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The Keep

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POST AMERIKAN



BLOOMINGTON-NORMAL

VOLUME 20

25¢

NUMBER 4

DECEMBER 1991/JANUARY 1992

AIDS *in a* NEW Package

*...after 10 years of queers
screaming their heads off,
mainstream Amerika prepares to lose
its first "hero" to AIDS...*



PAIGE 2



BLOOMINGTON-NORMAL

VOLUME 20, NUMBER 4

DECEMBER 1991/JANUARY 1992

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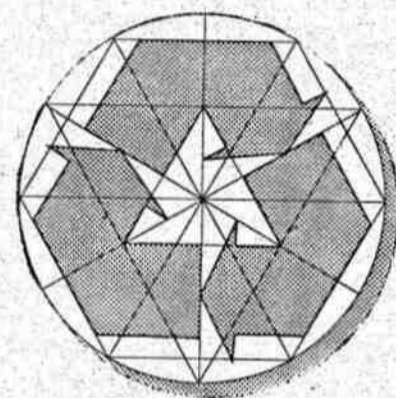
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About us

The *Post Amerikan* is an independent community newspaper providing information and analysis that is screened out of or down played by establishment news sources. We are a non-profit, worker-run collective that exists as an alternative to corporate media.

Published six issues a year. Staff members take turns as "coordinator." All writing, typing, editing, graphics, photography, pasteup, and distribution are done on a volunteer basis. You are invited to volunteer your talents.

Most of our material and inspiration for material comes from the community. The *Post Amerikan* welcomes stories, graphics, photos, letters, and new tips from our readers. If you'd like to join us, call 828-7232 and leave a message on our answering machine. We will get back to you as soon as we can. Don't worry if it takes a while—we don't meet every week.

An alternative newspaper depends directly on a community of concerned people for existence. We believe it is very important to keep a newspaper like this around. If you think so too, then please support us by telling your friends about the paper, donating money to the printing of the paper, and telling our advertisers you saw their ad in *Post Amerikan*.

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This issue of *Post Amerikan* is brought to you by . . .

John C. (coordinator), Carolyn, Deborah, Pete, John G., Scott B., Sue, Lisa, Christine, Bill, Bumper, Ralph, Vince AND ALL OUR WONDERFUL SUPPORTERS AND SUBSCRIBERS WHO SAVED OUR FINANCIAL BUTTS

Good numbers

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Deadline

The next deadline for submitting *Post* material is

JANUARY 27, 1992

Material submitted after the deadline will probably not get printed in the next issue.



Community News



Hug a tree for Shawnee

On November 13th, ISU's Student Environmental Action Coalition sponsored a presentation by Jan Wilder-Thomas of the Shawnee National Forest Freedom Fighters that brought the issues of habitat destruction and the National Forest Service's mismanagement of public lands to campus.

The lecture consisted of a history of the legislative struggles and protests leading up to the August/September timber cut in the Fairview portion of Shawnee National Forest. An incredibly beautiful and disturbing slide show followed. Numerous images of 100-year-old trees marked for the cut, orchids, ferns, songbirds, squirrels, butterflies, toads, and more were shown; the narration also noted the uncounted and unknown inhabitants of this hardwood ecosystem. The final slides revealed the areas devastated by the National Forest Service's and East Perry Lumber's actions. The resultant scenes were appalling.

Congressional activity concerning protection of Shawnee is rather sordid. Despite the public outcry and the Illinois Congressional delegation's efforts to stop the cut at Fairview, the Forest Service allowed the sale to proceed. In fact, there are now at least five hardwood timber sales on the Shawnee National Forest under contract to timber companies.

The Shawnee section of the House of Representatives Appropriations Bill 2686, passed last June, was compromised on September 19th, allowing timber sales to be remarked for smaller patch clearcuts. The June bill would have eliminated funding for ALL forms of clear-cutting "management." Several Senators from Missouri, Kansas and West Virginia were active in blocking this protective legislation.

In spite of the gravity of the situation, Wilder-Thomas was hopeful. In September, the Shawnee Solidarity Hunger Strike began in order to focus attention on the destruction of the only 100+-year-old hardwood forest ecosystem in the state of Illinois. ISU-SEAC organized a hunger strike from November 13-15 in solidarity with the Shawnee Freedom Fighters. Both groups hope to encourage additional actions to defend Shawnee, such as writing to those Senators who blocked Shawnee protection, asking U.S. Representatives and Senators to urge the Forest Service to buy back the outstanding timber sale contracts, and being there when the bulldozers come.

For more information, call SEAC members: Elaine at 888-4613 or Saad at 438-5765.

—crs



Classy Fried Ad

Classy fried ad: Art with Heart from nonprofit Syracuse Cultural Workers. 1992 Peace Calendar (by mail \$14.90 or 3/\$34.80), Solstice, Chanukah, Kwanzaa, Christmas cards: 200 posters; datebooks, buttons and more. Send \$1 for full color catalog. VISA/MC accepted 8am-10pm M-F EST, Sat 10am-5pm, to 12/21/91. SCW, Box 6367, Syracuse NY 13217. (315) 474-1132.

Faculty exhibit at ISU

Nearly fifty artists who are faculty members in Illinois State University's Department of Art are participating in an exhibition of their recent work at University Galleries. The ISU Faculty Biennial opened on November 19 and will continue through December 15. The exhibition is free and open to the public.

Faculty members of ISU's Art Department regularly exhibit their works throughout the country, and many have established well-deserved reputations as leading artists in their fields. Every two years the Faculty Biennial allows the Art Department's diverse faculty an opportunity to let the local public see the results of their creative research in the areas of drawing, painting, printmaking, sculpture, design, glass, metal, wood, fiber and photography. Also included in the exhibition will be works in the relatively new genres of installation art, video and computer art.

