layoff. Even in my un-air conditioned weight room, I feel good. In Florida, I couldn't work out even in air conditioning.

Maybe, as I said, it's just what you're used to. A change in climate, in altitude or just living conditions can easily create stresses on the body. If one is to survive AIDS, it has to help to reduce stress to the absolute minimum. Sometimes it can't be helped. I took a contract in Florida because I have to eat, but I'll try to stay near home for my next job.

This experience caused me to reflect on the changes I've made to make my life less stressful in the eight years that I've had AIDS. The first thing I did was to stay busy. When my then lover and I moved in with my brother shortly after I was diagnosed, his yard was a mess—the debris from previous remodeling projects had not been cleaned up. People had dumped leftover concrete into piles and just left it there, and there was no grass, just weeds. I attacked the concrete with a sledge hammer and hauled it off. I rototilled the yard and planted grass, shrubs, trees and flowers. Within a year and a half, people would actually knock on the door to thank me for beautifying the neighborhood.

Physical activities, whether from projects like this or from regular exercise, are perhaps the greatest stress relievers known. There was also a sense of achievement, which is important to anyone.

Next came my job. I'm an electrical designer/engineer when I'm not doing this, and for a while, there was a lot of work. For about three or four years, I averaged about 48 hours per week and often visited job sites as far away as Maine and Wisconsin. This included the time when I was extremely anemic from my medications and was receiving blood transfusions about every three weeks.

I learned from this the importance of pacing yourself. Even when you are weakened, it's amazing what you can accomplish if you just take tasks one at a time and not skip rest breaks. You need your rest,

but you can spread your rest breaks out and still accomplish your goals. It also takes determination to finish your tasks. Once you learn determination in your job, it's easy to transfer that to surviving your illness. I became determined not to allow AIDS to dictate my activities. It was my life, and I was not going to surrender it to any microscopic virus.

After my lover and I broke up, I waited one and a half years before I visited a bar. I didn't believe anyone would take any interest in someone with AIDS, particularly someone who had already had it for four years. I thought my sex life was over, but I was lonely, so I found a place to shoot pool. Amazingly, within six months, I was dating again, with a somewhat healthy sex life. It wasn't like before with my lover, but it was very satisfying. There can be sex after AIDS, but be careful and always let your partner know.

Even when you are weakened, it's amazing what you can accomplish if you just take tasks one at a time and not skip rest breaks. You need your rest, but you can spread your rest breaks out and still accomplish your goals. It also takes determination to finish your tasks. Once you learn determination in your job, it's easy to transfer that to surviving your illness.

Years ago, I used to drink beer quite heavily, but after a DUI, I became frightened of overdoing it. Shortly after resuming my social life, I decided that it would be best if I restricted my drinking only to the times I wouldn't be driving. I switched to drinking Sprites when I shot pool. I learned that no one cared that I wasn't drinking alcohol, that I shot a better game of pool and that my self-esteem improved when I wasn't occasionally making a fool of myself by getting drunk in public. The bartenders don't even care. Ray, at Buddies, sets me up a Sprite when he sees I've entered the bar. He's a great bartender.

So, you see, there are many ways you can change your life and habits to reduce the stress on your body and improve your outlook on life. I'm now calmer, more determined to succeed and, more importantly, I'm much healthier. I still drink, but rarely more than eight beers in a week. And because I exercise and stay fit, I may actually be better looking now at 44 than I was at 36, when I was diagnosed. I know that after eight years of AIDS, I'm a better man, and if I can do it, anyone can.

Sex with women may have left two lesbians HIV positive

Austin, TX—Two lesbians who have tested HIV-positive appear to have contracted the virus through sex with other women, an Austin doctor says.

If so, they would be among the nation's first reported cases of HIV transmission through lesbian sex.

Dr. David Wright says his two lesbian HIV patients insist they couldn't have become infected through shared needles or unprotected sex with males.

"By their history, they're not intravenous drug abusers," said Wright. "They describe themselves as not being bisexual. I think it's possible they got it through woman-to-woman sex."

Some experts have long held that HIV could be transmitted by vaginal secretions, especially if the receiving partner has an abrasion on the genitals or other body part that comes in contact with the vagina.

However, a previous federal study of a small group of lesbians with AIDS, who reported not having the risk factor of engaging in sex with men, showed that they all contracted HIV either through contaminated needles or a blood transfusion. But Susan Chu, an epidemiologist at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention who

did that analysis, said, "All that proves is that [sexual transmission between women] is rare, not that it doesn't happen."

"Given now that there [are] about 25,000 [American] women with AIDS, woman-to-woman transmission is not common," Chu said. "But I feel that one thing we need is for women and lesbians to be aware that woman-to-woman sex is a risk for HIV."

Janna Zumbrun, a lesbian who is director of AIDS Services of Austin, agreed.

"There's been a myth over the years that gay women were not at risk. It's amazing, but there are still lots and lots of people who think only gay men are at risk. We haven't even gotten beyond that myth," she said.

Critics say part of the reason the myth hasn't dissolved is because most AIDS statistics lack a category for lesbians, instead lumping them into the "other" group.

"The problem is there [are] so few cases, and, up to this point, nobody's been asking the question," said Dr. Tom Betz, medical director of communicable diseases at the Austin-Travis County health department.

The possibility of a woman acquiring the virus through lesbian sex is becoming a topic at AIDS conferences.

ASSOCIATED PRESS



One of the multicultural couples in "New Vibrations."

New prevention ad hitting airwaves

The San Francisco AIDS Foundation has launched a new public service announcement urging that viewers use condoms and get tested for HIV.

Titled "New Vibrations," the 30-second black-and-white ad features jump-cut shots of affectionate multicultural, mixed and same-sex couples as the words "Communication," "Love," "Pleasure," "Joy" and "Responsibility" flash across the screen, over the drumbeats of Marky Mark's "Good Vibrations."

"Our PSA is vital, sexy, joyful and sex-positive, and was designed to be a viewer-friendly reminder to care for yourself and your partner," said Les Pappas of the foundation, who is the ad's executive producer

If the ad is aggressive in its depiction

of pleasurable sexuality—including among gay and lesbian couples—it's because that kind of imagery is lacking in televised HIV-prevention efforts, Pappas says.

"This ad pushes the envelope of what PSAs generally show and are about," Pappas said. "But we firmly believe that people need to use condoms to prevent spreading HIV, and they need to get tested in order to get early care and treatment if they are HIV-positive. The American public is hungry for more direct, honest, effective communication about HIV, and this spot delivers that."

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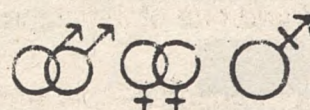
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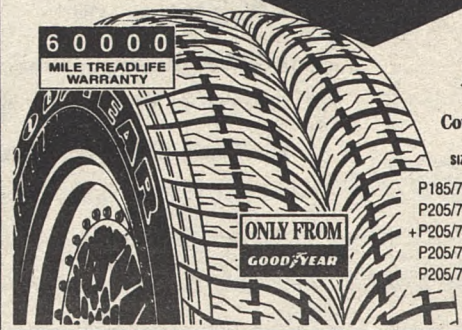
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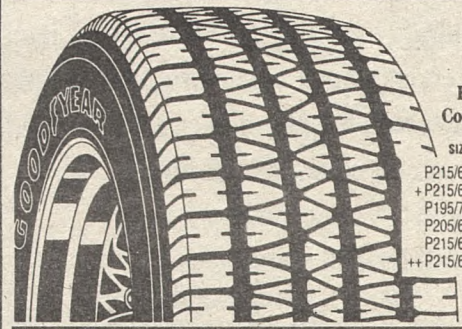
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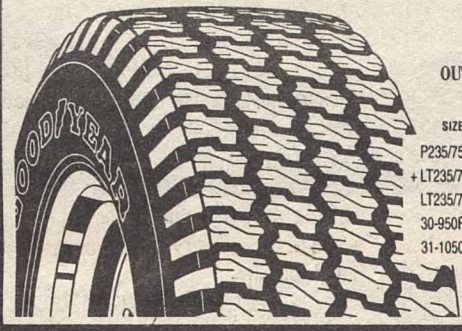
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Caught in the storm

Continued from page 1

young actress. But admittedly, the star power was kind of exciting and invigorating. So it has cost us so much so far as promotional value and potential future for the show. We did cast the entire show around Daisy."

Despite the disinformation of the Christian right, "Lips Together, Teeth Apart" is not a play about homosexuals. It takes place in a beach house on Fire Island. Two couples are using the house, which had belonged to the brother of one of the women who had subsequently died of AIDS. In the course of one day, the audiences learns of affairs and terminal cancer, of love and hate, and in the end, a plea for tolerance. On either side of the beach house on stage are gay neighbors, but none appear in the play itself.

When the play first opened in New York, its writer Terrance McNally, was criticized for not having placed any gay characters in his script. The play has gone on to be produced at least 50 times throughout the country, and only in Marietta has it generated any controversy.

"The play was very successful for us commercially and critically," says Wells. "Audiences loved it. We were turning away hundreds of people, literally, the last couple weeks of the run."

The other play which generated some heat for Theatre in the Square was "M. Butterfly." It indirectly did have gay themes because it was about a French diplomat who falls in love with a Chinese spy, who is a man disguised as a woman. It features one brief, essential moment of male nudity.

Wysong and the other Cobb commissioners say their action in cutting arts funding was motivated by fiscal responsibility and was not a vendetta against gays and lesbians. Home doesn't buy that for a minute.

"For him to say this is not a gay issue is ludicrous. He was gunning for that. Suddenly he

changed his argument in midstream. First it was 'community standards' and 'family values.' Then, when there was understandable objection to that—he realized it was unconstitutional—he decided it's really taxpayer dollars that are in question here. So we spent the last month just trying to read his mind, which is very scary. We don't know what he's going to come up with next."

Wells and Home might not wait to find out. While Theatre in the Square could survive in Marietta even without the county's arts funding, they are considering leaving Cobb County. A group in DeKalb County is trying to raise enough money to lure the theater to a new, more hospitable town square location in Decatur.

"Obviously there are some concerns that this could be only the beginning," says Home. "They say for now, 'Okay, we cut your funding, so you're free to do whatever you want to do.' So, we do whatever we want to do. Then in a year or two from now, they decide, 'Well, we don't even want them in this county.' So they start to look for subtle ways to pressure us out. Suddenly the business license gets caught up in bureaucracy. A building inspector complains about something or other, and we have to fix it suddenly. Just harassment. So if they don't want us here—if they don't want our kind of theater here—they can find ways to try to chase us out."

