

S O U T H E R N

VOICE

TAKING PRIDE IN OUR CULTURE

APRIL 14 - APRIL 20 / 1994

Armistead Maupin Talks Back

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Misogyny or Tribute?

THE POLITICS OF DRAG



by RICHARD ELDREDGE

Legendary Atlanta drag performer Charlie Brown has not yet arrived at her Backstreet dressing room on this recent Friday evening. She's still lurking somewhere behind the \$400,000 in dresses hanging nearby, or perhaps underneath the dozens of wigs, makeup mirrors, cosmetics, fingernail polish bottles, CDs and cassettes piled around the room.

Instead, a friendly, polite middle-aged man clad in a red baseball cap and a solid black T-shirt with a pack of Vantages poking out of the pocket passes out the evening's performance schedule (there are 32 acts on tonight's bill at Charlie Brown's Cabaret, a show that will last almost 6 hours) and takes drink orders for guests present. This is also Charlie Brown, a man who has lived and worked in Midtown Atlanta for almost 20 years perfecting his craft of female impersonation.

Sitting behind a lighted Clairol makeup mirror, he lights a cigarette and arches an eyebrow as the question is asked. It is a question he's heard many times before.

"Is what I do for a living a put down to women?" Brown repeats while staring intently at his cigarette. "Absolutely not. Do some women feel threatened by me because as a man I can paint my face, put on a dress and in two hours time present myself as a beautiful woman? Absolutely."

"How women can perceive Charlie Brown to be negative is beyond me. Yes, she's a bitch, I'll give you that, but I think she represents the female community pretty well. She knows what she wants out of life and she goes for it with self-confidence and strength."

"And damn it, she looks good too. What's wrong with that?"

Drag has been a part of the fabric of gay life since long before Stonewall, where drag queens tossing coins at the police led the rebellion. But when one gender imitates another, it can't help but set off a whole range of social and political messages, particularly in these days of sensitivity and political correctness.

Many women and men see drag as the entertainers do—as a glamorous, harmless, sometimes raucous and but always

festive form of entertainment. But others disagree, including some men who think that drag reinforces the stereotype of the nelly queen and, in particular, many women who see men in dresses as a hindrance to their efforts to redefine their gender after years of oppression at the hands of the patriarchy.

"Oh, I've had lots of verbal arguments with them over the years, honey," admits Brown as he begins applying pancake makeup and eyebrow liner. "Yet, there they sit, in blue jeans, flannel shirts, sporting hair shorter than mine, telling me I can't wear a dress. Honey, this is America, the land of freedom."

"Don't get me wrong. I'm not trying to be a woman. I don't live my life as a woman. Sure, this criticism hurts, especially coming from a segment of our own community. What really hurts is that the drag queens in this town do 80 percent of the benefits for the community here. When they call us, we're there for them. When they don't need us, they're talking trash about us. If these feminists would put their energy toward heterosexual groups that are attacking us, we would have a stronger community."

"Some of these women need to examine their own femininity," says Lena Lust, another well-known Atlanta performer who is sitting next to Brown in the dressing room. "I think a lot of them are angry with us for taking the time to look good. We're somehow showing them up, they feel. We're just doing our job and we happen to be quite good at that job."

"Fifty to 60 percent of our clientele is straight, who live outside the Perimeter," says Brown, "Straight women actually ask us for makeup and fashion tips. How can it be a put down when we've actually helped these women look better?"

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

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Campbell names gay/lesbian and HIV panels

Atlanta—Atlanta Mayor Bill Campbell has appointed an eight-member gay/lesbian advisory panel and a separate 19-member group to advise him on HIV issues.

In making the appointments last week, Campbell's office announced that Phil McDonald, who works out of the mayor's community affairs office, will be his link with the lesbian/gay board. Ivory Kimbrough, the city's AIDS housing administrator, will be the administration's point person for the HIV board, which includes at least three people living with HIV/AIDS.

Though he had pledged during his campaign to continue a gay/lesbian liaison position established by his predecessor, Maynard Jackson, Campbell has decided to eliminate that position. In an interview published in last week's Southern Voice, he said the advisory panel, working with McDonald, would be an enhancement on that concept.

Appointees to the gay/lesbian advisory board include:

- Joy Barnes, a member of the board of the Atlanta Lesbian and Gay Pride Committee and a member of Hospitality Atlanta, a group for African-American lesbians
- Edie Cofrin, who holds positions with both the local and national branches of the Human Rights Campaign Fund
- Dan Easton, a financial consultant who headed Atlanta's bid for the 1998 Gay Games
- DeVellus Glover, a writer and editor
- David McDonald, a psychotherapist and former co-chair of Queer Nation/Atlanta
- Aida Rentas, president of Latinos en Acción, a group for Hispanic gays and lesbians



Gay/lesbian panelist Aida Rentas says she's "excited" by the group's diversity.

• MacArthur Simmons, active in various sports organizations and a member of the Atlanta Executive Network, a gay/lesbian business group

• Dixon Taylor, an advertising representative at Southern Voice and board member of the Atlanta Executive Network and GLOBUS, which sponsors international cultural exchanges for gays and lesbians.

Named as policy advisor for the panel was Larry Pellegrini, lobbyist for GAPAC, Georgia's gay/lesbian political action committee. Named as consultants to the panel were Dallas Denny, executive director of the American Education Gender Information Service, a group which works on behalf of the transgendered, and E. Lynn Harris, an Atlanta author. "I'm really excited because it's such a di-



Mark King of the AIDS Survival Project believes the HIV panel can do some "decent advocacy."

verse board," said Rentas, pointing out that four members of the board are men, four women, four are white, three African-American and one Latina. "Maybe we can make a difference in life in Atlanta. I'm really hoping that it works, because I don't want it to be just for show to shut us up."

That was the main reaction to the appointments from lesbian and gay activists across the city, with most adopting a cautious wait-and-see attitude.

"They obviously painstakingly tried to make it diverse," said Lynn Cothren, a former co-chair of Pride and Queer Nation/Atlanta. "Some of these people I have a great deal of faith in. But I'm more interested in what is their charge as opposed to who they are."

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Pride settles T-shirt suit

Bulk of money to be repaid with profits from '94 event

Atlanta—The Atlanta Lesbian and Gay Pride Committee has reached a settlement with a T-shirt maker that is still owed \$65,000 from the 1993 event.

According to the terms of the settlement reached April 1, the Pride committee will pay Screenpeace, Inc. \$5,000 immediately, with the balance, \$59,418, due on July 1. As part of the agreement, the Pride committee also won't have to pay interest on the debt or attorney's fees, and Pride '93 co-chairs Skip Marklein and Paul Stone—who were personally sued to recover the debt because they signed the contracts with Screenpeace—were dropped as defendants in the suit filed by the company.

"We feel that's a very satisfactory settlement," said Carolyn White, the Pride committee's attorney. "We feel both sides were victorious with this."

"We've been walking on pins and needles thinking they could rip the road out from under us," said Richy Howard, co-chair of the Pride committee. "Now we can go ahead and produce a top notch event

CONTINUES ON PAGE 14

Bowers rejects company's plan to extend benefits to partners

But attorney general says he said no because of language used in the plan, not because of the idea behind it

Atlanta—Georgia Attorney General Michael Bowers has said no to a request from an insurance company to extend health care coverage to domestic partners of gay men and lesbians who work for the private firms the company insures.

In an opinion written at the request of state Insurance Commissioner Tim Ryles, Bowers said the Mass Mutual insurance company request could not be granted because the policy used the term "domestic partner" interchangeably with "spouse" and because it allowed companies to limit coverage to gay/lesbian domestic partners and not extend coverage to the unmarried partners of straight employees.

That, Bowers said, would discriminate against heterosexuals.

But Bowers told Southern Voice that if Mass Mutual changed those two aspects and resubmitted the plan, "it could probably be approved by the commissioner."

"I didn't see anything else wrong with it," Bowers said.

Bowers had previously issued an opinion which said that local governments could not extend domestic partnership coverage to their employees because that would violate the state's authority to define marriage. A lawsuit on that issue is pending in Fulton County

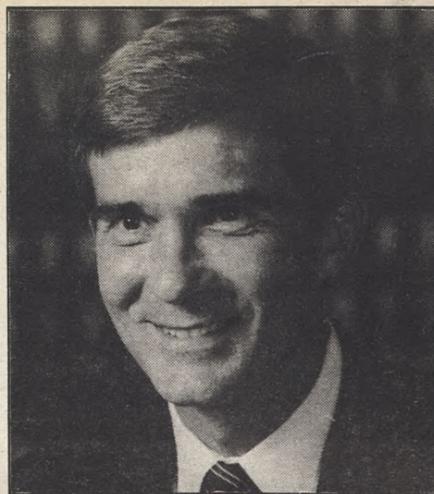
Superior Court. But Bower, at the time of that decision, said that it did not apply to private companies who wanted to offer domestic partnership coverage.

Mass Mutual's request was originally filed in December 1993. In the opinion, received by Ryles on March 21, Bowers said that the insurance company's definition of "domestic partners" was sufficient to receive insurance benefits in Georgia because it did not require "a sexual or meretricious component to the relationship," and because only the insurance company was making the determination as to whether a domestic partner was a "dependent."

But Bowers took issue with language in the policy that "the term 'spouse' also includes your domestic partner." Citing a court case and the American Heritage Dictionary, the state's highest lawyer ruled that a domestic partner cannot be a spouse and that such language in the insurance policy would be "inconsistent, ambiguous [and] misleading."

Mass Mutual's policy would have allowed the companies it covers to decide not to extend coverage to unmarried straight couples, although they would have the option of doing so. Bowers cited the 14th Amendment, which requires equal protection under law, to advise Ryles against acceptance of this policy, saying that "approval of this type of provision...may be considered state action resulting in an arbitrary discrimination against opposite sex domestic partners."

"I think you have an equal protection problem there, the same way if you restricted it to couples of the same race or something like that," Bowers said.



Attorney General Michael Bowers

Jim Viola, an attorney with Mass Mutual, said that his company leaves it up to individual employers to make the decision as to whether to include coverage for same sex couples only or for both same sex and opposite sex couples.

"We make these filings in response to the demand from the market place," he said, adding that he was "not sure if we would ask for reconsideration."

"But we might," Viola said. "If we find that, based on his letter, with minor changes we could very well get approval, we might refile it."

Last week, Bowers, who has a long history of opposition to gay/lesbian rights initiatives, also announced that he was switching from the Democratic Party to the Republican Party and would run for reelection to his current post. He is expected to draw strong Democratic opposition.