University Galleries is located in 110 Center for the Visual Arts building on the ISU campus, at the corner of School and Beaufort Streets. Call 309-438-5487 to arrange guided tours or for more information about exhibitions and programs.

Deborah Muirhead in Gallery II

University Galleries is hosting an exhibition of paintings by artist Deborah Muirhead, who is a graduate of both Illinois Wesleyan (BFA) and Illinois State (MA, MFA) Universities. The exhibition began on November 19 and continues through December 15, concurrent with the ISU Faculty Biennial. Muirhead visited ISU to give a presentation on her artwork on November 21.

An Associate Professor of painting at the University of Connecticut-Storrs, where she has taught since 1981, Muirhead has also distinguished herself as a painter. While almost completely abstract, her dark paintings (fifteen of which are included in this show) are rich both visually and metaphorically. Petroglyph-like symbols, wisps of branches or plants, lines and vessel forms appear against black, blue-green and grey backgrounds, like uprooted or ghostly images in search of place and meaning.

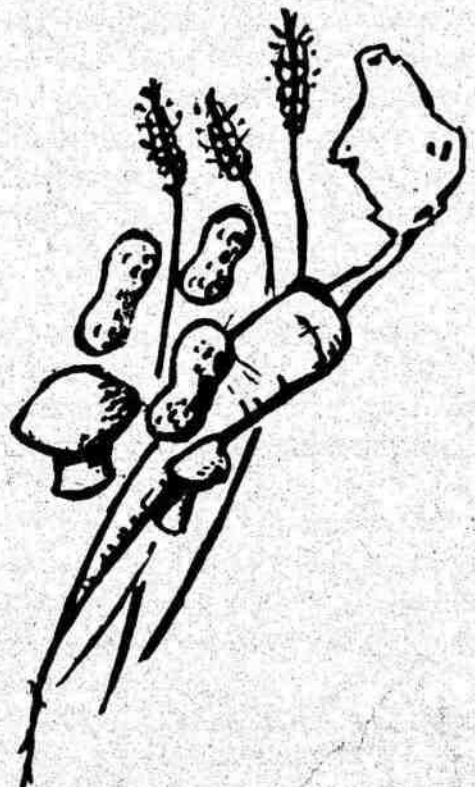
In an artist's statement for a 1991 show at the DeCordova Museum in Lincoln, MA, Muirhead states, "My work is inspired by my investigations of southern history, folklore and genealogy. Traveling south and rediscovering my southern roots provides my work with sources of inspiration. My intention is to create ambiguous forms which allude to things familiar yet allusive. Building these forms from layers of color, I place them in a luminous space resembling water, a symbol loaded with meaning in both African and African-American cultural history."

With a show of her photographs also at the McLean County Arts Center (through December 24) Muirhead's two local exhibitions provide a welcome opportunity to see the recent work of a one-time local resident and student. Both exhibitions of Muirhead's work are presented as part of the Bloomington-Normal Black Fine Arts Festival 1991-1992.

The Festival is funded and organized by member organizations of the B-N Black History and Culture Consortium: B-N Black History Project, David Davis Mansion, Illinois State University, Illinois Wesleyan University, McLean County Arts Center, and the McLean County Historical Society at the Old Courthouse. This project is funded in part by local regrating funds and the Illinois Arts Council.

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Letter from Guatemala

Indigenous and grassroots forces gather in Guatemala for the Second Continental Conference

499 years of colonialism—and resistance

October 12, 1991. So-called "Columbus Day" in the States, "Thanksgiving Day" in Canada. In Spain, the USA, and a number of other countries, holiday crowds have assembled to watch parades, to hear speeches, and, in general, to enjoy a brief diversion from everyday affairs. . . . In Guatemala City, a motley assortment of right-wing businessmen, politicians, and military officials have laid a wreath of flowers at the statue of Christobal Colon (Christopher Columbus). . . .

But here in Xela, in the Mayan highlands, 120 miles west of Guatemala City, "El Dia de la Raza" (The Day of the Race or the People) is being celebrated quite differently. Rather than cheering for the European "discovery" of the New World, or saluting the epochal "encounter of two cultures," an enormous crowd of *indigenas* (indigenous people) and *campesinos* (rural farmworkers) have massed for a street protest and rally.

According to estimates in the daily newspapers, as many as 30-50,000 Mayans and Ladinos (*mestizos*), accompanied by hundreds of visiting *internationalistas*, are holding banners aloft, chanting, and preparing to march through downtown Xela, culminating a week-long series of meetings, workshops, and cultural events. This week's international conference or *encuentro*, the *II Encuentro Campana Continental*, has been organized by activists from North America, the Caribbean, Central America, and South America.

Attended by 599 delegates, observers, and invited guests representing 26 countries in the Americas, it has been dubbed the "Self-Discovery of the Peoples of the Americas." And from the size, composition (the majority are women, indigenous, and rural-based), and militant enthusiasm of the crowd, October 12 looks like it will indeed be a day of self-discovery and re-empowerment for the Guatemalan grassroots—traumatized by three decades of military and right-wing terror.

Since the US-orchestrated military coup of 1954, there have been 150,000 assassinations and kidnappings in Guatemala, in addition to several million war victims displaced and exiled, according to church and human-rights monitors. Today's march and this week's *Encuentro* are a continuation and an expansion of previous conferences held in Bogota, Colombia, in 1989 and Quito, Ecuador, in 1990, and are being carried out, say organizers, as part of a long-term process of "broad and democratic reflection" and "concrete action" designed to unite Native American, African-American and other grassroots forces across the entire estern hemisphere.