In what may be the final irony, sitting in a display case in the lobby of Theatre in the Square is an award to the theater from the county naming it the "Number One Place to Take Visitors in Cobb County 1992-93." That distinction may be especially true right now, though not for the reasons the award was originally given.

The question now is whether the theater, and the men who built it into an attraction, can ever again feel comfortable in their quiet place on the square.

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Rand study contradicts Pentagon's party line on ban

For more than a month after President Clinton announced his "don't ask, don't tell policy" on gays and lesbians in the military, the Pentagon held onto the results of a study done by the Rand Corp., which had been paid \$1.3 million to look at whether the ban policy should be changed. Now that the report has finally been released, it is easy to understand the Pentagon's reluctance.

Rand's conclusions simply blow the doors off both the new policy and the arguments the military was making in favor of keeping the ban.

After looking at the military culture in seven foreign countries and at police and fire departments in six American cities where gays and lesbians openly serve, Rand's researchers concluded only one policy option was appropriate. That option was to allow openly gay and lesbian personnel to serve, under a military requirement that all people in the service "conduct themselves in ways that enhance good order and discipline."

Sexual orientation would be "not germane" to a military career, and military regulations would be changed to decriminalize consensual sexual behavior between adults.

Inappropriate conduct would include open displays of affection or "explicit discussions of sexual practices, experience or desires." And under Rand's definition of good order and discipline, all service personnel would be required to show "respect and tolerance for others."

Under Clinton's compromise, lesbians and gays can serve only if they either keep their orientation a secret or agree to remain celibate. Even private, off-duty sexual conduct would leave them open to discharge, and regulations would stay in place that make same-sex sexual conduct a crime.

Ban proponents used those provisions in the Uniform Code of Military Justice outlawing sodomy to bolster their case. But Rand's researchers concluded that because the code does not



The Rand Corporation's report pulls the rug from under the compromise that President Clinton made with his military leadership.

specifically define what acts constitute sodomy, the military could simply redefine the term in its guide for military prosecutors to exclude consensual conduct. Such a change could be done without the approval of Congress.

NEWS ANALYSIS

Senior military leaders had argued that allowing openly gay and lesbian people into the service would harm unit cohesion and military effectiveness. Rand, which also looked at scientific studies on group behavior as well as the experience of integrating the armed forces in the

1940s and 1950s, disagreed.

"The experience of analogous organization such as foreign militaries and domestic police and fire departments suggests that any [decrease in military effectiveness] is likely to be quite small," the report said. "It is not necessary to like people in order to work with them, so long as members share a commitment to the group's objectives."

The experience of racial integration shows that "it is possible to change how troops behave toward previously excluded (and despised) minority groups, even if underlying attitudes toward those minority groups change very little." The key to that, according to the Rand researchers, is for the senior officers to take a leadership

role. "It must be clear to the troops that behavioral dissent from the policy will not be permitted."

"Military roles, regulations and norms all enhance the likelihood that heterosexuals will work cooperatively with homosexuals," the report said.

One of the scare tactics put forth by those who support keeping the ban was the image of gay men and lesbians as sexual predators, lurking in the showers waiting for the soap to drop. Rand found that scenario was not backed up by experiences in the other gay/lesbian-inclusive organizations. Only a very small number of lesbians and gays publicly acknowledge their orientation. Those who do "are sensitive to the overall norms and customs of their organizations. They tend not to behave in ways that shock or offend."

And straight people within those organizations "generally behave toward homosexuals more moderately than would have been predicted based on their stated attitudes toward homosexuals."

As for combating harassment or violence against openly lesbian or gay troops—another issue raised by the military brass—the report found that "the experience of foreign militaries and police and fire departments suggests that if leaders make it quite clear that violence will not be tolerated and stern action will be taken, violence can be kept to a minimum."

Rand's researchers also found no basis for the argument that if gays were allowed in the military, soldiers in battlefield situations would have an increased risk of exposure to the HIV virus. Current military policies requiring HIV testing prevent HIV-positive people from entering the military, and those who contract HIV while in the military cannot be deployed in combat situations.

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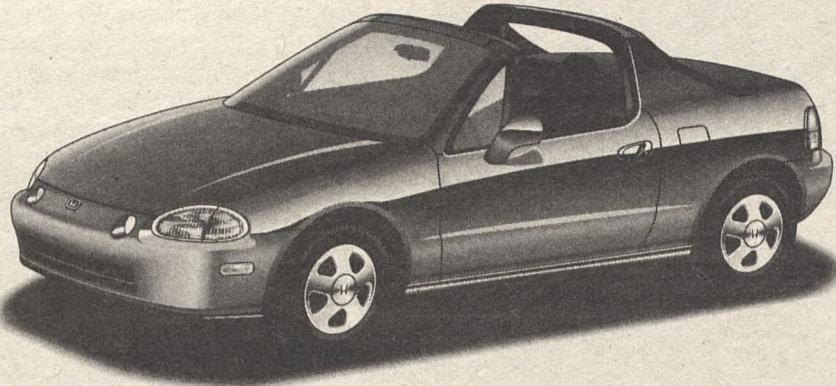
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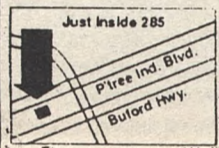
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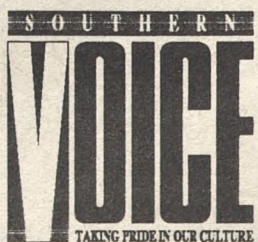
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Voter registration set in Fulton

The Voter Registration Project of the Human Rights Campaign Fund will be sponsoring several voter registration sites in Fulton County in the weeks before the Oct. 3 deadline for registering to vote in Atlanta's mayoral and city council elections.

Drives have been scheduled in the center court of Ansley Mall, located at the corner of Monroe Drive and Piedmont Avenue, every Saturday from Aug. 28 to Oct. 3. Each drive will run from noon until 4 p.m.

Also, there will be a registration site at the AIDS Walk Atlanta on Sunday, Oct. 17 at Piedmont Park from noon until 6 p.m.

Fulton County residents seeking to reg-

ister need only to bring a valid ID, such as a driver's license (in-state or out-of-state), utility bill, social security card, birth certificate, passport, etc. The simple form takes less than three minutes to complete.

Residents of those portions of the city of Atlanta that lie in DeKalb County, or anyone who cannot make it to these registration sites, can register at their local voter office, public libraries, most branch banks and some fire stations in their county of residence.

For more information, call the Fulton County Department of Registration and Elections at 730-7072 or the DeKalb Voter Registration Office at 371-2241.

Sacred Heart healing service set

On Sunday, Sept. 19 at 4 p.m., Sacred Heart Catholic Church in downtown Atlanta will once again host a healing service for people with AIDS, their loved ones and those who have lost loved ones to AIDS.

The service, which is open to people of all faiths, will express everyone's feelings about AIDS through music, dance and poetry. Young dancers and Atlanta singers and choruses will be blended with traditional scripture readings and music to create a special blessing for people with AIDS.

Tom Pazik, noted Atlanta choreographer,

will honor those who have died from AIDS by directing the dancers in original works written expressly for the healing service.

The success of last September's healing service has motivated Pazik and even larger groups of singers and musicians, as well as many people deeply involved in various AIDS ministries throughout the city, to undertake this beautiful tribute again this year.

Sacred Heart Church is located at 353 Peachtree St. in the heart of Atlanta's hotel district. For more information, call (404) 522-6800.

Next AIDS 101 seminar Sept. 18

The next AIDS 101 Awareness and Action Seminar, sponsored by AID Atlanta, will be held on Saturday, Sept. 18 at the Martin Luther King Jr. Center, 449 Auburn Ave. Seminars are all day workshops beginning with registration at 8 a.m. and ending about 6 p.m.

AIDS 101 Awareness and Action Seminars provide an introduction to information and services for anyone who wants to learn more about AIDS and HIV infection and

help stop this epidemic. The cost is \$15, and lunch is included. There are scholarships available for those in need. For registration information, call AID Atlanta at (404) 872-0600.

Pride positions open

Several positions on the operating committee of the Atlanta Lesbian and Gay Pride Committee are open for next year, including the positions of vice chair, secretary (two positions) and treasurer.

Anyone interested should call the Pride Line at (404) 662-4533 before Sept. 10. Selection will be made by the ALGPC Board of Directors prior to the next general meeting, Thursday, Sept. 23.

Anyone wishing to participate on the Pride Committee is welcome to attend general meetings, which are held the third Thursday of every month at the Colony Square Hotel.

**Aid Gwinnett
buddy training**

Aid Gwinnett will conduct an orientation and training session for its buddy program on September 25th and 26th. The two day training will be at the Aid Gwinnett office, 240 Oak St. Lawrenceville. For further details and registration, call Tom Atkachunas at 497-9731 or 962-8396.

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OCCASIONS

BIRTHDAYS

Dixon Taylor celebrated her 50th birthday on September 4 with out-of-town guests at a very special dinner at Bacchanalia. Congrats Dixon from all of your in-town guests who were not invited to this shindig. They say they'll remember this when your 51st comes around.

Happy 31st birthday to Chris Duncan on September 9. C.D., as he is known to his closest friends, plans to spend his birthday with his hubby of seven years, Brian. How will they spend it? C.D. says he doesn't know but is expecting and hoping for a very nice surprise.

HOMECOMING

Jim Gotzman (whose talented hands relaxed the muscles of many a tense Atlantan in the early and mid 80's) has sold his home in Lake Tahoe and is visiting in Decatur with friends John Stowe and Monte Schuth, whose home is getting a fabulous new coat of coral paint. Jim, known to friends as Sherah, Princess of Power, is looking at houses in the area. It may be a bit premature, but welcome back Jim.

NEW POSITION

Welcome and congratulations to Glenna Shephard, the new director of the Atlanta Feminist Women's Chorus. Glenna assumed her position several weeks ago and is running the rehearsals for the AFWC's upcoming concert scheduled for Dec. 4.



Jayne Pleasants and her daughter Karyn were recently reunited after 24 years. A belated "baby shower" was held over Labor Day weekend for the happy mother and daughter.