KC WILDMOON

Nancy's tax-free status in peril?

Atlanta—Has Nancy Schaefer's Family Concerns, Inc., a non-profit organization formed by the anti-gay/lesbian activist to promote "family values," put its tax-exempt status in jeopardy by getting involved in a political campaign?

That question is being raised after Schaefer, in a Family Concerns' newsletter sent last month, requested "prayers, volunteers and financial support, receptions and fundraisers" for her bid for the Republican nomination for lieutenant governor.

"Charitable organizations cannot be involved in any type of political campaign," said Eric Roberts, a spokesperson for the IRS in Atlanta. He said, however, that the regulations do not preclude groups from providing voter guides on various candidates or driving voters to polling places.

Roberts said he could neither confirm nor deny that an investigation of Schaefer and Family Concerns was being conducted by the IRS. But he did say that IRS regulations were "pretty specific" concerning involvement of tax-exempt organizations in political campaigns and that one IRS regulation specifically prohibits "publishing or distribution of statements" regarding campaigns for office.

Roberts said that an investigation of the allegations, if proven, could result in a warning, a fine or revocation of tax-exempt status. In the case of a fine or warning, he said the matter would not be made public. But if an organization's tax-exempt status is revoked, it would be a matter of public record.

KC WILDMOON

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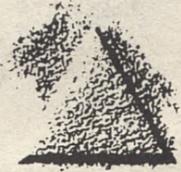
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SC shows its Pride this weekend

Columbia, S.C.—South Carolina's fifth annual Gay and Lesbian Pride March kicks off Saturday, April 16 at 1 p.m. from the corner of Main and Calhoun streets in downtown Columbia.

Led by the North Carolina Pride Marching Band, marchers will travel down main street to the South Carolina State House, where they will hold a rally on the steps. Scheduled speakers include Mandy Carter of the Human Rights Campaign Fund and Mel White, a former ghostwriter for the religious right who is now dean of

the MCC Cathedral of Hope in Dallas, Texas.

During the rally, a special program will commemorate Bill Dalton and Bill Edens, both of whom died recently. Dalton was treasurer of the South Carolina Gay and Lesbian Pride Movement and Edens was executive director of Palmetto AIDS Life Support Services.

Following the rally, a celebration will be held at The Edge, 1801 Main St., which will feature local and regional performers.

Anti-gay measure fails in Tifton

Tifton, GA—The Tifton City Commission has passed on a chance to officially condemn homosexuality, as the Cobb County Commission did last August.

In February, Tifton resident Tom Spampinato presented a Cobb-styled resolution to both the Tifton City and Tift County Commissions. Both bodies tabled the measure during February and March meetings, but at the April 4 meeting of the City Commission, Commissioner Jamie Cater made a motion to accept the anti-gay resolution. But none of the other four

commissioners fell in behind him.

"It died for lack of a second," said City Clerk Eloise Scarborough. "It's off the table for now."

Scarborough said that it is possible the resolution could be resubmitted at a later date.

The Tift County Commission may consider the resolution at its April 11 meeting, although that 7-member board has also seemed unwilling to consider it.

KC WILDMOON

Savannah gays meet with Kingston

Savannah—Members of First City Network, Savannah's lesbian/gay organization, met with U.S. Rep. Jack Kingston last month to discuss issues of concern to lesbians and gay men in Georgia's 1st Congressional District, which includes much of the Georgia coast.

FCN board members Wilson Huff, Mark Krueger and Kiki Terry met with Kingston, a Savannah Republican, and told him that gay men and lesbians had similar concerns to those of heterosexual constitu-

ents. They also discussed violence against the community and the gays-in-the-military issue.

According to an article in FCN's newsletter, The Network News, Kingston listened politely to the board members and then brought up "theology."

"[Kingston] made no promises to our community, but suggested we keep the dialogue open," said the Network News article.

Student who made threatening calls should be expelled, gay group says

Tampa, FL—A University of South Florida gay/lesbian student group wants a sophomore expelled and prosecuted for leaving more than a dozen threatening calls on the group's answering machine.

A complaint against USF student Nelson Trujillo was submitted to the Hillsborough County State Attorney's Office last week, said Pam Morris, co-chairwoman of the 50-member USF Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Coalition.

Morris said the calls began in October and some simply left the message "Die, faggots, die." Other calls predicted the murders of 10 gay men, five lesbians and two bisexuals in Tampa during the month of April.

Trujillo, a former columnist for USF's student newspaper, The Oracle, admits calling the coalition. He said he was simply expressing his outrage toward gays and lesbians in an exercise of free speech.

"I didn't mean it like it was going to happen for real," he said Monday. "When you're angry, you tell someone you're go-

ing to kill them. But that doesn't mean you're going to do it."

Gay behavior is the source of his rage, said Trujillo, 20. He blames gays for making AIDS a threat to heterosexuals but declined to discuss his feelings in detail.

Threatening telephone calls can be second-degree misdemeanors punishable by as much as \$500 in fines and 60 days in jail, said Paul Duval Johnson of the Hillsborough State Attorney's Office, which will consider the complaint. Florida's hate crime law might apply in this case, he said. If so, it would make the charge a first-degree misdemeanor and increase the punishment to as much as a year in jail and a \$1,000 fine.

USF's Student Code of Conduct defines harassment as conduct that creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment, while disruptive conduct includes violence or threats of violence against university people. Punishments range from reprimands to expulsions.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Court Says Scouts Can Bar Gay Leader:

A new California appeals court ruling that the Boy Scouts are not covered by California civil rights laws and can bar gays as scout leaders appears to be headed for the state Supreme Court. But the ruling, a 2-1 decision by California's 2nd District Court of Appeal, gives the scouts and other charitable organizations "free reign...to exclude blacks and women and Jews," according to Jon Davidson, an ACLU attorney arguing the case. The appeals court ruled that the Boy Scouts were a private membership organization, not a business, and were therefore exempt from the state's Unruh Civil Rights Act, which forbids discrimination by businesses.

Mississippi Lesbians Draw Praise In San Francisco:



Wanda and Brenda Henson, the lesbian couple who run a besieged women's camp in Ovett, Miss., received an official welcome and widespread support during a fundraising visit to San Francisco. "We're here to meet with family—with liberal-minded gay, lesbian and straight America in a place where they understand that lesbians don't recruit, don't mark children, and don't cause the divorce rate to go up," said Brenda Henson. The Hensons met with openly gay city supervisors Susan Leal and Carole Midgen and openly gay school board member Tom Ammiano at City Hall.

AIDS "Deathwatch" Set For New York City Hall:

People with AIDS will maintain a "deathwatch" outside New York City's City Hall for the next few weeks to urge Mayor Rudolph Giuliani not to make cuts in the Division of AIDS Services. Giuliani is examining whether part

San Francisco rolled out the red carpet for Wanda and Brenda Henson.

or all of \$22 million dollars—the part of the AIDS services' \$69 million budget not contracted out to service providers—should be retained or farmed out to other agencies. In late March, police arrested 45 people when more than a thousand attempted to cross the Brooklyn Bridge in a protest organized by ACT UP/NY against the possible cuts.

Utah Elects Gays To Republican Conventions: At least 10 members of the Utah Log Cabin Club have been elected as delegates to state and county GOP conventions. "The main goal is to get our party's ear, to let them know we're out here and who we are," said club president Chris Ryan, who was elected a delegate to the Salt Lake County GOP convention. "It's a first step, a tiny one, but it's a start." Republican traditionalists, however, blasted the gay elections. "We'll fight against these people to the bitter end," said Gayle Ruzicka, president of the Utah Eagle Forum. "They took us by surprise, but we'll be looking for them now.... They should support the platform, period. If they don't the party will rise up and do something about it."

On The Military Front: A federal judge in New York stopped the Pentagon from discharging six gay service members, signalling that the Military's new policy could face serious trouble in the court system. Judge Eugene Nickerson barred the Pentagon from dismissing or even investigating the six until their lawsuit is resolved. Meanwhile, in Colombia, the South American country's high court has ordered the military and police to lift their bans on gays. Gay activists there called the ruling "astonishing."

Countdown To Stonewall 25: The U.S. steering committee for Stonewall 25 held its final meeting in New York City last month, and group members are continuing negotiations with the City of New York on the parade route and final rallying point, which in all likelihood will be Central Park. The committee also refused to endorse a boycott of American Airlines after airline officials presented their plan for AIDS sensitivity training and offered financial support for Stonewall travel. Additionally, the committee refused demands to add "transgendered" into the official name of the commemorative march, fueling calls for civil disobedience by transgendered groups in protest. Elsewhere, the Lesbian Avengers and Dyke TV withdrew from a major Stonewall 25 fundraising event because they believed little money would be used for lesbians and lesbian issues. The DIFFA/Out magazine fundraiser will benefit AIDS causes.

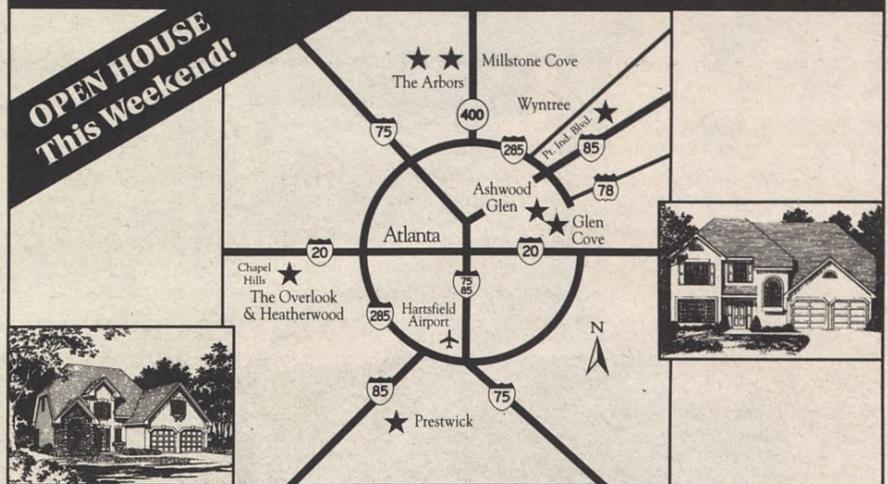
Furniture Chain To Air Gay Ads: Swedish furniture chain IKEA has launched a new series of four television commercials, one of which features a gay couple. The company believes the spot, which shows two men shopping for a dining room table, may be the first television spot used by a mainstream advertiser using gays. "The campaign not only illustrates diverse lifestyles...it reflects what's common to all of us: commitment to a relationship, the importance of family, and making a house a home," said Peter Connolly, the company's marketing director. The ads will not air before 10pm in the U.S. markets where IKEA has stores, a concession to Radical Right activists who oppose any representation of positive gay lives in the country's media outlets.