Rather than memorializing the genocidal exploits of Senor Colon and his conquistador "*escuadrones de la muerte*" (death squads), thousands have assembled in Xela, in Rigoberta Menchu's words, "to honor and remember the disappeared, the assassinated, the refugees, the widows, the exploited farmworkers, the factory workers, the unemployed, the children," as well as to commemorate a "collective and ongoing resistance."

As a Huaroni *indigena* from Amazonia remarks, we are here to acknowledge that a 500-year-old war continues, "a war hidden behind the leaves of the Amazon." In the words of Grace Smith, a Native North American, "When the white men arrived they told us to close our eyes in order to pray together. When we opened our eyes, we had their bible, and they had our land."

But the *Encuentro* is not just a remembrance of past and present atrocities; it is also an affirmation of the power of resistance and the enormous potential of the underclasses of the Americas (who represent close to 70% of the hemisphere's 700

million people). As Alberto Muenala puts it, "[separately] we are a bunch of twigs, but together we make a huge fire." Needless to say, there are no wreaths of flowers in Xela lying at the feet of Cristobal Colon, but rather a mound of lilies and palm fronds at the base of the monument to Tecun Uman, the Mayan warrior who led the fight against the Spanish Conquistadores.

The future of the continental conference: A new internationale?

A central theme echoed throughout the Conference is that, as bad as things are now, the future—at least for the indigenous and the underclasses—looks even worse. The destruction of the rainforests and ozone layer; the pollution of the soil, air, and water; the steady impoverishment of workers, rural farmers, and the poor; the overall decline in economic opportunity and social welfare; the assault on trade unions and *campesino* organizations and the further "maquiladorization" of regional economies; the cholera epidemic; the wars in the Andes and Central America; the persistence of death squads, bloated military budgets and standard military-civilian impunity; the drug epidemic and related street violence, not only in Colombia and in North America but now spreading throughout the hemisphere—these and other trends discussed at the Conference are but *some* of the frightening harbingers of what is yet to come.

As giant world trade blocs coalesce and wage economic warfare against one another, as North-South tensions increase, the capitalist elites in the Americas can be expected to follow in the tradition of the Conquistadores and empire builders: consolidating markets, reducing the living standards of the workers and the poor, gobbling up remaining Native lands, and intensifying the exploitation of the Earth.

As the Conference discussions and documents point out, the western hemisphere's 80 million indigenous people and 450 million African-Americans and Latinos are obviously being "softened up" to bear the brunt of this 21st-century recolonization process, this modern-day capital accumulation—whether it goes by the name of the "New World Order," "economic readjustment," or "international free trade."

And meanwhile, the top-down, European and Soviet-bloc Internationales of the past have collapsed, leaving the embattled Native peoples and the majority underclasses no choice but to surrender, or else to organize themselves, from the bottom up, community by community, region by region, country by country.

As *Encuentro* speakers emphasized, over and over again, the dominant "conquistadores" of our time are not just Spaniards or Europeans or Gringos, but rather an "international army of multinational corporations and financial elites," backed up by the military might of the USA. This "New World Oligarchy" can only be tamed, brought under control, and eventually defeated by transcontinental organizing, solidarity, and international resistance.

There can be neither democratic socialism, indigenous autonomy, nor any other form of sustainable, egalitarian self-determination "as long as our adversaries are united and strong and we are weak and divided." "We must stop fighting among ourselves and get organized," as a South American delegate exclaimed. "Continental Unity is not just a romantic-sounding metaphor," another conference participant told me; "it is a *necessity* for our survival and for our collective liberation."

The consensus of the workshops and the general plenary sessions was that the 1992 Continental Conference planned for next October in Nicaragua, and the individual protest campaigns being carried out in each of our individual countries, coinciding with the 500-year quincentennial of the invasion of the Americas, should not be designed to promote nostalgia, or be carried out matter-of-factly—accepting as a given the marginalization and fragmentation of our rainbow of movements; rather, they should be seen as a strategic opportunity to consolidate our forces. To paraphrase this year's Convocation document:

"We will be expecting you [to attend the next Continental *Encuentro*] to reflect and to debate together, in order to take another step in our lives. That same journey that we participate in daily in our villages, our communities, our towns, cities, and jungles; in the countryside, the highlands, the plains and the deserts; in our labor unions, organizations, and cooperatives; in our churches and our work places . . . the journey of getting to know each other better, to know that we are not alone, to realize that we are the builders of history, so that the world will recognize our resistance to this farce that governments, foreign to our feelings and demands, are creating to 'celebrate' our suffering."

Contradictions among the people

Unfortunately time is short, but participatory movement-building takes a long time, especially when you're trying to organize across artificial, but stubborn, national and cultural boundaries. The 40% of the Conference delegates who were indigenous and the 60% non-indigenous were not in perfect unity. The Conference was as notable for who was *not* there as it was for who *was* there.

Jesse Jackson, Noam Chomsky, and a number of other North American notables were invited but were unable to come; nor did I notice very many rank-and-file organizers from the peace and social justice community or the Green, minority, and women's movements north of the border.

At best, what transpired in Xela was a beginning, not a culmination, "an engagement or a flirtation between indigenous and non-indigenous constituencies, rather than a marriage," as several Canadian and US delegates put it. As another USA comrade said, "The international solidarity that we need is still a dream, or rather a potentiality. It will take a long while to build up the necessary trust and solidarity to turn around 500 years of cruelty and divisiveness."