REUNION

Jayne Pleasants was recently reunited with the daughter she gave up for adoption 24 years ago. "It's life-changing—it's a wonderful new journey and I feel oh so blessed," Jayne said after returning from a mid-August visit to daughter Karyn Hegrenes' St. Paul, Minnesota home. Karyn came to Atlanta for Labor Day weekend, where she met Jayne's friends and family, who threw a belated "baby shower" for the mother. Guests at the party brought pictures and stories to share with Karyn about her mother.

WINNER

Congratulations to Vance Edeker who won the Southern Voice Hotlanta Weekend Giveaway. We hope Vance enjoys his 2-night stay at the beautiful 1854 Bed & Breakfast in Charleston, S.C. as much as he enjoyed the Hotlanta weekend.

Send us your occasions! Mail to Southern Voice/Occasions, PO Box 18215, Atlanta, GA 30316, or call (404) 876-0789. We want to hear from you.



Chris Duncan will celebrate his 31st birthday on Sept. 9.

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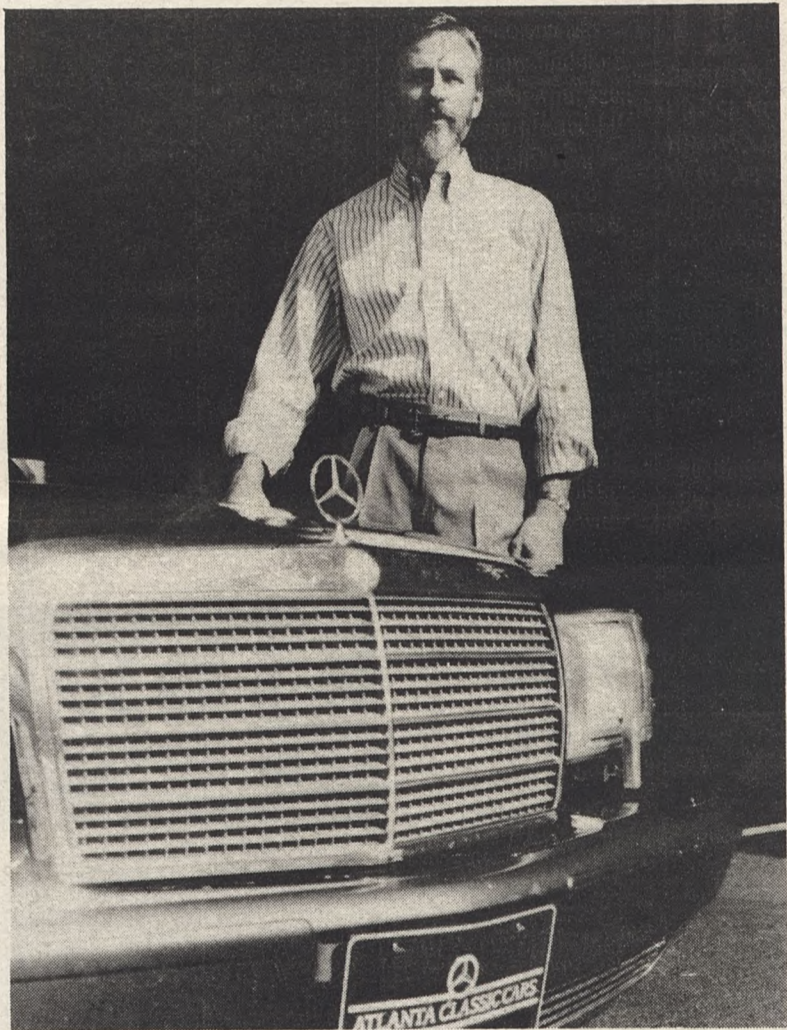
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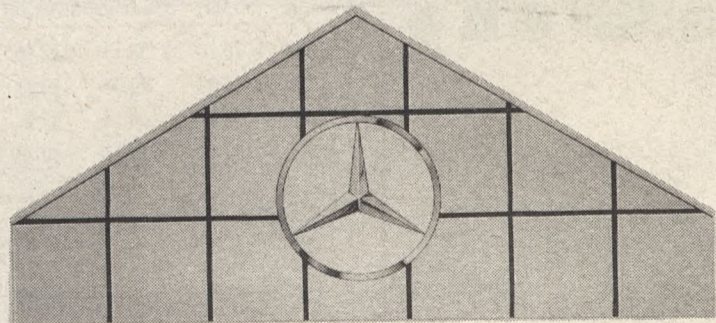
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OUT & ABOUT

THE ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE OF SOUTHERN VOICE

Seasonal mix of both new and classic

Atlanta Symphony Orchestra kicks off its 49th season this week

by AMY FRASER

The coming of fall signifies different things to different people—a new school year, football season, premier episodes of "90210." But for music lovers, it means the opening of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra's 49th season.

The season kicks off this Thursday, Sept. 9 as Yoel Levi, beginning his sixth season as the symphony's music director, leads the orchestra as it performs with international violinist Isaac Stern. The opening-night concert will feature Bruch's Violin Concerto No. 1, Schubert's Symphony No. 9, Beethoven's Leonore Overture No. 2 and Dvorák's Romance for Violin and Orchestra.

This season, Levi and Wells Kauffman, the symphony's artistic director, have assembled a potpourri of well-known and up-and-coming performers, including Peter Jablonski, Roberta Alexander, Bruno Leonardo Gelber and Jean-Yves Thibaudet. The idea is to make sure the 1993-94 season is as diverse as the symphony audience, and the season will feature 26 works composed in the 20th Century.

"We try to blend contemporary and classical music," said Levi, adding that there must be balance between the selections in order to keep the overall program cohesive. The Nov. 11-13 performance, led by guest conductor Robert Spano, exemplifies such a blend by featuring Sallinen, a contemporary funeral piece, followed by Sibelius' Symphony No. 5, an early romantic selection.

Robert Shaw, the symphony's legendary former music director and conductor, will conduct two programs this season, both featuring the ASO chorus. The first is Nov. 4-6 and the second will be March 24-26.

For anyone who is a newcomer to the symphony, Kauffman suggests "The Planets," Feb. 3-5, which will feature principal clarinetist Laura Ardan. Ardan will present the lyrical Copland Clarinet Concerto, originally composed for jazz legend Benny Goodman. The ASO will then present a premiere performance of Michael Torke's "color" composition. "The performance is a blend of Torke's sexy, jazzy music and Copland's tonal, lush romanticism," said Kauffman.

Along with new music will come new faces as a handful of conductors and soloists making their debut with the Atlanta Symphony, including conductors Yakov Kreizber, winner of the Eugene Ormandy Prize and the Leopold Stokowski Conducting Competition; Heinz Wallberg, who will lead the orchestra in an all-Tchaikovsky program featuring Swan Lake Suite; and Robert Spano, conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

Among the debut artists will be Peter Jablonski, pianist and jazz drummer; American soprano Roberta Alexander; 16-year-old violinist Leila Josefowicz; 19-year-old Russian violinist Maxim Vengerov; French pianist Jean Yves Thibaudet and 29-year-old violinist Frank Peter Zimmerman, who will be the soloist with the Berlin Philharmonic at the internationally televised "Europa Concert."

For audience-goers accustomed to a tighter budget and a looser dress code than what is required at the regular season performances, the symphony will be performing "sneak previews" on six Thursdays throughout the season.

"The sneak previews provide the rare opportunity for people to see how the rehearsal process goes and enjoy the music at a low cost," said Kauffman. The previews will be held Sept. 30, Oct. 28, Nov. 11, Jan. 27, March 23 and May 25.

To supplement its regular concert series, the symphony will also be sponsoring six thematic programs of light classics and popular favorites during its "Champagne and Coffee Series." The series will feature "The Best of Broadway and Opera," "At the Movies," and "Best of the Big Bands." The presentations will be held Friday and Saturday evenings and Saturday mornings.

Subscriptions for the symphony's season range in price from \$91.50 for a six-concert "sampler series" to \$642 for the full 24-concert season. Subscriptions to the "sneak previews" are \$40 each, while the "Champagne and Coffee" series subscriptions range in price from \$87 to \$204.

The Atlanta Symphony Orchestra's season ticket office is located at 1293 Peachtree Street, 4th floor. The phone number is (404) 898-1189. Office hours are Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Single tickets for the entire 1993-94 season are now available by mail at 1280 Peachtree Street NE, Atlanta, GA 30309, by phone (404) 892-2414 or in person at the Woodruff Arts Center box office.

JACK AND THE BEANSTALK
The classic fairy tale comes to life, with a little help from actors from the Alliance Theatre. Darryl One conducts. This performance is part of the symphony's Family Concert Series. **February 13.**

MIDORI
The rising young violinist will perform Beethoven's Violin Concerto. Jiri Belohlavek conducts the orchestra. **April 21-23.**



GOSPEL CHRISTMAS
This program of gospel music will feature the All-Atlanta Chorus, a choir made up of more than 100 singers from church and community choruses from throughout metro Atlanta. **December 2-4.**



ISAAC STERN
The famed violinist joins the symphony in performances of Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto and Schubert's Symphony No. 9. Yoel Levi conducts. **September 9-11.**



ROBERTA ALEXANDER
The noted soprano joins the orchestra in a performance of Shostakovich's Symphony No. 11. Yakov Kreizberg conducts. **October 28-30.**



PINCHAS ZUKERMAN
An all-Brahms program will feature this popular violinist. Yoel Levi conducts. **May 26-28.**

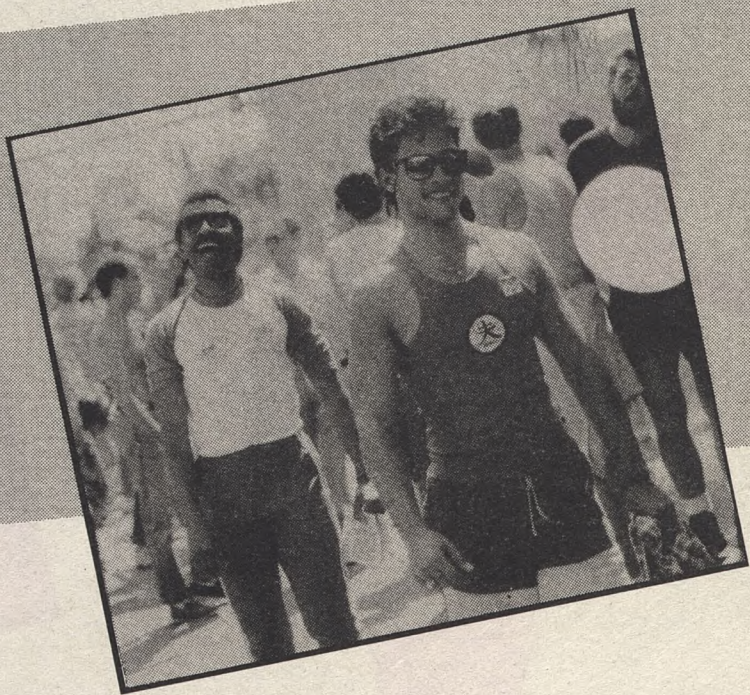
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Summer sent out in style

Hollywood Hots, a cabaret under the stars, will benefit NAPWA.