And...Luke Sissylag disrupted President Clinton's Easter Sunday church service to criticize the president's lack of action against AIDS...The German parliament has finally repealed Paragraph 175, the Nazi law that sent thousands of gay Germans to concentration camps...Three-quarters of Denver's lesbian and gay advisory board have quit, citing a lack of direction and political and emotional turmoil over Amendment 2.

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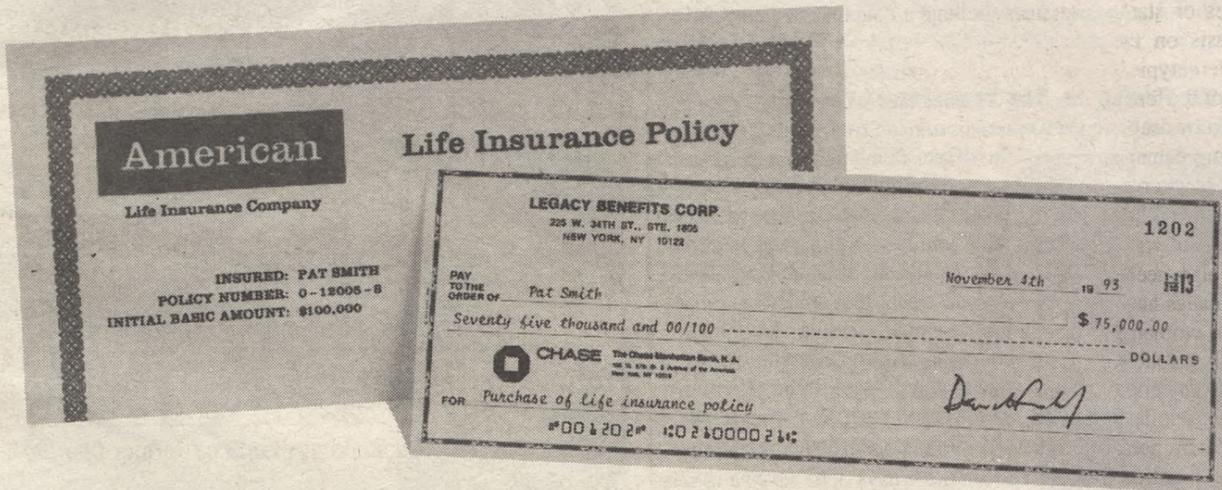
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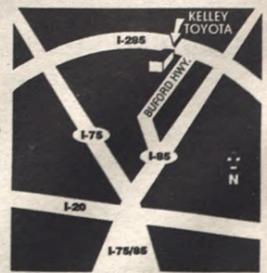
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The Politics of Drag

Continued from page 1

But it is exactly these types of statements—the strong emphasis on the value and importance of stereotypical female beauty—that sets off some of the feminists and lesbians who are offended by drag.

"Without a doubt, drag is doing damage to our progress," says Elizabeth Knowlton, a member of the Atlanta Lesbian Feminist Alliance. "Drag perpetuates female stereotypes. With glitzy dresses, makeup and high heels, drag performers are stating that females have to wear a costume to be identified as women."

"The concept of high heels by itself is derogatory to women. It's purposely designed to restrict movement. It pulls the Achilles' heel so that the more a woman wears a heel, the more she must continue the practice. Through models and advertising—and yes, through drag—we are telling women they must put on a costume before they can go to their workplace. Women are facing enough problems without men aping them."

"If we had white people putting on black face and using black slang to speak, I don't think people would think that's OK. The same concept can be applied to drag."

Knowlton, who has been a feminist for more than 25 years, admits that she has not studied drag. She saw her one and only show in North Carolina in the early 1970s. And that was a different kind of drag—men putting on dresses as a political statement without actually trying to create the illusion of female beauty.

"Back then, drag was a very radical thing. It still can be when men present themselves as men in dresses. Back in 1970 when men were doing that, they were putting themselves at considerable risk to make a statement. When men actually pass as women, however, the act loses its radical touch," says Knowlton.

Duncan Teague is a well-known activist from Atlanta's African American gay/lesbian community who has been performing drag for nearly 10 years. He agrees that some kinds of drag can be radical but dismisses the notion that drag as a political

statement belongs in the history books.

"Drag as entertainment and as a statement has always existed and continues to exist. The Radical Faeries are a group that's very political with drag. Of course, it might not be in vogue with the 'A' gays in the city. They seem to gravitate more toward drag for entertainment purposes," Teague says.

"No, I don't think political drag is as prevalent now as when the gender benders were being arrested years ago for walking outside a club in female clothing. But it's still around. I mean, hell, what are those kilt things? They're damn cheerleading skirts."

While Teague has minimized his drag appearances in recent years ("I'm primarily a benefit queen these days"), he says he is very sensitive and aware of his female supporters when he does don a dress.

"Putting on a dress and heels puts you in a very powerful position," he says. "I realize that I could say and do many horrible things in that situation that could damage women. I never want to do anything in drag that would make a woman's life worse. I did have a woman approach me once to thank me for not being discriminatory toward females. That made quite an impact."

Ramona Dugger, a heterosexual woman who sings at Charlie Brown's Cabaret, believes "the heaviest criticism [of drag] is coming from individuals who really have no concept of what drag is."

"People have a natural instinct to be afraid of what they don't know. This show is not a knock to womanhood. If they see this show, they'll realize that. Women here are presented in such a tasteful and talented way that I see it as the ultimate compliment to women."

"Feminists are greatly needed in our culture and should be proud of what they've achieved, but they cannot tear others down to further their cause."

Indeed, in some quarters, the views about female impersonation may be changing. Take, for example, Atlanta feminist Lee Hannah. She began changing her mind about drag when



Legendary Atlanta performer Charlie Brown

she read "Stone Butch Blues," author Leslie Feinberg's provocative memoir about the oppression of gender roles. Feinberg lived part of her life in male drag, passing as a man.

"Until I read Feinberg's book, I never understood drag or why men would want to be feminized," said Hannah. "The book allowed me to see someone who was butch by birth being suppressed by society in the 1940s and 1950s. We have to allow people to be who they are, regardless of gender. People have a right to wear and act whatever and however they want no matter what sex they were born. I can't stand in judgment of other people."

Hannah had never seen a drag show until recently in of all places, Toledo, Ohio. "I was amazed at how beautiful they were," she says.

Sherry Emory, co-owner of Charis Books, agrees that feminist furor in regard to drag may have faded a bit.

"I really have no strong feelings one way or the other on the subject of drag," says Emory. "I've been exposed to drag, having had friends who were into it, but to be honest it's not something that occupies a lot of time in my life. If that's something someone wants to do, that's fine with me."

Elizabeth Knowlton, however, remains unconvinced, and she believes that "the dialogue has to start with men talking to men about this issue."

"Women have worn themselves out talking to men about this issue. Men have to start telling other men that this behavior is not helping the women's movement, that in fact, it's very derogatory to it. Drag is helping to push women back into a place and era that we freed ourselves from a long time ago."

Two hours later after his makeup ritual began, the audience, both straight and gay, screams its approval when Charlie Brown takes the stage to perform a Reba McEntyre number that details a woman's flight to independence from an emotionally abusing man.

On stage, clad in a \$1,200 gold dress and auburn hair, Brown surveys the audience. "Welcome to my place. If you can't laugh at a fat, 44-year-old man in a dress, you can get the hell out now. You have no business being in Midtown after dark."

"And I'll tell you something else," Brown says, waving a fingernail at the audience before launching into the next number, "I'm only up on this stage tonight imitating the finest thing God put on this earth. And that's a woman."

Cover image is Raven, a performer at Charlie Brown's Cabaret

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NEXT WEEK

The Legacy of Washington

Last April, we were queer, we were there and we had a good time. On the anniversary of the largest civil rights demonstration in American history, Southern Voice looks at what, if anything, it actually accomplished.

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TAKING PRIDE IN OUR CULTURE

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A political schizophrenic always keeps 'em guessing

When it comes to men or political ideology, I believe there is one vital rule to live by—always keep 'em guessing.

Some weeks, usually after writing or running some little missive about how that Arkansas used car salesman we helped put in the White House is just really Richard Nixon with a better grade of mousse and a less well-developed sense of integrity, I'll hear from folks who view me as a Clinton bashing, conservative gay Uncle Tom. Other days, I get to hear from gay Republicans who view me, and by extension Southern Voice, as relentlessly liberal biased captives of the Democratic Party establishment.

Oh, so maybe *that's* what those people meant when they called me Sybil. Go figure.

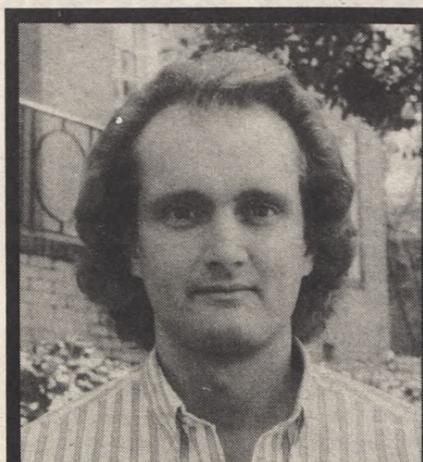
One thing I've learned as czarina of these Viewpoints pages is that gay and lesbian conservatives view the gay media in much the same manner that conservatives in general view the media in general; namely, as squishy-soft left-wing dupes who let their ideology cloud their judgment.

I will concede, and surveys done on this topic will bear this out, that media people tend to be further to the left than the general population and tend to identify themselves more often as Democrats than as Republicans. By and large, though, journalists work hard to prevent themselves from being too nice to anybody, even people with whom they find general political kinship. If you find that hard to believe, then I have two words for you—Whitewater.

On the other hand, there is also a segment of our community that subscribes to a particularly liberal political orthodoxy—and woe be unto him or her who treads outside of it. People who reflect this orthodox view probably do get more space in gay/lesbian newspapers than those who do not. The reason for that is simple—there are more of them and they are more prominent.

But that should not mean that we just dismiss the views of gay Republicans. For example, one point they often make is that the allegiance of gays and lesbians to the Democratic Party makes no sense because the Democratic Party has utterly failed gay and lesbian people.