While many non-whites wondered out loud "what's going on with all the supposed white radicals from North of the Border," some North Americans complained that Hispanics dominated the gatherings. Some indigenous people complained that the popular movements (trade unions, *campesino* organizations, left-wing groupings) were over-represented; while others objected that the internal processes of the Conference were not always 100% democratic. Some people wanted next year's conference to be held in Peru or Mexico, rather than in Nicaragua, a site which was narrowly chosen after a somewhat acrimonious floor fight.

And yet at the end of the week's activities, as thousands crowded into the final plenary session at the Xela fairgrounds to cheer the speeches of Guatemala's Rigoberta Menchu, Mexico's legendary "Superbarrio," and others, there was a contagious unity and an undeniable sense of solidarity and optimism in the air.

If 50,000 Mayans can defy the military might of a US-backed terror-state and take over the streets, if indigenous peoples from throughout the hemisphere can keep on resisting, in spite of the almost unbelievable odds stacked against them, then we can all get together. The process of Continental Unity, as Rigoberta Menchu and Superbarrio reminded us, will be "long and protracted," but in the end the people will rise up and get organized. For we have no choice.

—Jon Reed, Xela (Quetzaltenango), Guatemala, October 1991



Solidarity march in XELA

Steps toward a new discovery of the Americas

Demonstration for democracy and rights

Crowning a week of spirited discussions and joint resolutions, the banners, chants, and leaflets of the October 12th march in Xela, Guatemala, serve to highlight the basic demands articulated and endorsed by The Second Continental Conference. The seven major subject areas of those demands are:

- 1) democracy (real participatory democracy, including economic democracy, as opposed to the pseudo-democracy of IMF-style neo-liberalism and Bush & Company's New World Order);
- 2) human rights and the rights of indigenous communities (human rights broadly defined to include full economic, political, and cultural empowerment, and autonomy for Native nations);
- 3) land and life (land reform; sustainable development; indigenous treaty rights; protection of the Earth and the biosphere);
- 4) colonialism, neo-colonialism, and self-determination (solidarity with Cuba, Haiti, and all of the indigenous and grassroots struggles in the Americas; reparations and a reversal of 500 years of genocide and exploitation);
- 5) women (an end to the oppression and marginalization of women; equal rights and full emancipation);
- 6) youth (children's rights; full empowerment of youth, students, and young workers);
- and 7) post-Quincentenary: action proposals to stimulate indigenous, African-American, and grassroots unity; (challenge the bourgeois quincentenary; educate the public; unify and strengthen popular forces; build a transcontinental network and movement of participatory discussion, collective action, and political power).

The march as a symbol of the new resistance

In spite of a Mayan holocaust that dates back to the early 16th century, and a vicious Euro-North American-backed "Death Squad Democracy" that continues through this day, the turnout for the march showed that the indigenous-powered grassroots movement of Guatemala is rising up once again. Of course, the US-sponsored government of Jorge Serrano is doing its best to stop this grassroots resistance.

Even as the Xela march was being held, six armed gunmen, under the watchful eyes of the police, broke into the offices of one of the country's most active human-rights organizations, GAM, Mutual Aid Group for the Families of the Disappeared, in Guatemala City. GAM organizers at the Conference handed out the day before the march a press packet calling attention to the 730 political assassinations and 100 forced disappearances that have taken place in Guatemala in the first seven months of 1991.

Several days previously, as a United Nations human-rights investigator prepared to meet with a refugee "community of resistance" living in the mountains of northern Quiche, army helicopters strafed the assembled villagers.

But this terror seems unable to stop the revitalized Movement. Over the past 12 months, the Guatemalan URNG armed resistance has intensified, forcing the Serrano administration and the military to the negotiating table. Even as the Conference unfolded, the URNG was in the process of carrying out successful guerrilla operations in several parts of the country.

Human-rights, refugee, and displaced communities have recently consolidated their ranks; com-



"We are gathered here together in Xela, indigenous and non-indigenous, people of many different colors and cultures, sisters and brothers of the Earth, to celebrate 500 years of resistance, 500 years of resistance by Native peoples, African-Americans, and the popular movement...Let us go forward from this conference and promote unity—unity of thinking and unity of action. Let us go forward, compañeros and compañeras, and organize ourselves. The struggle will be painful and protracted, but we will win."

—Rigoberta Menchu, Guatemalan exile leader, in her closing address to the Second Continental Conference.

munity protests have been launched in indigenous areas to abolish the hated para-military civil patrols, to abolish forced military recruitment, and to demilitarize the countryside and the urban areas. In the past year, there have also been a series of militant strikes by workers as well as a number of student mobilizations.

As leaflets handed out at the march by the Campesino Unity Committee (CUC), the farmworkers' union in Pacific coast plantation zone, state: "They tore off our fruits, they cut off our branches, they burned our trunk, but they were not able to kill our roots." And—as speakers from 26 different countries at the Conference demonstrated—it is not only in Guatemala that indigenous population living in dire poverty, and movements are unifying and strengthening their base of support.

In Brazil, in Ecuador, in Peru, and elsewhere, the people of the grassroots are slowly, but inexorably, getting organized. This "hidden movement" may not be front-page news in the *New York Times*, but it's happening. The sharing of this media-censored news, and the sharing of common strategy and tactics, lie at the heart of the *Encuentro*, in the workshops in the plenary sessions, and, most of all, in the small-group and one-to-one discussions at the Conference.