Tory Beatty is one of the scheduled Hollywood Hots performers.

Summer is giving way to fall, and in Atlanta's gay/lesbian community, that means sending the season off in the traditional style, with one more grand annual party.

This year's fifth annual Hollywood Hots, billed as a "cabaret under the stars," will be held Saturday Sept. 11 beginning at 7 p.m. behind the Heretic on Cheshire Bridge Road.

The yearly show is one of the largest local fundraisers for National Association of People With AIDS (NAPWA). It brings people together for an evening of singing, dancing and dishing

Hollywood Hots is Saturday, Sept. 11 at 7 p.m. at the Heretic on Cheshire Bridge Road.

Hollywood Hots Inc., last year's show brought a record 2,500 in attendance and raised approximately \$20,000 for NAPWA. This year, Hollywood Hots is expected to draw an even larger crowd and raise even more money for the association, which provides services to people living with HIV/AIDS.

Hollywood Hots, long known for its annual growth, had to make some changes this year to accommodate the anticipated larger crowds, primarily a change in location. In the past, performances for this show have been held at Morningside Chase Apartments on Monroe Drive. But the crowd is expected to be too big, so it has been moved to the Heretic.

Performances will be held behind the club.

drag queens, while also providing help to brothers and sisters who are living with AIDS.

According to Rod Staples of

The Heretic's management has already been busy for weeks now clearing the back to make room for stage and audience.

At press time, some of the evening's performers were still unconfirmed. Those who are scheduled to take the stage, however, include Charlie Brown, Amber Richards, the Bulldog Dames, Apple Love, lesbian performer Rache Alpert, singer/dancer Tory Beatty, Felicity Fahrenheit, Mr. Southeastern Drummer, Peg Raven and Kat LeClaw.

Tickets are \$15 if purchased in advance or \$20 at the door on the night of the performance. Advance tickets may be purchased at Brushstrokes, Boy Next Door, MalePak, Prometheus Unbound, Boot Camp, Better Bodies, Trolley Square Apartments, Arts Center Tower Apartments, Ansley North Apartments and Ansley South Apartments. Call Hollywood Hots Inc. at 321-3983 for more information or for other ticket locations.

JOE BIRDSONG

THAT WAS WEIRD- WE ACTUALLY HAD FUN AT AN ACCOUNTANT'S OFFICE! ISN'T THAT SOMEWHAT OF AN OXYMORON?



TO BE CONTINUED...

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C A L E N D A R

9 THURSDAY

DEALS WITH THE DEVIL AND OTHER REASONS TO RIOT. Pearl Cleage celebrates the publication of her new book, *Deals With The Devil*, tonight at Charis Books. Cleage, a charismatic storyteller, identifies herself as an African American Urban Nationalist Feminist. 7:30 pm. Charis Books & More. 419 Moreland Ave. 524-0304.

SEA MARKS. Thaeae Gael opens its 10th season with this story of two romantic outcasts who somehow find love and tenderness with each other. Guest directed by Carol Mitchell Leon. Runs through October 3. 14th St. Playhouse. 876-1138 for reservations and tickets.

ATLANTA SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA. ASO's 49th season opens tonight with Yoel Levi conducting. Isaac Stern, master violinist, will be performing with the orchestra for the first

time in 30 years. Selections include Schubert's Symphony No. 9 and Beethoven's *Lenore* Overture No. 2 among others. Tonight, Friday and Saturday at 8:00 pm. Symphony Hall. Woodruff Arts Center. 892-2414.

GAY GRAFFITI. Local radio show offers news, music and info for Atlanta's gay and lesbian community every Thursday night at 7:00 pm on WRFG, 89.3FM.

10 FRIDAY

FEELING THE PRESENCE: BROWNIE BROADWAY AT 50. SAME's OutProud Theatre opens its new season with Rebecca Ranson's one-woman show, the fourth in the Brownie Broadway series which began in 1973. Based on personal history and perspective, "Feeling The Presence" will overview Ranson's life and mark her passage

into her 50th year. Runs through Sept. 25, Fri. and Sat. only. OutProud Theater in TULA Galleries. 75 Benett St. 609-9590.

FIESTA PARTY. Latinos En Accion, a newly formed group of Latino lesbians, invites all gay men and lesbians to a dance, celebrating Hispanic heritage month. 7:00 pm. Refreshments. \$5. Tix at Charis and Brushstrokes. 1st Existentialist Congregation. 470 Candler Park Dr. 621-5743.

OPEN HOUSE AT ALFA. The Atlanta Lesbian Feminist Alliance invites women to attend this open house for games, food and conversation. Wheelchair accessible; chem free. 8:00 pm. 64 Clay St. 378-9769 for directions.

SIL0 X: A HAUNTED HOUSE. Atlanta's biggest and best haunted house has its grand opening tonight. Spanning the length of three football fields, Silo X features lasers and extensive sound and lighting systems. Totally ghoulish. Open Thursday thru Sunday nights in Sept. and Oct. Perimeter Mall. 645-7900.

11 SATURDAY

HOLLYWOOD HOTS: 5TH ANNUAL CABARET UNDER THE STARS. An evening of incredible fun to benefit the Hollywood Hots PWA Fund and NAPWA. Performers include Charlie Brown, Amber Richards, Raven and more. 7:00 pm. The Heretic. 2069 Cheshire Bridge Rd.

FALSETTOS. Tonight's performance of the Tony award-winning play is co-sponsored by ArtCare and all ticket sales will benefit AIDS service organizations in Atlanta. 8:00 pm Alliance Theatre. 873-4088.

SPLIT. The fascinating story of the queen of all drag queens, International Chrysis, the darling of Salvador Dali. An unsettling documentary on gender, sexuality and the cult of beauty featuring the life story a Bronx boy who transformed himself into the showgirl of his fantasies. 8:00 pm. Rich Auditorium at the High Museum.

NEXUS 11TH ANNUAL ART PARTY. Nexus Contemporary Art Center celebrates its 20th birthday with this evening of music, art and performance. Features Joyce & Jacque, Akbar Imhotep, and SLAW (Southern Ladies Against Women). 8:00 pm. 535 Means St. 688-1970 for more info.

12 SUNDAY

40th ANNUAL ATLANTA ARTS FESTIVAL. Experience one of the most comprehensive multi-disciplinary arts events in North America. Hundreds of booths and exhibits, food and fun in Piedmont Park. 11:00 am-9:30 pm. through Sept. 19. Call 364-0997 for complete scheduling info.

13 MONDAY

REBECCA RANSON 50TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION. Ranson, playwright and Artistic Director of SAME, reads from her work-in-progress "Scrap Notes," a collection of family portraits that range from lesbian aunts to an uncle who practiced law from his station wagon. 7:30 pm. Charis Books & More. 524-0304.

OUT IN ATLANTA. Atlanta's local lesbian and gay cable program. 10:30 p.m. and again, Wed. 5:30 p.m. Cable Ch. 12.

GAY USA. A gay and lesbian news show produced in New York includes national and international coverage. Cable Ch. 12, People TV. 11 p.m.

14 TUESDAY

AND THE BAND PLAYED ON. Randy Shilts' best selling book about the early years of AIDS comes to HBO tonight. 8:00 pm. Other play dates are Sept. 17, 19, 22, 26 and 30.

16 WEDNESDAY

VISIONS OF GAY SPIRIT. An evening with Tom Spanbauer (see



page 27), Andrew Ramer, Cary Alan Johnson and Franklin Abbott. The evening is open to anyone interested in Spirituality and Literature and introduces the Gay Spirit Visions Conference to be held in Highlands, NC Sept. 17-19. 8:00 pm. 1st Existentialist Congregation. 470 Candler Park Dr. 378-1227.

BLUE SKY CONCERTS. Take your lunch to the square in downtown Decatur (where you're always welcome) and enjoy the acoustic rock group Backyard Swing. Blue Sky Concerts are held every Wednesday in September from 12-1:00 pm. Free. 371-8262.

POSITIVE LIVING. This locally produced show about people living with AIDS. People TV

Ch. 12, 2:30 p.m. and again on Sat., 10 p.m. It also airs on City Ch. 6, Th. 5 p.m.

FRONT RUNNERS. It's not too early to start training for the 1994 Pride Run. Run with the Front Runners. Meet at 6:30 pm in Piedmont Park parking lot near the tennis courts. 621-5007.

Pictured:
LEFT: A creature from Silo X which opens Sept. 10. Photo by Diane Dunham
BELOW: "And The Band Played On," starring Phil Collins and Lily Tomlin, premieres on HBO on Sept. 11 and runs again on Sept. 14. Photo by Janet Van Ham
ABOVE: Pearl Cleage reads from her new book at Charis on Sept. 9.



O N G O I N G A N D U P C O M I N G

MATING HABITS OF THE URBAN MAMMAL. Through Sept. 19. Due to popular demand, this new comical musical has been held over at The Discovery Arena at Neighborhood Playhouse in Decatur. Performances are Thurs through Sun. 373-5311 or Ticketmaster at 817-8700.

APPROACHING ZANZIBAR. Through

Oct. 17. Actor's Express kicks off its 6th season with this comedy by Tina Howe. The dizzily whacko script is full of romance, magic, wonder and healing. Directed by Stephen Petty and stars Patricia French, Annette Coleman, Theo Harness and Dr. Jim Braude. 280 Elizabeth St. 221-0831.

CELEBRATING GAY SPIRIT VISIONS. Sept

16-19. Explore your nature with a group of men who love men on top of "The Mountain" in North Carolina through tribal rituals, workshops and presentations focusing on silence, vision and action. Authors Tom Spanbauer and Andrew Ramer will be present. \$195-\$225. (704) 526-5838, (404) 378-1227/Al Cotton.