They couldn't be more right. I must confess that I voted for Bill Clinton in 1992—although my everlasting shame is



Letter from the editor

by RICHARD SHUMATE

absolved somewhat by the fact that I did vote for Paul Tsongas in the primary. But when Slick Willie sold us out last July—with the considerable assistance of Georgia's own Senator Sam—it became painfully clear that while most Democrats may not be as openly hostile to the cause of gay and lesbian equality as most Republicans, they are just about as worthless.

The argument heard most frequently from people who say we should continue to support Clinton, even though he doesn't have a spine, is that he's better than the alternative. They also point out that he's appointed many queer folk to important federal posts. That argument, of course, ignores the fact that there's not a single out gay or lesbian in the Cabinet, which Clinton vowed would look like America, and that, with the exception of Roberta Achtenberg, most of these appointments could only charitably be described as low level. Most of his promises on HIV issues, including the Manhattan project to find a cure, have fallen by the wayside.

Quite frankly, I'm mighty tired of having to settle for the best of several piss poor alternatives. Gay and lesbian people have been able to create new paradigms for the way we

live, love and form families. Certainly, we could do the same for the way we vote.

But, my detractors will say, that ignores the reality that America has a two-party system that we must work within. To which I reply that this vaunted system appears to be crumbling (witness Ross Perot) and that instead of working within it, perhaps we should do what we can to push it over the edge. As Sybil might say, reality is a moveable feast.

Gay and lesbian Republicans like to point out that there are moderates within the Republican Party who are very homo friendly, such as Massachusetts Gov. William Weld, and would be good in the White House. True enough. But anybody who expresses gay-positive ideas prior to election has a snowball's chance in Guam of winning the presidency on the GOP ticket.

However, the point they make here might be extrapolated to a scenario in which a moderate GOP candidate without that baggage might be just what we need.

History is our guide here. Remember Richard Nixon? Despite the many grievous things he did, Nixon's big accomplishment was opening up Russia and China to the West. None of his Democratic predecessors would have dared to do so because they would have been carved up by the right. But Nixon, with his credentials as an anti-Communist witch hunter in the 1950s, was politically able to stand up and do what was in America's best interests without committing political suicide.

So perhaps it wouldn't be the end of the world if someone like, say, Dick Cheney or Jim Baker won in 1996. Maybe they would be able to keep their right flank covered and stand up for gay and lesbian rights as a Democrat could not. After all, when Cheney was defense secretary, his right-hand man (so to speak) was gay. That's an indication that his mind is at least partially open.

This is risky strategy, to be sure, but it's worth thinking about. At this point, it's not like we have much to lose.

But, hey, Janet Reno would still be an even better choice in '96. Or maybe Ted Kennedy. Or Jesse Jackson. Political schizophrenia, it seems, gives one a world of interesting options.

Always keep 'em guessing.

LETTER

Boycotts amount to adopting behavior of our oppressors

I am writing to offer a word of caution. In some recent issues of SoVo, there have been several letters about a certain rebel T-shirt and boycotts of Domino's Pizza and Florida [orange juice].

What I have read raises the concern that we must be very careful about what we as a people do and say.

We mustn't fall into the same behavior as our oppressors. If we are to have our fundamental rights respected—freedom of speech, expression, association, worship, etc.—we must allow others the same even when it repulses us. They are entitled to their opinions and beliefs, and we cannot infringe upon those rights.

The line is crossed when opinion leads to action or inaction detrimental to another group

of people. For instance, indicting Cobb County as a whole for the actions of the commission. By not acting to rescind the hateful measure, it is condoned.

As for [orange juice], the citrus association is not purposely attacking us with its spokesperson. Rush Limbaugh has only given us his opinions, not raised any armies as did Anita [Bryant]. The citrus association is only guilty of bad taste, in my opinion. We don't expect straight people to stop buying flowers if a gay activist were to promote the floral industry.

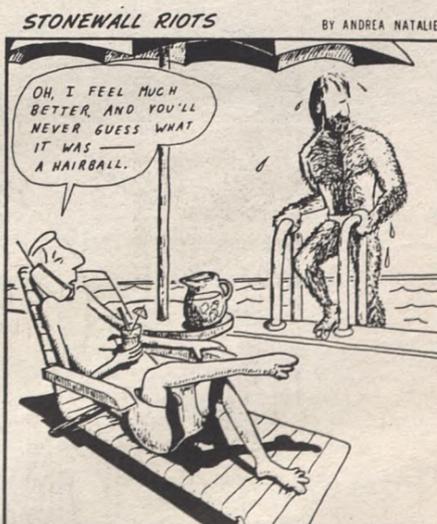
As for the T-shirt, the gentleman who crossed a room to take exception to a man's choice of clothing infringed his freedom of expression. Had the man asked his opinion about the shirt, the situation would change.

We must be ever so careful that we do not become the abuser and let emotion or alcohol cloud our judgment. Remember: Do unto others as we would have done unto us, not do unto them before they do unto us.

R. Craig Shaw
Atlanta

SEND US A LETTER

Southern Voice welcomes your point of view. Letters to the editor should be no longer than 200 words and must include your name, address and daytime phone number. Names can be withheld on request, but anonymous letters are not accepted. We reserve the right to edit or reject any submission. Send letters to: Southern Voice, P.O. Box 18215, Atlanta GA 30316. Or fax them to the attention of Richard Shumate at (404) 876-2709.



Not too much to ask to keep my memories in my drawer

There she sat, coiled in an edge chair two rows from the back. Mark David Chapman in dyke's clothing. Waiting to strike.

It was a festive night for the rest of us. A Cris Williamson/Tret Fure concert 12 years in the remake. A full dozen years since the top of the line had come to the bottom of the East Coast. And we were revved for the experience. Psyched and sold out.

Women and a few men gathered outside the Ft. Lauderdale UU church two hours early. Even though the sold-out status meant that everyone already had a ticket, the stadium seating meant that front row center was up for first-come, first-served grabs.

Security was tight. No badge, no early entry. Order of the day was stand and sweat. It was afternoon in the March South Florida 80-degree sun. Summer air would be impossible to breathe if this day was our indication. Still, many managed to make it more interaction than a trial.

It wasn't anybody's fault this was holy week at Alamo rental cars. It couldn't be helped that our artists were made to stand in a line of their own at the car counter raising holy hell with our schedule. This was Cris Williamson, the songstress of early lesbian evolution, and she would be worth the wait.

Then everyone streamed inside. Stadium seated. Air-conditioned. Breath-held for a first chord promising energy and unity and full blown lesbian nostalgia.

Sure, Cris and Tret would play their new ones. Everyone expected it. In fact, Cris announced it at the beginning, right after she embarrassed the kids with the Kodaks into putting them away. "Make no mistake." She



Cleaning Out My Closet

by SHELLY ROBERTS

seemed to be saying. "These are my newest gifts to you. These are who I have been lately. These are who Tret and I have recently become, and here are a few thoughts and possibilities we are anticipating for the future."

And near to the back she sat. Still. Hinkley in hiding. Tucking her rattle closely, tightly, silently, keeping her coiling to herself.

We heard about the adventures in Russia where Tret and Cris were cheered for their bravery. "Bravery?" they asked. "Da," replied the Russians. "To be two women who have traveled without men. Da." Da. What other kind of thinking would you expect from a country which equated the word for "yes" with the universal baby sound for father?

"Da." Tret said. And "Ha," we responded,

chortling our sharing of the secret.

"We had them singing 'Song of The Soul' in a Russian tavern. They know a drinking song when they hear one," Cris reported, swinging her imaginary stein in a chanty rhythm to which we all silently supplied the words "...why don't you sing this song?...why don't you..." In the trailing silence, you could hear the hearts collectively sighing for the want of the rest of that song's singing. But no one said a word, leery of Cris' legendary disposition, an artist who offers her gift in the wrapping of her own choosing. Three hundred and thirty eight of us welcomed the new gifts. Such lyricism. Such new depth. So many roads traveled since the beginning. Twenty years we have all been changed. Fourteen years Tret had been transformed from raw rock and roller to musical partner. Together there were changers, changed. And we were thrilled to be witnesses. For nearly two hours.

Only one of us was instead impatient.

"For the last song..." Cris hesitated for effect. And the crowd hoped hard for something at last familiar to tie present time to a past with a Cris Williamson background sound track.

And she struck.

"Sing the old ones. Not all of this trash," she spewed. Nasty. Demanding. Loud. No gentle, tolerable request. "I bought a ticket. I paid the price. I stood in the sun. I own you. Give me what I order." She seemed to scream in a venomous accusation and requirement. Outrageous and out of place. It was the group's collective hope grown cancerous. To disrupt. Affront.

Breaths were held. How would Cris deal with this damaged moment. Leave the stage?

Forever? Would South Florida have to wait for a very cold day till she ever came back? Would Cris think that the viper was us? Would she hold it against us? Would the serpent never shut up? She went poisonously on until the producer approached and required silence.

We were all very proud of Cris Williamson that night, aware of her reputation earned for intolerance with the lesser folk. Earned at a cost of keeping to herself the pieces demanded by ravenous fanatics. Cris stayed. And stood her ground and processed us all through the worst of it. Explaining love, and gifts, and 17 albums since "Waterfall." Then she sang it away. As she had been about to, before she was so rudely interrupted. And we sang too. Some small satisfaction hovering above the lingering disquiet.

So the 'Song Of The Soul' that Cris Williamson sings now is with Tret Fure. And the sound is more fully textured than when it began. And if she asks me to keep my memories in a drawer, is that so much to ask? After all, they are my memories and my drawer. And she has new memories to offer.

If you're reading this, Cris, thanks for the memories, and I accept the new gifts. And in the aftermath, I can only hope that you will not judge the most of us for the least of us. That, once again, all of us are not going to have to be represented by the one of us who was the worst of us. I hope you will come back to sing your songs for us again.

And we can sing for a long, long time.

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GUEST COLUMNIST

Where do we go to look for books that speak to our kids

by LESLEÁ NEWMAN

Recently during a trip to New York City, I found a wonderful-looking children's bookstore in Chelsea, the neighborhood in which I was staying. I wandered about for a while, browsing through an impressive selection of children's literature, and then something struck me.

Where were the books for our kids? Casually, I wandered over to the cash register and asked the clerk if he carried "Heather Has

Two Mommies." The following conversation ensued (keep in mind this is New York City, home of the famous Rainbow Curriculum we're talking about here, and Chelsea is très gay, just a hop, skip and a jump from Greenwich Village).