The continental rainbow

As the march wound through the streets of Quetzaltenango, there were contingents of foreign delegates from the Conference interspersed among the Guatemalan demonstrators, many of whom were wearing their traditional clothing or *traje*: Cuna from Panama; North American Iroquois, Papagayo, Apache, Inuit, and Gwich'in; Mexican Yaqui and Zapotecas, Guaymi from Costa Rica, Guaranies from Brazil, Mapuches from Chile, Quechuas from Ecuador, Bolivia, and Peru,

Miskitos from Nicaragua, and other indigenous and non-indigenous Canadians, Ecuadorians, Brazilians, Peruvians, Bolivians, Paraguayans, Colombians, Nicaraguans, Salvadorans, Hondurans, Cubans, Dominicans, Panamanians, African-Americans, Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, Euro-Americans, and more—literally representatives from the entire rainbow of native and grassroots organizations of the hemisphere.

Along narrow avenues lined with thousands of spectators, trailed by 300 members of the international press, the demonstrators delivered their commentary on the quincentennial, loud and clear: "Long live the Resistance," "Indigenous, Black, and Popular Movement United," "The People United Will Never Be Defeated," and "A People Who Are Hungry Are a People Without Peace."

Colorful banners identified the grassroots organizations: widows, refugees, communities of resistance, students, thousands of indigenous women and children, dressed in traditional clothing, marched behind the banners of CONAVIGUA and CONDEG, Guatemala's mass organizations of widows and war-displaced refugees.

In what was an unusual development for Guatemala, there were very few uniformed soldiers and police along the demonstration route. Demonstration organizers pointed out that the government feared to repress the march in the presence of so many foreign witnesses, including international human-rights organizations and the "first lady" of France Danielle Mitterand. In front of the steel-shuttered Bank of the Army, the machine-gun toting National Police kept a respectful distance behind the chanting columns.

As a solid mass of shouting demonstrators passed in front of Xela's infamous Military Base #17, only four soldiers were visible—two rather alarmed-looking enlistees slouching down in the guardtower at the front gates and what appeared to be officers peering out from half-drawn curtains on the second floor of an adjoined barracks.

The wary looks on the faces of the demonstrators were noticeable, however, as they turned towards the cuartel. Nonetheless, the protestors displayed their usual class consciousness, spontaneously directing two new chants toward the hundreds of soldiers who were undoubtedly listening on the opposite side of the 10-foot concrete walls: "No more military repression! No more repression!" followed by "The soldiers in uniform are also exploited!"

"Before, they killed us in the name of progress and anti-communism. Now they kill us in the name of democracy."

—Francisco Cali, a Guatemalan spokesperson for the Second Continental Conference of Indigenous and Popular Organizations, held in Xela, Guatemala, Oct. 7-12, 1991

In spite of the scarcity of security forces and the lack of the usual police intimidation, many of the spectators lining the streets looked worried, especially the Ladinos, the non-indigenous. A reporter said that many Xelans have voiced concern that, with the indigenous community and *campesinos* rising up once again, there may be a return to the mass repression and slaughter of the 1980s.

Of course, with 85% of the predominantly indigenous population living in dire poverty, and political assassinations and disappearances still running at the rate of 100 victims a month, things are not that peaceful right now. But a Guatemalan *companionero* stated recently, "I prefer to take the risk of dying in the struggle, rather than passively accepting the slow death of everyday oppression."

—Jon Reed



GALA News

Miriam Ben-Shalom at ISU

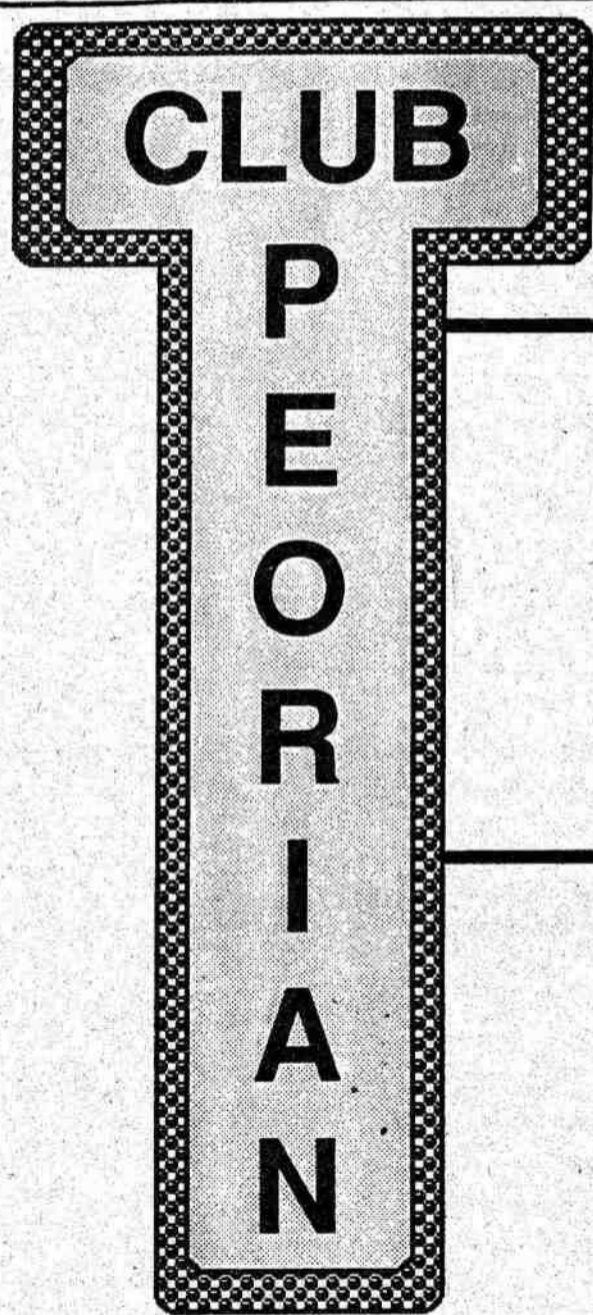
Miriam Ben-Shalom spoke to a crowd of about 100 in ISU's Prairie Room on November 9. Presented here are excerpts from her speech, followed by comments from me (in italics).