NEW WOMAN CONFERENCE. Sept 23-26. A three-day conference for new (post-operative) women and their male and female partners. A retreat held near San Francisco that combines communing with nature with the sharing of experience. P.O. Box 67, S. Berwick, ME 03908. (207) 676-5870.

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FRESH AT 40

Arts Festival of Atlanta kicks off this weekend, featuring nearly 1,000 artists.

Some people might view turning 40 as either the beginning of the end or perhaps time to sit back and take it easy. But for the Atlanta Arts Festival, that milestone, reached this year, is a time to explore new frontiers.

The festival is once again challenging the status quo in contemporary art, music and performance during its annual cultural extravaganza, which starts Saturday in Piedmont Park and runs through Sept. 19. International in scope but regional in hospitality, the festival will feature nearly 1,000 of the world's most unique and innovative visual and performing artists, converging on Midtown to give audiences a taste of slightly offbeat, provocative and sometimes even traditional artistry.

The Arts Festival of Atlanta

runs from Sept. 11-19 at Piedmont Park. Hours are 11 a.m. to 9:30 p.m.

Nine visual arts exhibits, including those in the Pavilion and Bathhouse, are featured this year. Other exhibits include Arts Cars, Site Works, Big Art, Video Art, Art in Transit, Youth Art and the Big Top Five (formerly known as Group Exhibits).

Something new to the festival this year is a satellite exhibit, The Language of Force, at the new gallery in City Hall East (the former Sears building on Ponce de Leon), which is part of a corresponding exhibit in the park's pavilion. Curated by Atlanta artist Eddie Granderson, the exhibit features work by artists attempting to

explore the reasons people behave violently. In addition, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention will present a symposium designed to create a dialogue for addressing issues surrounding violence in our society.

Other key exhibits include the Bathhouse exhibition, "The Metaphorical Machine," which features artists who turn electronic components and gadgets into works of art, and City Site Works, presenting everything from a "planetary playhouse" by Miami artist Marilyn Gottlieb-Roberts to a rather large recycled animal sculpture from Miralda of Spain.

Performing artists from around the world as well as close by will be performing on two stages and throughout the park itself. Because the park's permanent stage, which used to be near the 12th Street entrance, has been dismantled, performances are being held on two new stages—the Midtown Valley Stage, near the Clear Creek ravine parallel to Monroe Drive, and the Uptown Lake Stage, located north of the Bathhouse. Approximately 50 performances are scheduled throughout the nine-day event, offering a global view of collaboration within disciplines, across genres and between artist and community.

Of particular interest to the lesbian/gay community are performances by BETTY, the rock/jazz trio that will debut a new music/theater piece, and Mrs. Fun, the avant-garde duo that counts k.d. lang among its biggest boosters. BETTY performs Sept. 11 and 12 at 8 p.m. at the Uptown Lake Stage. Mrs. Fun performs Sept. 13 and 14 at 9 p.m., also on the Uptown Lake



The trio BETTY will be one of the acts featured at this year's Arts Festival of Atlanta.

Stage.

Collaborating with the Arts Festival of Atlanta this year is the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games Cultural Olympiad, which will help bring a day-long Mexican celebration to the park Saturday, Sept. 18. Culminating with a performance by Los Folkloristas, a Mexican musical ensemble, the celebration features culinary demonstrations, dance, music and other activities for both children and adults.

Also new this year is Cafe Bizzoso, a unique and special partnership between the festival's performing arts division and the artists' market. Hosted by vaudevillian Rodger French, this one night art cabaret features new works and works in progress by artists including Big Sky, Dance Force, Louise Runyon Barth, Nicole Torre and

Transactors Improv Company.

And, of course, the artists' market includes works for show and sell by more than 300 artists from Atlanta and around the nation. It's quirky sidekick, Bazaar Bizzoso, features those handcrafted works not usually presented in a market format.

Hours for the festival, which is free, are 11 a.m.-9:30 p.m., except for the final day (Sept. 19) when the event winds down at 8 p.m. Festival organizers are encouraging people to take advantage of the free MARTA shuttles which operate between the Arts Center rail station and the park.

For more information on festival events, call 364-0997 or 853-3ART.

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Finally, with the advent of September, we can see (and feel) the cool autumn light at the end of the long hot tunnel of summer. September also brings with it the annual **Nexus Art Party**, which drew raves from me (and everyone else who attended) last year.

Held at the beautifully renovated warehouse space on Means Street near Georgia Tech, the Nexus party is recognized as "the party of the year" and attracts an average of 2,000 people who come to enjoy the festivities, food and fun. But don't be intimidated by the large number of guests. Nexus is a sprawling complex, with large spaces both inside and out to accommodate the partygoers. A stage is set up in the front courtyard for performances, which this year will include contemporary folk duo Joyce and Jacque and the Black Label Orchestra. Providing the beat will be the notorious spin doctor of WRAS, the House Faerie. Roving performance artists will keep things lively. Look for Normando Ismay, Akbar Imohotep, Susan Harvey and my favorite, SLAW, those sweet as pie Southern Ladies Against Women.

In addition to the entertainment, the gallery's exhibit space will be filled with an exhibition called "20 Artists 20 Years," which will bring together 20 of the most outstanding artistic talents who have been associated with Nexus since its beginning two decades ago.

Surrounding the central courtyard are the Nexus artists' studios, which will again be open for inspection. These are the best part of the party, allowing guests to meet the artists and take in the creative atmosphere. The very reasonable ticket price also buys a year's membership to Nexus. For more information, call 688-1970.

So many interesting things are happening on Sept. 11, including one of the city's biggest and most fun annual events, **Hollywood Hots**. This year's Cabaret Under the Stars will feature a cavalcade of Atlanta's foremost entertainers, including Amber Richards, Charlie Brown and the divine Peg. The location of the event has moved to the back lot of the Heretic and will start at 7 p.m. on Saturday, Sept. 11. Tickets are \$20 at the door or \$15 in advance at The Boy Next Door, Boot Camp, Brushstrokes, MalePak and Prometheus Unbound. For more information, call 321-3983.

In other art news, the much publicized "Party to End the Century," put on in the atrium of the High Museum by the

AFTER HOURS

D A N N Y R O B L E



The movie "Split" is the story of International Chrysis, who went from Bronx boy to glamorous showgirl.

members of the 20th Century Art Society, was quite an event. The New York partying team known as lalalandia was flown in to work their magic on the atrium, and work they did. With the help of Ed Woodham, Jim Miller, Doug Loggins and Sue Bresler, of 800 East, the lalalandia boys set up lights shining through plastic screens full of dripping water, creating liquid shadows on the walls. Miles of inflated plastic tubing bisected the open atrium, which was dominated by the mammoth scaffolding used

for the installation of the new Sol Lewitt geometric painting. Though the party was touched with controversy and the Atlanta Journal-Constitution dubbed it only a so-so success, Carrie Przybilla, associate curator of modern and contemporary art, told me, "I would really like to thank Ed and everyone involved with 800 East who helped with the construction and the entertainment at the party, especially Disfunksha. When she came in and walked through that crowd, it created exactly the kind of energy I had hoped for." Other crowd pleasers included DeAundra Peek, ARGE, Mitchell O'Barr, Duffy Odum, Terence Jackson, Saaha, Wayne Sizemore and Anthony Owsley.

While on the subject of the High, a documentary film by Ellen Fisher Turk, called "Split," which focuses on International Chrysis, a boy from the Bronx who reinvented himself as one of New York City's most glamorous showgirls, will be shown on Saturday, Sept. 11 at 8 p.m. Described as an "unsettling meditation on gender, sexuality and the cult of beauty," the film chronicles Chrysis' ascension from obscurity to being the toast of the downtown scene and companion to famed surrealist Salvador Dali. Starting to cross dress at age 14, "William" transformed himself from an adolescent boy into a goddess using street hormones and floorwax in her breasts, which she then dubbed Johnson and Johnson. Chrysis died at the age of 39 from cancer brought on by the abuses done to his body for the sake of beauty. "Split" won a special jury prize at the 1993 Berlin Film Festival.

By now, you've heard that the Alliance Theatre is presenting the Tony winning musical "Falsettos." This story of a family life and the AIDS crisis deserves our support at a time when any theatrical production racier than "The Sound of Music" is in danger from the right. And the best way to show support for the Alliance Theatre and to help in the fight against AIDS is to attend a special matinee performance of "Falsettos" on Saturday, Sept. 11 at the Woodruff Arts Center. This performance is co-sponsored by ARTCARE, the charity art auction, and will benefit Equity Fights AIDS, the Visiting Nurses Association, Childkind, AID Atlanta and Project Open Hand. Ticket prices range from \$18 to \$100. Premium ticket holders may attend a pre-show brunch at the Ritz Carlton and a post-show party in the Circle Room of the Arts Center. Order your tickets by calling 873-4088.

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BOOKS

IN LOVE WITH THE MOON

Tom Spanbauer's book, "The Man Who Fell In Love With The Moon," has found its audience by word of mouth. Readers have come under the thrall of characters such as Shed, the Indian boy who went from prostitute to berdache on a journey to find out what his name means. Or Ida, the madam of the pink whorehouse of Excellent, Idaho. Or the moondrunk cowboy, Dellwood Barker.

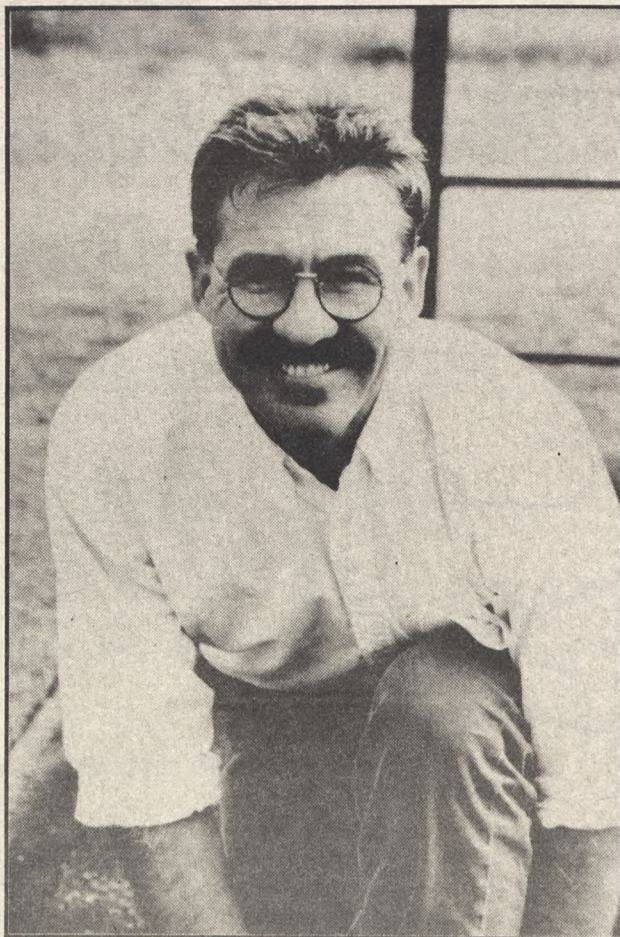
"There's a Spanish version that has just been published, and it's going through the same process," says Spanbauer from his home in Portland, Ore. "'The Man Who Fell in Love with the Moon' never really hit the charts in terms of selling, but three years later, it's selling as much as it was three years ago," which is unusual for literary fiction.