"Do you carry 'Heather Has Two Mommies?'"

"No we don't."

"Any particular reason?"

"We don't carry those kind of books."

"Oh really?" I feigned surprise. "And what

kind of books, pray tell, are we talking about here?"

"Oh you know," the clerk said, "books about issues or special problems."

"Oh, I see." I let my eyes sweep the room. "So, you don't have any books in this entire store that touch on any issues or problems?"

"Um, well..." the clerk began to stammer. "We do, but those books have the issue woven into the story."

"Exactly like 'Heather Has Two Mommies,'" I pointed out.

"Right," he agreed, "but we only carry books that are accessible to all children."

"All children," I repeated, trying to sound impressed. "Well, that would certainly include the children of lesbian and gay parents, now wouldn't it?"

"Yes, well..."

I let the clerk sweat for a minute before I changed tactics. "Tell me," I asked, "have people come in and asked for 'Heather Has Two Mommies?'"

"Oh, yes. Many people."

"And you don't stock your shelves according to public demand." A statement, not a question.

"We're happy to special order the book." The clerk visibly brightened. "Would you like me to order one for you?"

"No, thank you," I said, and turned my back, pretending to continue my browse. But my heart wasn't in it anymore, so I left the store and joined a group of gay men across the

street admiring the windows in Barney's. After a few minutes I wandered down the street in search of a cappuccino and a quiet place to think. (The former was easier to find than the latter.)

Why didn't I scream at the clerk, "Oh, so you'll take our money, but you won't risk taking the heat by displaying our books?" Why didn't I go into a Homophobia 101 schpeel that would rattle his ears right off his head?

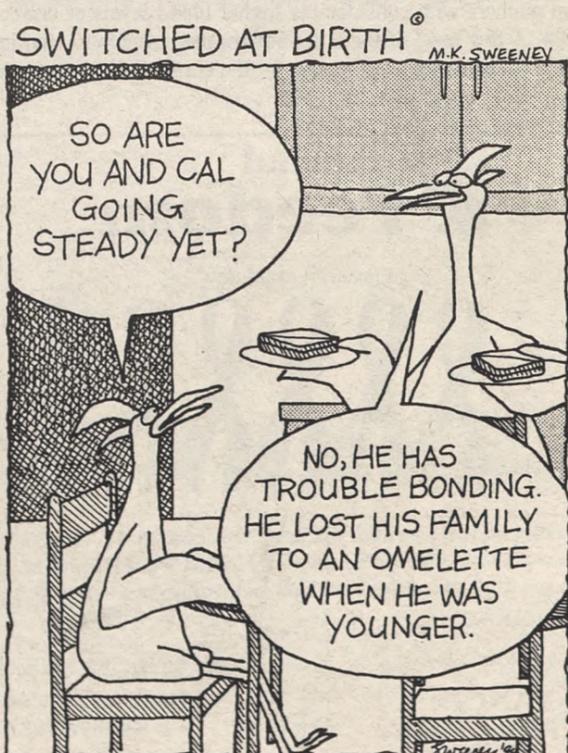
Because, I mused, as I wiped steamed milk off my chin, anger was not the emotion that engulfed me as I stood in that bookstore. What

I felt was sadness. I felt sad, like a child who has just been told "we don't want you to play with us," which is a refrain I heard over and over as a child, though not because my parents were gay.

The reason isn't important. What's important is that every child deserves to feel that he or she has a rightful place in the world, and our children certainly would not feel welcome in this particular bookstore. And that makes me sad.

And angry. And even more determined to continue writing books about lesbian and gay families. For our children, that they may grow up feeling safe, wanted, and welcome everywhere.

Lesleá Newman is a columnist and author of children's books, including "Heather Has Two Mommies." She lives in Northampton, Mass.



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AIDS

BRIEFS

by Bruce Mirken



New Combination Treatment?: A recent and little publicized Italian study, published in the International Journal of Clinical and Laboratory Research, indicates highly encouraging results from use of a new three-drug combination treatment: Thymosin alpha 1, AZT and alpha interferon. Thymosin alpha 1 is a hormone naturally produced by the human thymus that affects the development and maturation of T-cells. It has been looked at a bit as an AIDS treatment, but hadn't previously been given to people in this particular combination. The Italian study was divided into four arms consisting of seven patients each, with each arm receiving a different treatment regimen: AZT alone, AZT plus alpha interferon, AZT plus thymosin alpha 1, or AZT, thymosin alpha 1 and alpha interferon. The patients had T-cell counts of between 200 and 500 at the start of the trial. The difference in the groups after one year was startling: The AZT-only group lost T-cells overall, with only one of seven patients showing a small gain. Both 2-drug groups showed relatively little change, though they did a bit better than those taking AZT alone. But those receiving the AZT, thymosin alpha 1 and alpha interferon combination showed dramatic rise in T-cells, from an average of 309 to an average of 496. All seven had at least some increase, and the five patients who stayed on the three-drug treatment for another six months continued a sustained, though more gradual, increase. The patients' T-cells also showed somewhat increased function. A number of cautions need to be kept in mind when interpreting these results, observers note. First this was a very small study. Second, the trial was not "blinded," meaning that both researchers and patients knew who was getting which treatment, so it is possible that the expectations of either the doctor or the patients might have had some influence on the results. Third, because all participants were relatively healthy at the start and nobody developed any AIDS-defining infections, it was not possible to determine if the increased T-cells translated into actual improvements in health or survival. Still, the researchers strongly advocate further research on the AZT/thymosin alpha 1/alpha interferon combination. Such a trial, they indicate, is getting underway in Italy, but so far there has been no move to do such testing in the U.S.

Alternative Treatment Information: The Winter 1993/1994 issue of Treatment Issues, the treatment newsletter published by New York's Gay Men's Health Crisis, contains an extensive review of alternative HIV/AIDS treatments. It includes an article by the late Jon Greenberg detailing the difficulties involved in getting researchers to study such things as herbs and nutritional supplements as well as the problems involved in making treatment decisions when you don't have a lot of data to go on. Other articles walk the reader through the details of a great many alternative treatments commonly used by people with AIDS, summarizing what is known and what remains to be known about them. *For information about Treatment Issues, contact GMHC Medical Information, 129 W. 20 St., New York, NY 10011*

HIV and Pregnancy: AZT, given to an expectant HIV-infected mother during pregnancy and then to the newborn infant for the first six weeks after birth, seems to reduce mother-to-child transmission of the virus by about two thirds, according to preliminary results of a government-sponsored study released in late February. The National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases considered the data important enough to issue a special "clinical alert" to medical practitioners. Many questions remain, however, as the study was not set up to determine whether it was the treatment during pregnancy or the treatment after birth which did the trick, or whether both are necessary. Also yet to be determined are any potential long-term effects to either mother or baby from AZT therapy during pregnancy. Meanwhile, on a related front, Swiss researchers have found a way to gauge the likelihood of a pregnant woman passing the virus on to her new child. When they compared HIV-infected mothers whose babies became infected to those whose babies were born uninfected, they found that the infants who stayed HIV-free came from mothers with considerably higher blood levels of antibodies to the HIV protein known as p24. A low level of these antibodies, the researchers say, indicates a higher risk of mother-to-child transmission. The reason for the correlation remains unknown.



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Doctor who falsified breast cancer data responds to critics

Montreal, Quebec—A Canadian surgeon, meeting reporters Mar. 31 for the first time since a scandal broke over data he falsified in breast cancer studies, said he only wanted the best care for his patients.

Dr. Roger Poisson said none of his patients suffered because he did not adhere to what he called overly strict research rules.

On the contrary, many of them benefited from experimental treatment of the clinical studies, and he felt unable to refuse some of them who met nearly all of the criteria for participating, he told a news conference.

Poisson's false data were included in four breast cancer studies that compared different methods of treating the disease.

The study concluded that lumpectomy and radiation are as effective against breast cancer as mastectomy. In lumpectomy, only cancerous lumps and some nearby lymph nodes are removed. In mastectomy, the whole breast is removed.

The National Cancer Institute in the United

States has said independent analysis shows Poisson's data, a fraction of the total in the studies, do not affect the fundamental conclusions.

An investigation by a U.S. government agency last year reported Poisson, of St. Luc's Hospital in Montreal, falsified data he submitted on 99 patients. His data were included in four studies that compared different methods of treating breast cancer.

Poisson's falsified data were discovered in 1990. But the case did not gain widespread attention until the results of the investigation were reported March 13 in a Chicago Tribune article.

Poisson apologized for tarnishing the reputation of Canadian research.

"I'm apologizing to my colleagues, in hindsight, knowing what I know now. But you see, it was not meant to harm the patients or the studies," he said.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Inventor agrees not to use machine to treat diseases

Salt Lake City, UT—The inventor of the so-called AIDS Treating Machine has agreed not to use his device or the solution it produces to treat people for any disease.

In a deal struck with the Utah Division of Occupational and Professional Licensing, Tim Themy-Kotronakis also agreed that a qualified physician could use the machine or the solution only with FDA approval.

The West Valley City businessman began aggressively promoting his device last year, advertising it in specialty journals and magazines and distributing fliers touting its alleged health benefits.

In November, the licensing division accused Themy-Kotronakis of practicing medicine and pharmacy without a license. Themy-Kotronakis, president of a West Valley City company that manufactures devices to treat industrial effluent, agreed to the licensing division's conditions while denying the state's allegations that he practiced medicine and pharmacy without a license.

Themy-Kotronakis also is in trouble with the FDA, which is seeking to keep him from

doing clinical studies or marketing his device without FDA approval. A pending motion in U.S. District Court for Utah has not yet been scheduled for a hearing.

Court documents filed with the motion include an affidavit from a top FDA official who described Themy-Kotronakis' health claims about his machine as "purely fraudulent."

The device is a cylindrical tank outfitted with two electrodes that shoot current through ordinary salt water, producing a solution containing oxygen gas, hydrogen gas and sodium hydroxide, which in concentrated form is lye.

Along with its motion, the FDA filed correspondence from Themy-Kotronakis that indicated he offered to sell the device to an Anchorage medical clinic. He also proposed to the Iraqi ambassador that he open a clinic in Baghdad, at a cost of \$10 million, but that "the fees will be high, leaving you and me plenty!"

ASSOCIATED PRESS

CDC says TB is on the decline

The number of new tuberculosis cases nationwide dropped five percent last year, the New York Times quoted a federal health official as saying.