On gay oppression in Amerika

Oppression of gay people in this country goes back to the 16th Century when the Spaniards came to conquer a world which they thought belonged to them and them alone. In the process of doing so, they oppressed Native Americans from the Alaskan Natives down to the so-called Indians of the South Amerikas.

The Spaniards brought along an interpreter with them whom the Indians just loved because he was gay. They understood very well what he was. The tradition of contraries or berdaches [ceremonial cross-dressers] is something Native Amerikans understand very well.

This interpreter got along very well with his Native Amerikan friends. The Spaniards were threatened by this and dispatched him somewhat mysteriously and very expediently and this man was never heard of again. So murder of gay people in this country predates even the bringing over of Afrikans to this country as slaves.



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On the origins of the current policy

[A 1941 Navy memo] stated in plain English that people of color were supposed to accept second-class status [in the military]. They were supposed to accept not being able to work anywhere they pleased. They should be happy to accept jobs like cleaning out latrines or being ship's stewards because white men did not want to serve with them.

Because white men didn't want to serve with them, they were considered to be a detriment to morale, a threat to *esprit de corps*, and a threat to the trust which allegedly builds between members of squads and platoons in companies. If those words sound familiar to you, it's because today's military regulation which bars lesbians, gay men and bisexuals from service is based on that memo. Today's regulation is almost verbatim.

[Governmental] gay oppression stopped with the advent of the Korean conflict and thereafter with the beginning of the Vietnam War. It's distressing to me to think that when there's a war on, they don't care you're queer or not. Nobody really gives a damn; they need your body for cannon fodder.

On Operation Desert Storm

One of the big issues during the Persian Gulf war was that gays were being sent over then told they would be summarily discharged—if they survived.

In my position as Chairperson of the national Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Veterans of America, I dealt with over 300 phone calls in the month of February from people who were worried sick. You know what amazes me? Of all the active duty people I talked to, not one of them wanted to use their sexual orientation to get out of service.

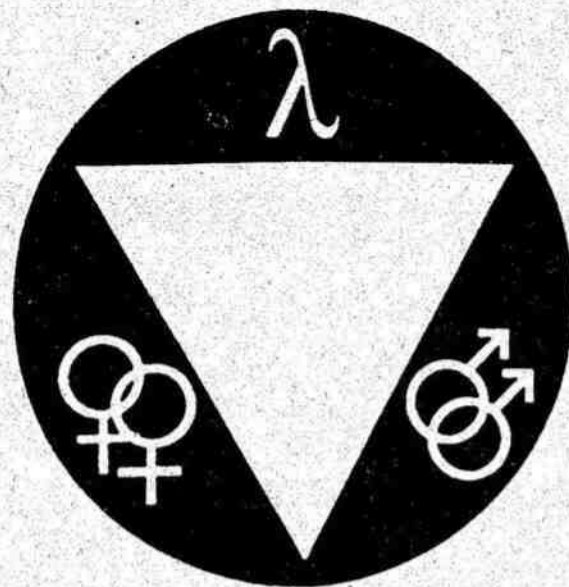
On ROTC

The U.S. military relies on good, college-trained officers. To remove that source of good college-trained officers is an important message to our government. When you try to oust ROTC from a campus, you are telling the government that number one, you're not going to tolerate any type of discrimination on your campus. Secondly, you're sending an even stronger message which says you're not going to tolerate government financed discrimination.

I don't have any arguments with the ROTC program. But because it engages in overt discrimination against 10-15% of the student population at this university, it has no business and no place on this campus. I know there are individuals who say things like, "There are people who get scholarships and research grants and it might adversely affect some people." Well, what about the 10-15% of the student population that doesn't have equal access to those scholarships or that research money?

The only difference between someone on a street corner selling it for 20 bucks and a university which decides to keep a discriminatory agency on campus is the price. Prostitution is prostitution.

You need to be protesting and you need to kick ROTC off campus because this government needs to know that it's time to stop using government dollars to discriminate. It's time to stop wasting money that could be better used for housing for low-income people, for job training programs, and for assisting Amerikans who really need help. I know I could use [the military's budget]. Boy would I have educational programs. I could even buy desks for my students.



On trust and honor

I stand before you tried, convicted, found guilty of telling the truth. If I had shut my mouth 18 years ago when my Commanding Officer asked me, "Sergeant Ben-Shalom, are you gay?"; if I'd have lied, that is, committed an act of dishonor, do you know I'd still be in? Getting ready to retire? But because my code of conduct does not allow me to lie, I was considered to be unfit to serve my country.

I find it amazing that I am trusted to teach Amerikan youth as a high school teacher—and certainly [the school] knew who I was when they hired me, because on the day I signed my contract the woman there looked at me and she said, "Hm, Miriam Ben-Shalom. How's your court case with the Army going?"—but I was not trustworthy enough to go to Saudi Arabia.



On freedom

Every day of my life for the last 20 years I stood up and spoke up and I defended freedom. 18 years ago I took an oath to protect and defend the Constitution of the United States and I feel that I have done so every day; because a day doesn't go by that I don't speak up on behalf of civil liberties for lesbians, gay men and bisexuals.

Freedom is not something that you get on a large platter, like, "here it is, freedom." We have got to work for it every day and work hard for it every day or it's going to be taken away from you.