But perhaps the most gratifying sales story is not really a sales story. "There's a bookstore in Seattle where every time I go there, they list that they have six copies in stock, but it's never in the store, which means it's being stolen, which is even better."

Spanbauer will be the keynote speaker at the Gay Spirit Visions conference later this month near Highlands, N.C. "It's the first time I've been asked to speak to a group of gay men like this," he says. But that's just one of the rewards that have come his way due to the almost cult-like and still growing popularity of his novel.

"There's a movie in the works. I'm in a Gap ad—Gus Van Sant took my picture. It's been pretty amazing," Spanbauer says.

The germ for the novel is a story from an Idaho ghost town in the Sawtooth Mountains. "My friend is the self-appointed mayor of this town, third generation Mormon, whose grandfather settled there. Once, he told me [the] story of Peg-Leg Annie and Emma Cates, who became Ida and Alma in the



BRUCE BRADLEY

Tom Spanbauer has found the cult-like success surrounding his book to be at times "confounding."

book. [It's] the story about the prostitute who died and the one who lost her legs going over the mountain."

The central character is Shed, a half-Indian whose search for the meaning of his Indian name Duivichi-un-Dua inspires the journey. "To tell a story of identity and sexuality, I wanted someone who wasn't straight or white or Indian, someone who had fallen through the cracks. And I also wanted someone who had never been affected by our Judeo-Christian

sense of morality. Sex is a business for him, but, at the same time, a very sacred thing, a very healing thing."

Spanbauer notes that the difficulties in writing the novel were immense. "It took me four and a half years. I was living in New York City at the time and I just about fell apart—no money, a super on East Fifth Street. Six buildings I took care of, sweeping the sidewalks and picking up dog shit. Living in a cement box in the middle of Manhattan, being poor—it was a pretty rough time, but it was a journey." An image that kept him sane came from a psychic who told him "that when I sat down to write, my roof in Manhattan opened up into an Idaho sky."

Spanbauer uses tantric sexual techniques (like those taught by the Body Electric) in the novel. But they don't come from practical experience.

"It's probably something I could use myself, but I've never done [the classes]. I had a tantric yoga book that I found very interesting. And I have a blood brother with whom I've had a long and fruitful relationship. Once, I called my blood brother and told him about this coming/not coming thing I had read about, and he said 'Oh, we do that. We call it Moves Moves.' That's how it was for the Shoshone."

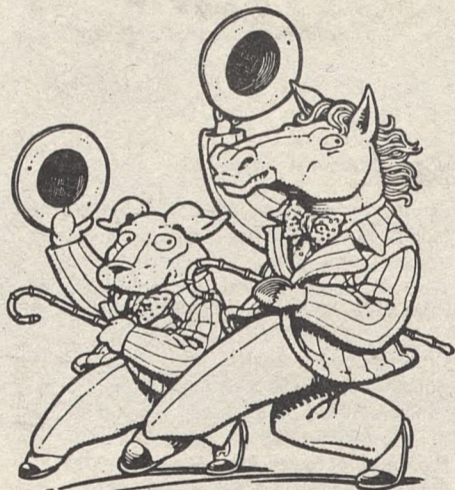
Fame has been a bit daunting for Spanbauer. "People will meet me and look at me all starry-eyed, like I'm Elizabeth Taylor or something. I kinda don't know what on earth to do with that. It's confounding, because people think I'm Dellwood Barker or Shed and start asking me questions as though I'm them. A lot of Body Electric men meet me and start asking me questions like I'm a guru or something. I'm just a guy who wishes his dick was bigger, you know?"

Tom Spanbauer will be reading at the First Existentialist Church on Candler Park Road at 8 p.m., Sept. 15. Along with him will be Cary Alan Johnson (a Washington D.C. poet recently published in Assotto Saint's "Here to Dare: Ten Gay Black Poets"), author Andrew Ramer ("Ask Your Angels") and local poet, editor and psychotherapist Franklin Abbott. Admission is \$5.

For information about last-minute registration for the Gay Spirit Visions Conference, call (404) 378-1227.

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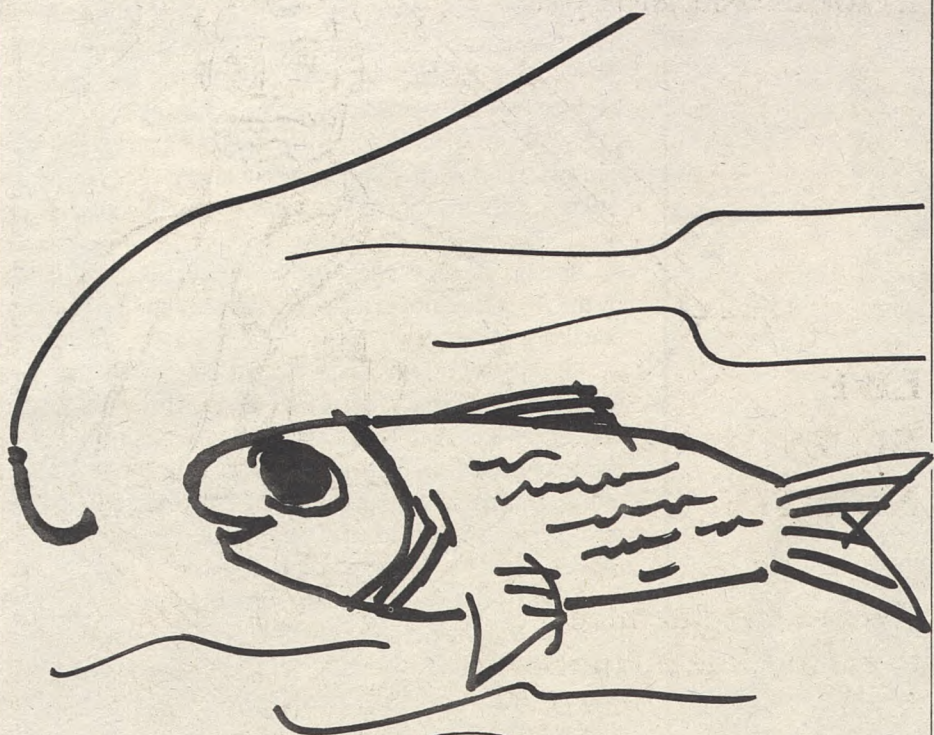
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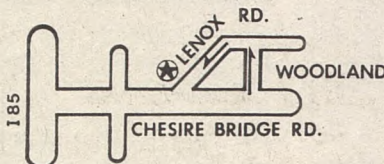
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EAT

A FOOD COLUMN BY GARY KAUPMAN

It's unusual for me not to scurry to a new restaurant soon after it opens. It might, after all, turn out to be the home of the finest eye of newt soup in all the universe. Or perhaps the hummingbird's tongues will be so good that I'll see God the minute they pass my lips. At very least the new chow palace might turn out a bowl of chicken soup the likes of which I haven't tasted since grandma Alma passed back in '73.

Given my fascination with food and the institutions that produce it, I was surprised that I felt no inclination to rush the doors at **Azalea** (3167 Peachtree Rd 237-9939) when it opened three or four years ago. I'm not sure what kept me away. The place looked way cool: black and white and metal walls adorned with Mapplethorpe-like prints of flowers; a multi-level dining room; an open kitchen; and a very trendoid Buckhead clientele that was tons of fun to watch.

I even walked in a couple of times, checked out the menu (shrimp and pork potstickers with chili soy sauce, whole sizzling catfish, batter-fried lobster tail with honey mustard) shook my head and wandered away—through a parking lot packed with sleek German cars that cost as much as my house.

But a couple of weeks ago a friend suggested that we stroll by Azalea and check out the hot catfish sculpture that local metal artist Ivan Bailey had done for the restaurant's new addition. Well, Ivan's glorious catfish and the smiling hostess won me over; I decided it was time to get with the program and eat dinner among the beautiful people.

Sometimes a boy should just trust his intuition.

Confusion-fusion is probably the best way to describe a menu that can keep a straight face and offer an andouille sausage and shrimp eggroll with sweet chili dip right next to a phyllo packet stuffed with crabmeat, feta, and spinach and served in a Chardonnay cream next to a crisp chicken pesto ravioli with smoked tomato dipping sauce. Trying to assemble a meal from this mish-mash is a challenge. But trying to pick a bottle of wine (from a mostly California list) that would compliment more than one choice from that mish-mash is the real mindboggler. Take note that lots of folks here are sipping cocktails and beers.

When in doubt, keep it simple, right? Fresh potato chips and fried calamari sound safe, no? The elliptical chips are plentiful, salty, crisp and almost greaseless—good as any in town. The three dips that accompany them (two creamy, one tomatoey) can best be described as ambigoo. The flavors and textures are not bad, but are only about as exciting as onion soup and sour cream.

There's not one whit of ambiguity about the cilantro pesto that comes with the fried calamari. Oily and bright tasting, it might be fine on bread (which is not provided) or pasta, but on the heavily breaded and already greasy squid, it's no treat at all. The mild tomato-basil dipping sauce works better, but then there's the matter of the unidentifiable sweet-spicy flavor that pervades the tender rings of squid flesh. The whole mess makes me crave the simplicity of Camille's version; or the delicacy of Marra's.

Given the gargantuan volume of the appetizers, we skipped salads (which come in full or half portions and sound blessedly simple) and charged on to entrees.