New cases fell five percent from 1992, when 26,673 new TB cases were reported, said Dr. Kenneth Castro, who heads the Division of Tuberculosis Elimination at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Final TB figures for 1993 won't be released until next month, he said.

Castro credited effective TB prevention efforts with the decline, but stressed that, "We

must not be lulled into complacency by these figures."

He spoke at a mid March press conference at which New York City health officials said new TB cases there fell 15 percent from 3,811 in 1992 to 3,234 in 1993. The city spent \$40 million last year to control the spread of TB.

HIV-infected people are more likely to contract TB than the general population. Last year, the CDC added TB to its definition of AIDS.

WASHINGTON BLADE

Average age of PWAs has dropped, stats show

The average age of people with AIDS dropped from over 30 in the early 1980s to around 25 by 1990, according to an analysis by scientists at the National Cancer Institute (NCI).

The researchers said their analysis of AIDS statistics also showed that AIDS takes longer to develop in younger people. Among people who became HIV-infected at age 20, symptoms took

an average of 12 years to appear, compared to just eight years among people who became infected at age 40.

Reporting in the March 17 issue of the New England Journal of Medicine, the NCI scientists also estimated that 50,000 to 61,000 people become infected with HIV every year.

WASHINGTON BLADE

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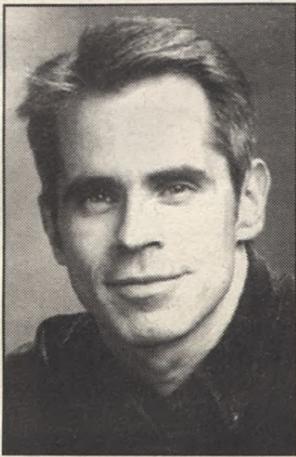
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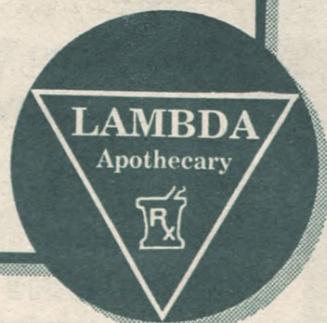
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Oral rinse possibly effective against Candida infection

An inexpensive over-the-counter oral rinse may provide relief for patients infected with Candida. In an independent in vitro study, Verdesol proved effective against Candida krusei, even at high dilution ratios. According to researcher and microbiologist Dr. Colin Franker Jr., this is significant because Candida krusei often infects immunosuppressed patients and can become resistant to drug therapy.

Verdesol has been marketed in limited geographic areas among dental professionals for over 40 years as an antibacterial, antifungal rinse. Unlike many better known oral products, Verdesol contains no alcohol, an ingredient that destroys tissue and causes a burning sensation when used. "Verdesol is unique because it provides healing without side effects," states dentist Dr. Brad Eli, "There are no known long or short term side effects and patients describe a soothing sensation when they use this product."

Many health professionals working with AIDS patients have been looking for an effective means of controlling fluconazole-resistant Candida and providing relief for oral sores.

In 1990, a 21-day comparative study was run at Loma Linda University using Verdesol, Peridex, and a placebo. The results showed that Verdesol exhibited strong antibacterial action against four different bacterial strains.

Then early in 1993, Dr. Colin Franker Jr. Ph.D., professor of microbiology at UCLA, ran a series of tests on Verdesol and Peridex, studying the effects of each product on Candida krusei. During the test, Franker found that, even at dilution levels of 1:3200, Verdesol remained effective against Candida, and far outdistanced Peridex in the study.

Dr. Eli points out what he sees as one of the largest advantages of Verdesol, in comparison with other available treatments. "Verdesol contains no alcohol or other harsh chemicals like other products. This means that a patient using it, one who had open lesions in their mouth, could use Verdesol without any pain. Anyone who has had these sores will know how painful they can be."

Another important consideration about Verdesol is that the savings are considerable. Fluconazole, and Clotrimazole, also prescribed as Mycelex, are prescription drugs that can cost a patient from \$25 to over \$200 a week, where Verdesol costs from \$7 to \$14 a week.

Verdesol is nonprescription and available in most pharmacies, supplied by McKesson Corporation, and Bergen Brunswig. The Verdesol Company is also willing to supply any AIDS clinics, hospices, hospitals, or doctor's offices with free samples by calling (408) 270-0366.

SAN FRANCISCO SENTINEL

People with HIV/AIDS welcome in Japan

Officials of the Japanese Ministry of Health and Welfare have emphasized that people with HIV or AIDS are welcome in Japan, and that no visitor to Japan, regardless of length of stay, will be denied entry to the country because of HIV status.

Yokohama, Japan, is the host city of the Tenth International Conference on AIDS, to be held August 7-12.

"The contributions and perspectives of people with HIV or AIDS are essential to a successful AIDS conference, and those people are welcome in Japan," said Dr. Naoko Yamamoto, Deputy Director of the Infectious Diseases Control Division, Health Services Bureau, at the Japanese Ministry of Health and Welfare.

Dr. Yamamoto added that Japanese officials do not ask visa applicants about their HIV status or sexual orientation, and do not require them to take an HIV antibody test. "The policy applies regardless of length of stay, and it applies not only during the Yokohama conference, but at all times," Dr. Yamamoto said.

According to Ministry officials, Japan has

never denied access to any visitor or immigrant because of HIV or AIDS.

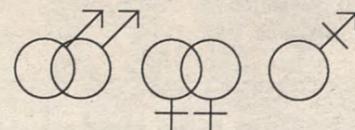
In a related matter, Dr. Yamamoto also stated that discrimination against people with HIV or AIDS in hotel accommodations is illegal in Japan. The Conference organizers have reserved 7,000 Yokohama hotel rooms for conference guests, and are providing AIDS education to hotel managers and employees.

"Education efforts are being specifically targeted for hotel managers and employees, to assure that guests living with HIV or AIDS are welcomed and always treated with respect," said Dr. Yamamoto. "Since AIDS cannot be transmitted through normal daily contact, turning down a guest because he or she has HIV or AIDS is not permitted under the law."

The ministry's Environmental Health Bureau has notified local governments and a national association for hotel standards that the Japanese Hotel Business Law does not allow discrimination against people with HIV or AIDS. In addition, the national association has been hosting seminars and lectures to ensure that hotel personnel are well-educated on AIDS issues.

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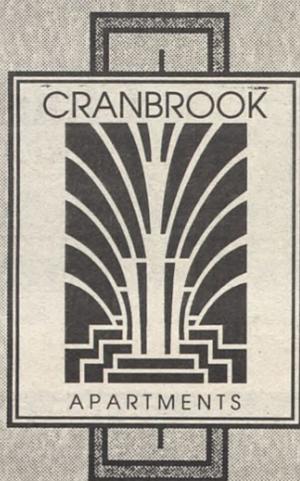
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Congressman grapples with revelations about his sexuality

Milwaukee, WI—U.S. Rep. Steven Gunderson's reluctance to discuss his sexual orientation suits the Republican chairman of his congressional district in western Wisconsin. But the decision gets mixed reactions among gays and lesbians.

"There's a fair number of people who will say, 'I really don't care what his orientation is as long as he continues to be discreet and doesn't advocate and doesn't become the spokesperson,'" said Doug Knight, who chairs the GOP in the state's 3rd Congressional District.

"Frankly I don't think it's any of my business whether he is [gay] or isn't," Knight said. "If he crosses that line, I and a lot of other Republicans in this area who are very loyal supporters of Steve Gunderson would take a step back, and I think he knows that."

Despite persistent reports that he is gay, Gunderson, a Republican who has served in the U.S. House since 1981, has regularly declined comment on his personal life. He plans to run for reelection this fall.

"Talking about, explaining or defending one's personal and private life under a public microscope is a violation of our guaranteed right to privacy," Gunderson said in a statement last September during debate over the Defense Department's policy toward gays and lesbians.

However, in a keynote speech March 12 at a fundraiser sponsored by the Human Rights Campaign Fund in Baltimore, he shared some personal experiences, mentioned a friend named Rob, their two dogs and a beach house they rented last summer.

"Like many of you in this room, we too have been touched by AIDS in the last year," he told his audience. "Two of our closest friends died from AIDS, and while for Rob and I this was the first personal loss from this tragic disease, it makes its impact no less painful to each of us."

Two weeks later, the issue of Gunderson's

sexuality came to the forefront when U.S. Rep. Robert K. Dornan, a strongly anti-gay Republican from California, cited Gunderson's HRCF speech during a House debate on a controversial amendment to an education bill that would have restricted what schools could teach about gays and lesbians.

In remarks he later withdrew from the Congressional Record, Dornan accused Gunderson of having "a revolving door on his closet."

"He's in, he's out, he's in, he's out," Dornan said. "I guess you're out because you went up and spoke to a huge homosexual dinner, Mr. Gunderson."

Gunderson declined to reply, saying he did not want to dignify Dornan's comments.

Tim McFeeley, executive director of the Human Rights Campaign Fund, said "the unique role he plays as a loyal Republican member of Congress is very valuable, not only in terms of the issues that are important to the lesbian and gay community which he helps us with, but also the perception of what is a gay or lesbian person."

"Too often people deal in stereotypes, and I think Steve Gunderson is very far from what most people stereotype gay people as being," McFeeley said.

Tanya Domi, legislative director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, called Gunderson "very sympathetic. His role as a Republican moderate can be extremely effective."

But Michael Petrelis of Queer Nation thinks Gunderson should be outspoken.

"He wants it both ways. He wants to say that he doesn't approve of being labeled. Wait a minute; you're labeled a Republican or a congressman or a Wisconsinite. What would be wrong with adding the 'gay' label to the list?" said Petrelis, who was part of a group of Queer Nation members who outed Gunderson in 1991.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Pride settles T-shirt lawsuit

Continued from page 3

this June."

But while the settlement clears the way for the 1994 Pride celebration, the agreement will require the Pride committee to come up with nearly \$60,000 by July 1, less than a month after the event. Where will that money come from?

Howard said the money will come from the expected profit of the 1994 Pride celebration.

He said a subcommittee of the main Pride committee produced a detailed business plan for this year's event, outlining "exactly how we expect to spend money and where it will come from," with supportive data to present to Screenpeace.

"Our budget [for '94] is \$85,000," he said. "We don't expect to spend a penny over \$85,000."

Howard added that the committee will be watching expenditures closely, making sure that budgeted amounts are not exceeded and guaranteeing the profit they hope to see at the end of the June event.