Look at the challenges to *Roe v. Wade*. Look at the challenges to Affirmative Action. Look at the steady erosion of legal protection we have as citizens should we be accused of a criminal action. Look at the steady erosion of freedom of speech in terms of gag orders, ordering doctors or health care workers not to discuss abortion with women. By what right does the government limit freedom of speech? So I'm well aware that freedom is something you have to work for every day and I'm waiting for the day they try and shut me up. Boy, are they going to be surprised.

I believe militarism is wrong and I can't support anyone's decision to join the military. However, each of us must choose our own course and fight for freedom in our own way. I can only envision the day when not only will every aspect of society be open to everyone, but the idea that the military is a necessity will fall into obscurity.

—jmc



Lunch with the legislator

There's something about Illinois legislators in ISU's Circus Room that really gets the old juices flowing. This time it was State Representative Gordon Ropp, here October 7 as part of Women in Communication's "Lunch with the Legislator" series.

You may remember from "Bert report 1" that Gordo is not the most sympathetic person in the world to the civil rights of lesbian, gay and bisexual people. Well, it turns out he also doesn't care a great deal for working parents or for suicidal teenagers.

Gordo got off to a fast start, saying he knew that all of us "had a prayer in our hearts" and were "thanking our Creator" for the changes taking place in the Soviet Union. He spoke for a while on the unfair burden it puts on businesses for government to mandate any kind of family leave. So what if Amerika is the only industrialized nation except South Afrika with no federal family leave legislation?

Gordon continued with a long exposition on why he supports programs to keep children "at risk" for dropping out of school enrolled. According to Gordon, the only reason for supporting such programs was because if you don't, you'll end up paying for that kid's prison stay. These are of course the only two options for children; school or prison.

Let the games begin

Then the real fun, the question and answer session, began. I got things off to a rousing start by reminding Gordon of his response to the question "Should homosexuals be barred from certain careers?" to which he had replied, "Not by law—just good common sense." To their credit, many of those in attendance were audibly disgusted at such a position.

I asked Gordy why, in the midst of a recession, it made "good common sense" for anyone to limit their employment opportunities and to list some careers I should avoid for being gay and why I should avoid them.

Gordo said that there are certain fundamental freedoms in this country and that one of them is that businesses should be free of government telling them who they have to hire. He continued, "Go ahead and be gay if you want to, but you have to understand that there are certain restrictions that you will have to live with if you make that choice. I guess my question to you is, why are you gay?"

In return I asked Gordon why are you straight? Assuming that you are, of course. I then pointed out that arguments similar to his have been made in the case of, for example, discrimination against Afrikan-Americans, not in terms of being forced to hire them, but in terms of not being able to fire them.

Gordon interrupted me to point out that Afrikan-Americans are good hard-working people and have been suppressed in this country long enough. Thanks so much for that insight. But you're in favor of continuing to suppress gays, then?

"It's my freedom to do so."

The next person asked Gorgon about his stance on family leave, noting that while her employer has a good policy, other employers might not. His answer? "Oh, does State Farm have an inadequate family leave plan, or does ISU?"

So these are the only two companies that employ anyone in this town? He went on to reiterate the horribly unfair burden it would place on corporations to have government make them give employees a couple of weeks unpaid leave in case of family emergency.

My turn again

I was curious as to how the Gourd could reconcile his opposition to incorporating gay issues into sex education programs with a Health and Human Services report indicating that a gay teenager is three times as likely to commit suicide as a straight youth, and should gay youth not be targeted in our schools as an "at risk" population?

Gordon noted how sad it was that some people have school experiences that lead them to "do away with themselves," then proceeded to plant the burden for suicide prevention squarely on the shoulders of our massively overstressed teachers. He also noted that I had misunderstood the definition of "at risk," which referred to students with a high likelihood of dropping out of school.

Funny, I always figured that killing yourself was a pretty major barrier to graduation.

Gordon went on to enlighten us all with more of his calcified thoughts on just a host of other topics, then left us to do "Problems and Solutions." As he was leaving, he expressed his hope that he hadn't spoiled our lunch for us.

No worries there, Gord. An hour with you made me so nauseous, I may never eat again.

—jmc

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LAW.

ROTC veto overturned

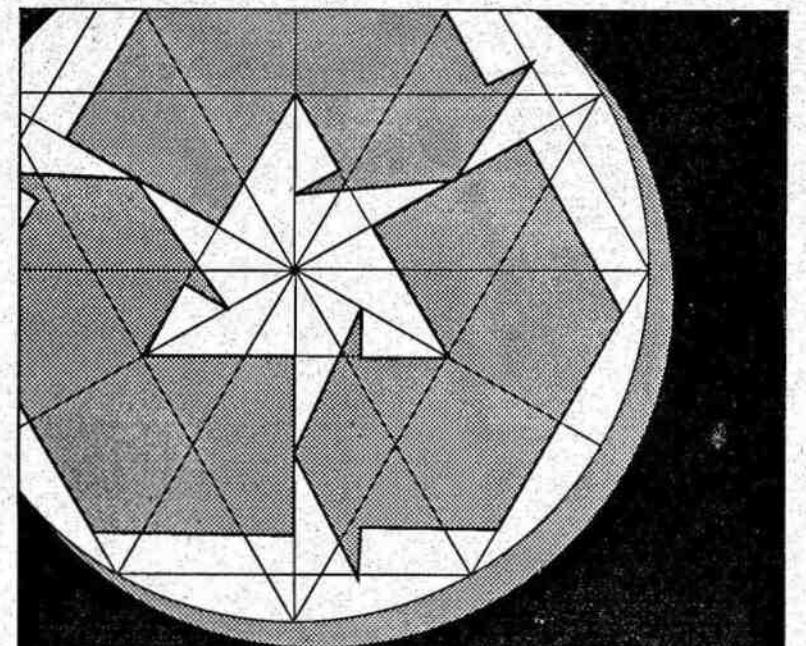
Much to the dismay of gay rights lobbyists, the Illinois General Assembly recently passed a bill making it more difficult for state-funded universities and colleges to ban the Reserved Officer Training Corps (ROTC) from campus. Senate Bill 644 officially tightened the reins of discrimination when, on November 13, the state legislature overrode Governor Jim Edgar's veto of the bill, thus preventing college governing boards from barring ROTC.