If memory serves, the hot-smoked salmon in a potato crust is one of the dishes that won (former?—his name is no longer on the menu) Executive Chef Tom Catherall several culi-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 30



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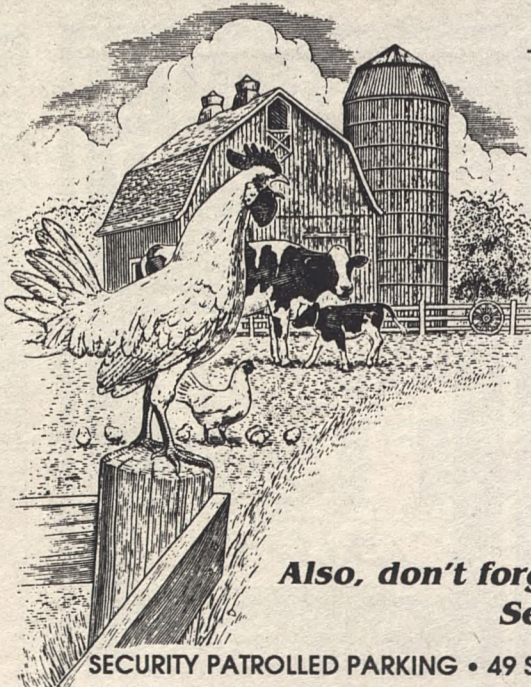
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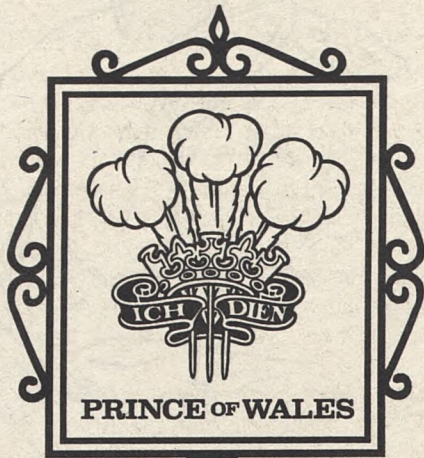
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2770 Lenox Rd. • 261-6280

EAT

A FOOD COLUMN BY GARY KAUPMAN

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 29

nary awards and high hosannas from critics. Like most the rest of the menu, it's a complex combination of ingredients (salmon, potatoes, black olive paste and cream sauce) and technique (smoking, searing, deep-frying) that's at great risk of crashing from its high-concept perch.

But except for being a mite too greasy, it works mighty well. The salmon is moist and smooth, the shredded wheat-like potatoes crisp, the olive paste rich and assertive. With a simple salad it would make a good meal.

Unfortunately, another staple that's been on the menu for a while, grilled shrimp wrapped in prosciutto, with tortelloni and two sauces, falls off its perch, crashes, and burns in both concept and preparation. The primary premise, smoky sweet ham, paired with salty, moist shrimp is sound. Served on a bed of simple noodles with a drizzle of oil and a squeeze of lemon it could be a dreamy combo. But here the (five medium) shrimp are overcooked and taste of iodine and the pasta packs are thick, chewy and stuffed with a flavorless and leaden cheese mixture. Neither sauce (mild tomato basil and even milder cream and question mark) works particularly well with the shrimp or the pasta. And neither does anything to marry the flavors and textures of the two very disparate main ingredients. Pretty to behold, the dish is a major flop.

Which about sums up how I feel about the restaurant.

High-style mavens will probably find the scene worth the trip and the tab (\$25+ each for two courses and a cocktail). Me? I've got big-time trust issues with *any* restaurant that would offer to serve me a grilled tuna steak on top of a pile of macadamia studded mashed potatoes.

Tummy Rumbblings

I've had two really disappointing lunches and one great one in the past few weeks.

The good news first. I've only eaten at **The Bistro at Andrews Square** (56 E. Andrews Dr.) once and was less than amused. But friends keep telling me that they crave the place. And one fan even brought me the leftovers of her lunch recently.

Even though the roast chicken, rice, and beans spent two days in my fridge in a styro container and got reheated in microwave, they were all sublime. The half chicken was rich, full flavored and beautifully spiced. Medium grain rice, cooked in stock and studded with perfect fat mushrooms and cloves of garlic sent me swooning. A combo of lima beans and black-eyed peas (even reheated) were buttery and cooked perfectly.

If you're feeling flush (and of a humor to dress up—the place is *in* Buckhead) check it out.

Also out Buckhead way, **The OK Cafe** (Northside P'kway and West Paces Ferry) still looks great, but the once tasty tofu burger is now naught but white mush on an uninspired bun. At more than \$5 with no sides it's no fun, and no bargain. And the also once fine chocolate icebox pie is now filled with something that resembles bad chocolate mousse. The onion rings are way too greasy (though mighty tasty) but the hamburger is still great.

The new **Murphy's** (Virginia Ave. at N. Highland) looks fabulous and is way more comfortable than the old, cramped location. But my grilled eggplant sandwich (on focaccia) showed an essential lack of understanding about how eggplant should be prepared. And the bread had about as much character as cotton. No fun.

Not So Gorgeous George: The facts are starting emerge about why Bill Clinton abandoned his promise and decided not to simply lift the ban on queers in the service. One of the most distressing stories that we've seen comes from the Sept. 6 issue of "The New Republic" and concerns the role of George Stephanopolous in Clinton's decision to go along with "don't ask, don't tell." It seems that Mr. S. is an unrepentant liberal who would have allowed gays to serve without restriction, but his decade or so of government experience has made him distressingly pragmatic when it comes to the vicissitudes of electoral politics. So when it looked like the Clinton administration was going to get defined (and murdered) by the issue (partly because the Joint Chiefs wouldn't budge), Stephanopolous recommended that Clinton back down from his promise and compromise his ideals and our rights. Dish no longer finds Mr. S. to be quite so pretty as we had in the past.

Queen's Lament: Day trippers to HRH Queen E's London home have not been quite up to predicted levels—kinda like users of Ga. 400. (No word if frequent visitors get the Brit version of a Cruise Card). It seems that the number of visitors is about 2,000 folks a day behind predictions and that the dudes who count the queen's money were concerned that they were not going to be able to raise enough money to pay for \$58 million in repairs to fire-damaged Windsor Castle. But the good news is that sales in the gift shop are way more than expected, more than \$50,000 a day. The best seller? A dozen crown-shaped chocolates for \$6. No word on whether gold foil-wrapped condoms embossed with the queen's seal are also offered.

Progress?: Ryoko Akamatsu, Japan's new education minister, is pushing the edge of the envelope pretty hard. He wants to allow women to sit on the panel that chooses champion sumo wrestlers and (gasp) even enter the ring where these monster men grunt, groan and otherwise abuse each other. Seems that Akamatsu's predecessor, a woman, was barred from the ring in

Dish

THERE'S A FINE LINE BETWEEN TELLING THE TRUTH AND TALKING TRASH



Queen Liz's house party not up to snuff.

1990 when she tried to present a trophy. Sounds familiar, kinda like the guys at Virginia Military Institute, no?

Glamour, Glamour: Having read "Glamour" magazine for more years than we want to admit in public, Dish is constantly amazed at the changes in that once stodgy pub. The new layout is

trendoid to the max and some of the content is definitely not what your mama read in these pages in the '50s. Like side-by-side pictures of RuPaul and Lassie and the question, "What do these two have in common?" The answer, of course, is that they both have penises (granted, Glamour's response, "They're both female impersonators" was less direct than Dish's.) Or an article about how drug companies exclude HIV-positive women from clinical drug trials because they are of childbearing age. The good news on that discriminatory score is that the government is relaxing its restraints in these areas, but that doesn't mean that drug companies will follow suit.

Lacking Glamour: Dish was astounded at a wire service story that quotes a GSU psych study which concludes that the "male hormone testosterone may help make college fraternities rambunctious." Duuh. It took a scientific study to figure this out? James Dabbs Jr. did his research at a school (not GSU) where the inter-fraternity council rated Greeks as "rambunctious" or "responsible"—the former held 33 parties a year the latter 10.5. More importantly (to Dish at least), 61.5 percent of the guys with lower testosterone were smiling in their yearbook pictures, while only 33.7 percent of the high level dudes had happy faces. We'll take a man with a grin any day of the week.

Come Out, Come Out: Dish can't use names here because we don't out folks who aren't involved in active acts of homophobia. But we know for sure that at least one of Georgia's most vigorous anti-gay activists has a gay child. We hear rumors almost daily that the same is true of another and that a third has a homo sibling—living at home with mom. Fact is that if these folks would come out and shine the light of truth on the hypocrisy of their parents and siblings, life would be easier for us all—the homophobes included. Please, if you know one of these folks, encourage him or her to stand tall and come out publicly. They don't have to condemn their relatives, just be honest about who they are.

SEPTEMBER 9 - SEPTEMBER 15, 1993

This could be an intense week, but it will be very good for finishing old projects, communicating with good friends and getting ready for the new moon in Virgo on Sept. 15. Be organized, set personal priorities and keep your sense of humor.

Dear **ARIES**, how is your love life? Are you able to establish rapport with people, or do you feel like you are just bumping into walls with important relationships? If you can relax and take things a little slower, things may be easier. **TAURUS**, are you doing what you really love to do, or are you just going from day to day, making a living and getting by? It might take some effort and persistence, but you can definitely benefit by focusing on what you love and what you love to do. **GEMINI**, your ability to handle loads of information in an effective and productive way is a real talent, so find ways to put it to good use. Look around for people or situations with tons of information needing to be sorted out and put to use.

CANCER, if your life is in a little disarray, then you may be trying to do too much for other people and not enough for yourself. Be sure you have quality personal time to do some things that bring peace and joy to your life. **LEO**, with the sun in your second house

STARSIGNS

of personal finances and material resources, you could really benefit by paying focused attention to your income as well as your spending habits. It might not be pleasant, but it is always useful to know about money. Happy birthday, **VIRGO**. Hopefully, you are having a wonderful month, doing the things you enjoy with the people you love. Do take a few minutes out to reflect on, and write down, how you would like your life to be by this same time next year.

LIBRA, Mercury is moving from your 12th house of visions, dreams and the collective unconscious into your first house of personal awareness and conscious perception, making you more articulate and able to focus clearly on new ideas. **SCORPIO**, is your world a little upside down at the moment? Do you feel like you are walking around in a fog? If so, then you may have repressed experiences trying to surface, or your intuition may be

working overtime to provide protection. Dear **SAGITTARIUS**, Venus is now moving through your ninth house of higher education, long-distance travel and ideals, so you may be taking a more romantic or idealistic view of situations. Be cautious about making any major decisions right now.