"Pride should be producing a very substantial profit," he said. "If the organization is being run properly, it should be left with quite a bit of change."

This year, that change is earmarked to pay

off the debt to Screenpeace. But in the future, such profits would be funneled back into community organizations.

"The plan calls for us to pay for Pride, pay the debt and then have a little left over for seed money for next year, which will be our 25th anniversary," Howard said. "The goal is that '95 will be the first year we can start making donations [out of profits]."

It's a tall order, Howard admits, but with a tighter control on expenses and sharp budget cuts—there will be only one stage this year, 3,000 T-shirts have been ordered instead of last year's 15,000, and the entertainment budget has been reduced—he believes the new business plan will work.

"Because of the debt, it's really made us focus on where the money is and how we spend it," he said. "Now the thing to do is not let all the work we put into the plan fade away. We're going to implement it."

Southern Voice could not reach Bart Hardison, owner of Screenpeace, for a comment in time for this issue. Hardison has previously said he took out a loan to cover last year's T-shirt order and the lack of payment had put him in a considerable bind.

KC WILDMOON

Campbell appoints advisory panels

Continued from page 3

Don George, the head of the HRCF's Federal Action Network in Georgia who is also involved in the Olympics Out of Cobb Coalition, agreed.

"I'll wait and see how these people function—if this is really an advisory board that has some input or if it's a paper advisory board," he said. "Each one of them is a very fine individual. It's the collective list I'm concerned about. I'll wait to pass judgement in about six months."

Local and national activist Pat Hussain, however, assailed the selection process, which was done within the administration. Campbell said the appointments came from a list of people he had come to know during his tenure on City Council.

"I'm very very concerned when a publicly elected official and the people who work for him create a process that is not public," she said. "They think they know who we are, but they can't...without opening it up for comment, asking for names."

Hussain said she was confident the people named to the board would be doing "the best that they can," but added that the city has not done "the best it can with the process without opening it up."

"I find fault with an administration that said, 'If I'm elected I will appoint an advisor,' and then didn't," she said.

McDonald said an agenda for the lesbian/gay panel will not be set until the group begins its regular meetings within the next few weeks. The board will meet on a monthly basis, with the mayor joining the meeting a minimum of once every quarter.

"One of the things [Campbell] is real interested in addressing is the difficulties in the black, white, Hispanic and Asian gay communities and the lack of communication," McDonald said. "And he wants groups from city government talking to them so they can get an idea of what city government does."

Out of the 19 members on the HIV/AIDS advisory board, only three are known to be living with HIV/AIDS. The list includes three corporate appointments, some from religious communities, a public school teacher and several from HIV/AIDS and healthcare organizations.

"Some [appointments] appear to be political appoints as opposed to practical appointments," said Mark King, executive director of the AIDS Survival Project, who was named to the panel. "But there are enough strong voices that we can do some decent advocacy."

While no one from his group was appointed to the board, Jeff Graham of ACT UP/Atlanta said he was "pleasantly surprised" with the appointments.

"I think it's a good group of people, very diverse," he said. "The people I know personally are very good people, very committed."

Graham did say he was concerned that the 19 members of the board would have some difficulties reaching consensus, and that he feared the group would "stand between the people demanding change and [Campbell's] office," but that he held out hope that would not happen.

Ivory Kimbrough, who will convene the board from her staff position, said the group's main focus would be in helping shape the city's policy on HIV/AIDS issues, but that, as with the gay/lesbian board, a clear agenda would not be set until the group begins meeting. She added that one of the first tasks for the group would be to set up a major conference addressing HIV/AIDS, probably in the fall. King said he thought the conference was a good idea.

"As I understand it, it's going to focus on business," he said. "To me that's great, be-



Pat Hussain says she's troubled by a selection process that was not public.

cause as service providers we don't do that. With the city taking the lead there, it is a great idea."

Graham said he hoped the new HIV advisory board would mean that the city would be taking steps to create an HIV-related policy, something he believes has been sorely lacking.

Maurice Franklin, a long time HIV/AIDS activist who recently returned to Atlanta from Washington, D.C. and was appointed to the panel by Campbell, agreed that more attention should be focused on the disease from the city.

"What I'd like to see happen is that the city does some HIV training within city departments and in the business community," he said. "I hope we can all get together and make some recommendations on policy to the mayor."

Franklin, who serves on the board of governors of the Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Forum, has nearly 10 years experience in HIV/AIDS-related matters, culminating last year when he was chosen to head the Whitman-Walker Clinic's Max Robinson Clinic for African-Americans in Washington. He left the clinic after admitting that he falsified some items on his resumé.

"I made a mistake and I feel like I paid for it," Franklin said. "It shouldn't have happened. But the breadth of my work in this community speaks for itself."

In addition to King and Franklin, others named to the HIV advisory board are: Dr. Kenneth Alexander of Antioch Baptist Church North; Dr. William Alexander of the Morehouse School of Medicine; Dr. Tom Comstock; Dazon Dixon of SisterLove, Inc.; Tom Ellicott of Ralston-Purina; Dr. Gerald Durley of Concerned Black Clergy; Cecelia Galvez of St. Joseph's Hospital's Hispanic Services; attorney Rick Glass; Onaje Lacy of Atlanta West; Leslie Levy of Jewish Family Services; Lindsey Lowdon, a public school teacher; Sandra McDonald of Outreach, Inc.; Enoch Prow, an executive vice-president of NationsBank; Margie Shannon of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference; Ava Diamond Suber, executive director of Project Open Hand; Debbie Thomas of the Georgia Women Preventing AIDS Campaign; and Ken Towns of the United Way.

Ex officio members are Sue Ellen Crosslea, acting director of the city's Office of Human Services; Angie Hammock from the federal Centers for Disease Control; Jo Kroger from the American Red Cross; Charles Nelson of the National Minority AIDS Council and the Food and Drug Administration's AIDS Drug Task Force; and Dorothy Triplett of the CDC.

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Miami hosts Southeast gay Jewish conference

Miami Beach, FL—The Southeastern Regional Conference of the World Congress of Gay and Lesbian Jews will be held April 29 to May 1 in Miami Beach.

Hosted by Congregation Etz Chaim, the conference will be held at the Ramada Deauville Beach Resort, just up the beach from South Beach. Lesbian, gay and bisexual Jews from around the Southeastern United States and Latin America are expected to attend.

The conference begins with a welcome reception late Friday afternoon, followed by Shabbat dinner and Friday night service led by Etz Chaim's spiritual leader, Rabbi Rachel Hertzman. A "creative" Saturday morning Shabbat service is followed by lunch and a series of workshops of gay and/or Jewish interest. Havdalah is followed on Saturday night with a gala banquet/ball and the Conference

ends on Sunday morning with a farewell brunch.

"We are looking forward to a sensational weekend," notes Ray Levi, president of Congregation Etz Chaim. "It has been 10 years since we hosted the last regional conference, and it was a truly unique experience. Not only will we be meeting gay and lesbian Jews from all over and perhaps renewing contacts with friends, but we will be sharing ourselves, our gayness and Judaism in a format designed to truly encourage openness, connection and awareness."

For more information, contact the S.E. Regional Conference in care of Congregation Etz Chaim, 19094 West Dixie Highway, North Miami Beach, FL 33180 or call (305) 931-9318.

Texas lesbians meet in San Antonio

San Antonio, TX—San Antonio's beautiful River Walk will be the setting for the Texas Lesbian Conference's seventh annual conference, scheduled for April 29 through May 1.

The conference, entitled "SALUD! Celebrating Our Community, Celebrating Ourselves," will be a multicultural event planned by San Antonio's culturally diverse lesbian community. Keynote speakers for the conference will be lesbian sex therapist JoAnn

Loulan and Linda Villarosa, senior editor at Essence magazine. The main entertainment will be comedian Marga Gomez.

Approximately 30 workshops will be presented, covering topics such as relationships, legal issues, lesbians in business, health, spirituality, multicultural issues and more.

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Marlon Riggs dies at 37

Filmmaker explored black gay life in the controversial "Tongues Untied"

Oakland, CA—Marlon Riggs, a professor and filmmaker who won Emmy and Peabody awards for his documentaries on African-American and gay life, died of AIDS last week. He was 37.

Riggs began making documentaries in 1982 after receiving his masters degree from Harvard University, and quickly gained national recognition, with several films aired by the Public Broadcasting System.

His best-known documentaries—the Emmy-award winning "Ethnic Notions" and "Color Adjustment," which won a Peabody—traced the media portrayal of blacks through U.S. history.

A public television documentary he produced, "Tongues Untied," about black gay men, was used by conservatives in 1992 as an example of the type of art they said the government should not fund.

Onetime presidential candidate Pat Buchanan used a snippet from the film in a

campaign ad showing gay men dancing in chains and leather straps.

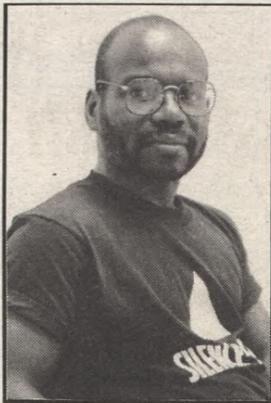
The ad accused former President Bush of allowing taxpayer financing of "pornographic and blasphemous art" through the National Endowment for the Arts.

Riggs was one of the youngest people ever tenured at the University of California at Berkeley in arts and humanities, said Tom Leonard, acting dean of the Graduate School of Journalism.

His mother, Jean Riggs, and companion Jack Vincent were with him when he died at his home, Leonard said.

Riggs also is survived by his father Alvin Riggs, and sister, Sascha.

ASSOCIATED PRESS



Marlon Riggs

Out book project seeks photos

Out Magazine is currently working on a book project on being "Out in America" and is looking for photographs of gay/lesbian life in Atlanta and from around the South.

The book will be a glossy color and black and white photo book containing images shot in the past two years. Themes are broad, so submit as much as you would like. The edi-

tors are also looking for snapshots and historical photographs.

Submissions should be made as soon as possible. Send your work to: Book Project, Out Magazine, 110 Greene Street, Suite 800, New York City, NY 10012. Or send it via Federal Express account #173503954 standard service.



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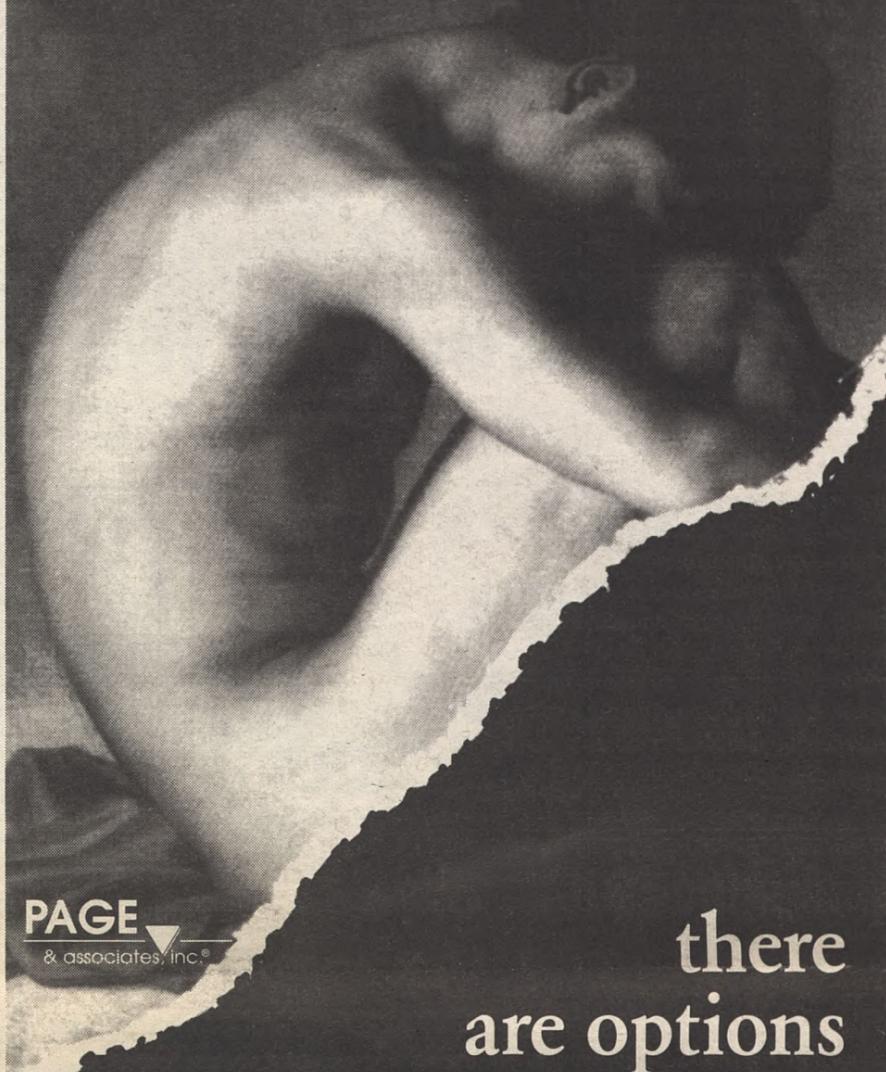


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OCCASIONS

ANNIVERSARIES

Bob and Brian are celebrating their one year anniversary on April 10.

Mona Love (née Bennett) celebrates her fifth anniversary as a SoVo photographer on April 14.

BIRTHDAYS

Happy belated birthday to Ananda Tuyes from Dana. Ananda was 22 on April 5.

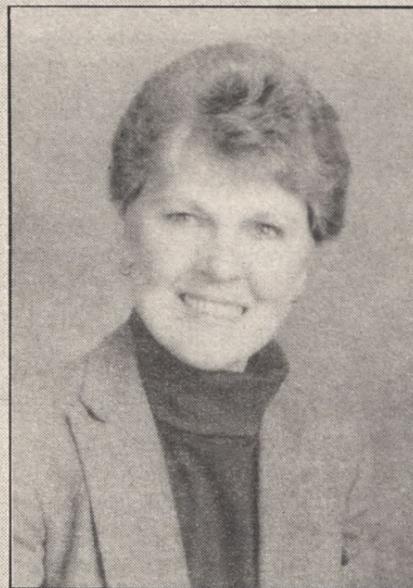
Lauren Elensky is thirtysomething on April 14.

Happy fiftysomething birthday to Arkie Clark, celebrating in high style on April 18.

A belated happy birthday to Mary Beth Wallace at the end of March.

GRADUATION

Sarah Timberlake proudly announced the graduation of her partner, M. Jean Tepsic, from New York University. The University will confer a PhD. with Distinction on May 12. Dr. Tepsic's dissertation has



Arkie Clark celebrates on April 18.

been nominated for the Phi Delta Kappa Phelps Award as the outstanding historic, philosophic or aesthetic document among this year's graduates.

When you've got a special occasion, send it to Southern Voice/Occasions, PO Box 18215, Atlanta, GA 30316, call (404) 876-0789, or fax to (404) 876-2709. Please include a phone number for verification.



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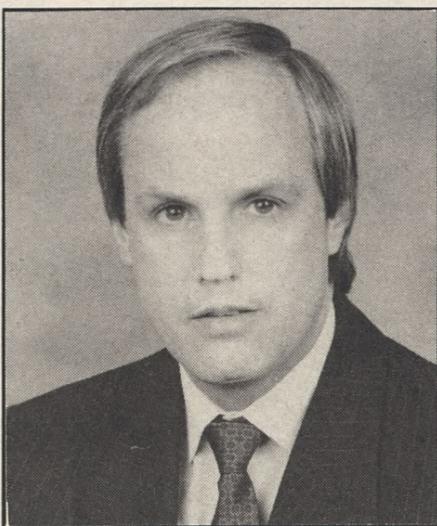
Treatment activist Martin Delaney to speak at Atlanta town meeting

The nations leading AIDS treatment activist, Martin Delaney, will be in Atlanta this week as part of a national series of town meetings on options for people living with HIV/AIDS.

"The Hope Tour: A Project Inform Town meeting," which features Delaney, will be Monday, April 18 from 7 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. in the Grand Ballroom of the Colony Square Hotel (at the corner of 14th Street and Peachtree Street in Midtown). The event is being sponsored by the AIDS Survival Project and AID Atlanta.

Delaney is the founding director of Project Inform, a community based, non-profit treatment and advocacy organization. The Hope Tour was initiated by Project Inform in an effort to stem the tide of hopelessness that followed the International Conference on AIDS in Berlin last June.

He will speak on a variety of issues regarding AIDS research and treatments, including early intervention of HIV disease,



Martin Delaney

immune system reconstitution and the future directions of HIV therapy.

The forum is free and open to the public.

AIDS 101 set for April 16

The next AIDS 101 Awareness and Action Seminar will be held Saturday, April 16 at the Emory University Student Center. The AIDS 101 Seminar is an all day workshop, beginning with registration at 8:00 a.m. and ending at 5:00 p.m., sponsored by AID Atlanta.

AIDS 101 Awareness and Action Sem-

nars provide information and access to services for anyone who wants to learn more about AIDS and HIV infection, and volunteer to help stop this epidemic. The cost to attend is \$15, and lunch is provided. For more information, call the AID Atlanta office at (404) 872-0600.

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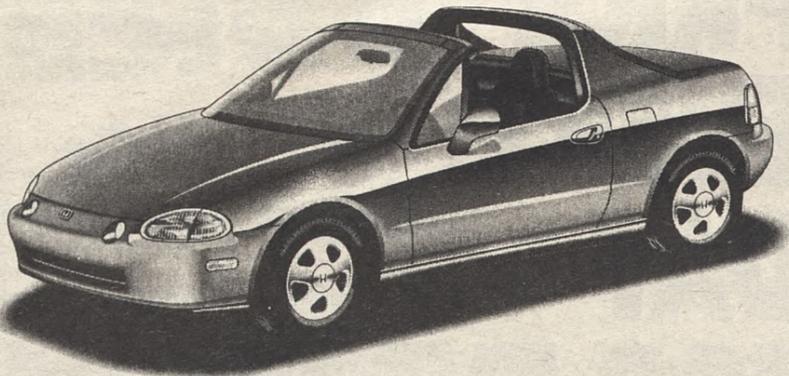


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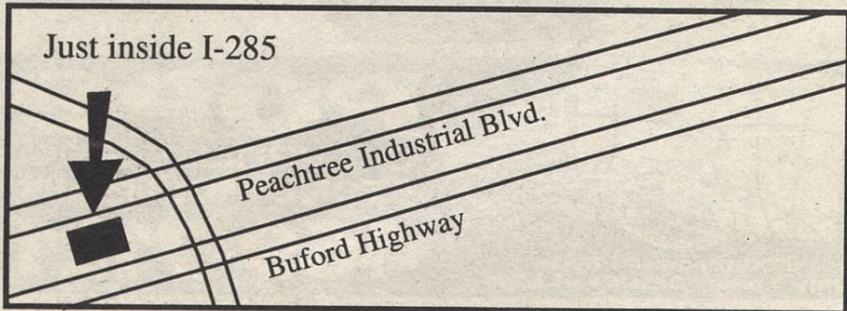
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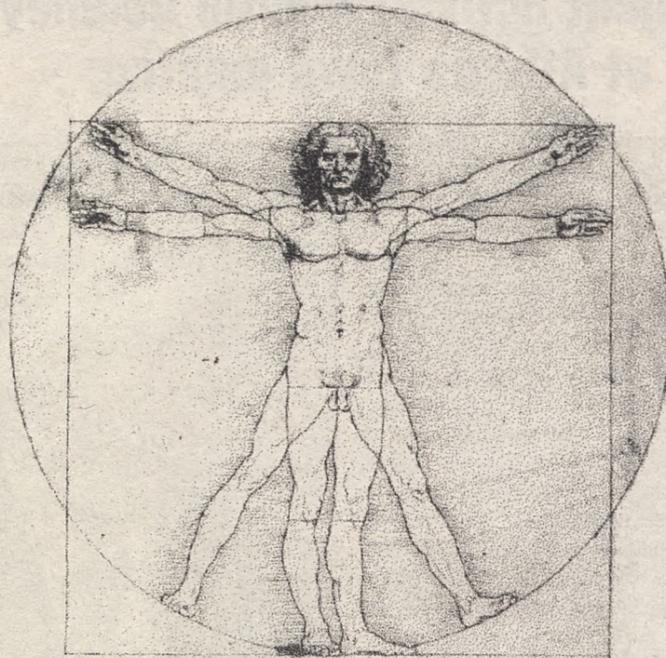
During my two days of business at your dealership, I was aware of two other same-sex couples making purchases. Thank you once again for your dealership's stance to be gay/lesbian sensitive and for providing quality gay personnel such as Julie Ellis.

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