CAPRICORN, being on the planet right now may require shifting or adapting some of your favorite points of view on life. This is not always easy for you to do, so be patient with yourself and others. You may learn something valuable. **AQUARIUS**, you are now in the final stages of Saturn moving through your first house, and you are probably learning some very important things about yourself. Hopefully, you are discovering what is most important to you and what is the most fulfilling. **PISCES**, with the sun moving through your seventh house of close personal relationships and partnerships, you may be discovering some interesting but little known facts about people you thought you knew really well. Just don't take on their karma, OK.

Mary Bailey Rule is a professional astrologer who specializes in personal and relationship chart interpretation as well as crisis management. She can be reached in Santa Fe at (505) 982-3104 to order charts or arrange a chart interpretation.

THE MOSTLY UNFABULOUS Social LIFE OF ETHAN GREEN:

7 DEADLY SINS OF LOVE (PART 1)

DEADLY SIN #1: DRESSING ALIKE

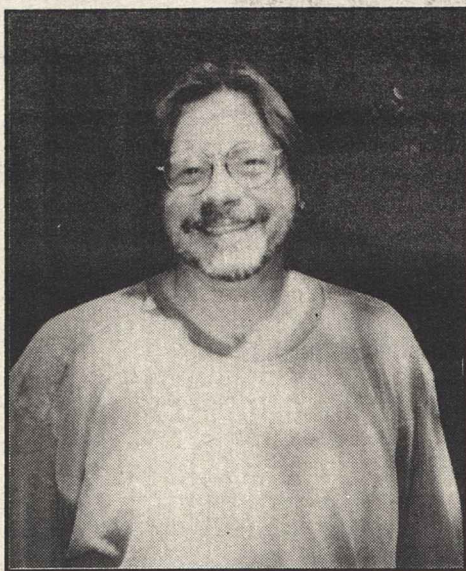
DEADLY SIN #2: CLUTCHING EACH OTHER WHILE CONVERSING WITH OTHERS
 SO, HOW ARE YOU?
 I'M FINE.
 LIZA HONEY, I WAS ASKING ETHAN. I KNOW YOU'RE FINE.
 OH-(GIGGLE).
 GIGGLE
 DID YOU TWO JUST HAVE SOME NEW SEXUAL BREAKTHROUGH OR WHAT?

DEADLY SIN #3: SMUGLY BELIEVING THAT YOUR RELATIONSHIP IS PERFECT, WHILE RELENTLESSLY CRITIQUIING THOSE OF YOUR FRIENDS.
 DID YOU NOTICE HOW Snappish CAL GOT WHEN BOBBY STARTED TALKING ABOUT WORKING OUT? THEY REALLY DO BICKER ALOT MORE THAN WE DO, DON'T THEY?
 I LOVE IT WHEN THE COMPANY GOES HOME.

DEADLY SIN #4: CONSTANT BUYING OF TCHOTCHKELEH FOR THE HOUSE..
 BETH, DON'T YOU THINK THIS CERAMIC SUN FIGURINE WOULD LOOK PERFECT ON THAT DECORATIVE COPPER AND TEAK CORNER SHELF WE HAVE IN THE BATHROOM...
 LIZA, WE DON'T HAVE A DECORATIVE COPPER + TEAK CORNER SHELF IN THE BATHROOM...
 I CAN FIX THAT BETH...
 LONG DOLLAR SILVER VASE \$20
 LON...
 CONTINUED.

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OUTLINES

MICHAEL EDWARDS**Age:** 44**How Long in Atlanta:** 17 years**Relationship Status:** Partners for 14 years**Last Book Read:** "Origins Reconsidered" by Richard Leakey**Pet Peeve:** Many and several

It's a hard thing explaining the creative process. That's why Michael Edwards brought his creative mind and hands right into a recent explanation. With a flash of his trusty Polaroid, and with its subsequent "arrested" development, Michael can create photos that have an other-than-earthly quality, from shooting lines and halos to womb-like enveloping washes. A simple self-portrait became something wonderful, quickly. Is it nouveau fast art?

"Well," he says with his hearty laugh and engaging grin, "I guess you could call it that. Clay (he is a sculptor as well) is heavy and bulky and hard to work with. Really what it is is fun and expressive and at the same time sort of an anecdote to clay."

This is not to belittle Edwards' talent as a sculptor, because years of work in his studio have actually netted him a fair amount of notoriety, with pieces in such near and far places as the lobby of the Hyatt Hotel on the Grand Cayman Islands, California and in many Atlanta synagogues.

Edwards interjects that the Polaroid method came about "by fooling around." Just fooling around wasn't what he did five years ago when he was one of the founders of Project Open Hand, the Atlanta AIDS Service organization that now delivers more than 1,360 meals daily.

The expertise that allowed Edwards to help create Open Hand comes from his own youth. "I was a restaurant-motel vagabond because my parents were in the business, so I never had a normal home life. But in the kitchens my parents ran, I learned skills like making biscuit dough for 40,000 and other industrial-strength portions. And I thought at the time that it was a useless knowledge that I would never be able to use again."

But use it he did. "I first started delivering meals when I was working for AID Atlanta," said Edwards, who got involved as a response to the 1987 March on Washington. "But it was just a few people, and the meals were cold. I felt that people with AIDS should get cooked meals, nutritionally complete."

At this point in his life, Edwards also needed "to get out of his artist's studio," to quell his loneliness and isolation. In Open Hand's early days, Edwards said "it seemed like such an incredible thing to pull off 160 meals and to get them out. But what was so incredible, and how it all came off, was the amazing synthesis of people with important talents and boundless energy."

After five years, Edwards left Project Open Hand because he says "there wasn't a place that I felt comfortable."

"It wasn't anyone's fault. Your ego can get real crazy if you're the founder of something, and I just tried to avoid all that by leaving. There weren't any hard feelings or

anything." In fact, Edwards is going to deliver meal number one million on Sept. 7.

The tenuous connection to his own experience with food and his family brought up memories from his youth. Edwards grew up in a rural area about 150 miles north of Memphis, Tenn. When asked about what it was like, his quick answer is "about like Cobb County is now. Very closeted, very bigoted. The church was telling me I was going to hell on a regular basis. Plus my family was wildly dysfunctional. And I knew I was gay from the time I was four too, so by the time I got to high school and the bullies were taunting me and saying, 'suck my dick, faggot,' I was actually attracted to them."

"Oh God," Edwards shakes his head, "it takes years of continuing therapy to untwist that."

And coming out to his mother and grandmother was kind of a Harvey Fierstein moment. "We were in the kitchen and my mother was turning the pages of the newspaper, and I told her. And she just kept right on turning and, without looking up, said 'I always knew' and 'Where do you keep your dresses?' and 'Doesn't it hurt?' I was just dumbfounded and stared at her."

Edwards' family has all passed on, but the memories are alive in his startling new collages (his current artistic focus) that use overlapping layers of both photos and color Xeroxes on acetates.

It is hard to believe, but there was a time when Edwards was not an artist.

"I went to Memphis State and was a theater major, but I sort of started fooling around with the visual arts." He came to Atlanta only intending to visit for three weeks, yet remained and apprenticed with a sculptor here. In between were some wild times.

"Oh, I was crazy and into drugs and staying out all night, and then I met Dan one night at the Pharr Library and I guess it was exactly the right time. I was 30 and ready to slow down."

Edwards' partner is Dan Pruitt, author of the lyrics and books for the "Harvey Milk Show" and "Different." "We disagree all the time, but we never fight. Actually, Dan is able to make me laugh at myself."

They share a house which they restored, in Virginia-Highland, with three dogs and a cat. What was the first thing an artist did on encountering his new house? "Pull out the nasty yellow shag carpet."

IAN W. GINSBURG



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Erev: Wednesday, Sept. 15, 8:00 p.m.
1st Day: Thursday, Sept. 16, 10:00 a.m.
2nd Day: Friday, Sept. 17, 10:00 a.m.

Yom Kippur

Kol Nidrei: Friday, Sept. 24, 8:00 p.m.
Yom Kippur Day: Saturday, Sept. 25, 10:00 a.m.
Yizkor/Neilah: Saturday, Sept. 25, 5:30 p.m.

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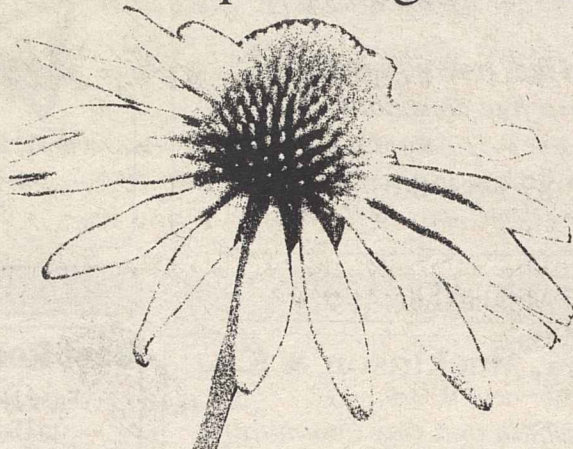
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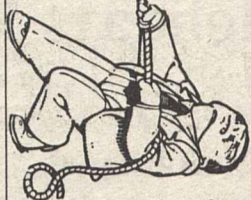
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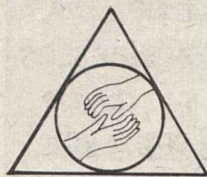
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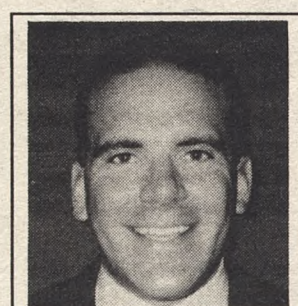
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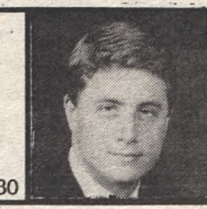
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GWM, 34, 5'8", 160 lbs. G-look, masc, muscular, gymfly, laid back, non pretentious, honest, affectionate, romantic seeks same in secure GWM 35-45. ☎ 1476

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GWM, 32, 5'10", 135#, blk/brn, very French active, ISO laid back, dominant, verbal, WMs to help fulfill my constant cravings. ☎ 1478

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