The bill was passed in reaction to recent efforts of gay rights activists to kick ROTC off campuses because of its anti-homosexual policy, which originated at Northern Illinois University by student Jodi English.

Hardly a surprise, both local state representative Gordon Ropp, and local state senator John Maitland, supported the bill. [Postnote: see "Lunch with the legislator" in this issue for more on Ropp] In fact, the bill was passed unanimously in the Senate and by a 102-3 vote in the House.

Those who maintain that ROTC should be removed from campus do so on the grounds that its failure to allow homosexuals to join the ROTC program directly contradicts the policies of universities or states which disallow discrimination based on sexual orientation. Curtis White, English professor and faculty advisor for the Progressive Student Union at Illinois State University, said the new law "should not affect" a resolution approved by the ISU Academic Senate that requires an annual report to the senate to detailing what has been done to change ROTC's discriminatory policy.

--Bert



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Feminist Primer



Y is for... Youth

"Youth," said George Bernard Shaw, "is wasted on the young." Whether or not you agree with Shaw, you have to admit that people--particularly women--start mourning the passing of their youth even while they're still in their teens.

We seem to think that if we had it do all over again, we wouldn't toss our youth away by not having explored our sexuality more adventuresomely, or by marrying too young, or by having babies too soon, or by not going to college earlier, or by not leaping onto the career fast track sooner.

On the other hand, if we didn't make *those* kinds of mistakes, we mourn not having backpacked through Europe for a year or two after high school instead of going straight to college, or not having settled down with that nice boy (or girl) because we wanted to play the field more, or not having had children sooner (or at all), or having spent too much time at the office, too little with family and friends.

We're all haunted by the ghost of youth past. Youth lost, youth spent or misspent, youth wasted, youth gone forever.

Sometimes, though, I wonder if anyone, female or male, ever *really* experiences youth. Often I wonder if those who attempt to savor their youth really are just afraid of commitment and adult responsibility. And I wonder just as often if those who plunge ahead into college, career, adult responsibilities are equally as afraid of taking adventuresome risks.

When you're barely old enough to vote or drink legally, you run smack into admonitions that you're not getting any younger. Your face may still not have fully cleared, and yet advertisers push you to buy skin cream and consider having plastic surgery to excise those tell-tale crows' feet and laughlines before they appear. You've barely had time to lose your virginity, and *Newsweek* or *Time* runs some cover story on rising infertility among twenty-something college-educated women. You've just gotten into the swing of dating-as-an-adult, fresh out of college, and your grandmother threatens to take off all her clothes in Public Square, lie down *and then* let the birds eat her, if you don't marry before your next birthday.

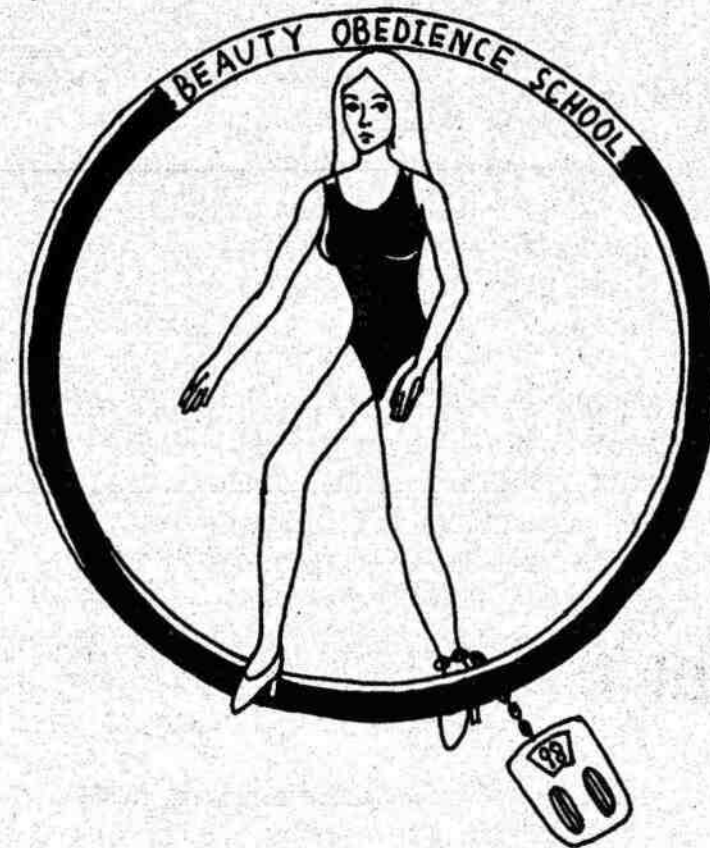
An old (so to speak) woman friend from graduate school told me the other night that after women turn 27, our metabolism starts to slow down by 3% for every succeeding year. Our muscle flexibility apparently declines at a similar rate, too.

So in response to our being well past 27, Dale and I drink our protein shakes, take our vitamins, and watch our cholesterol intakes. We aerobicize, pump iron, stretch and generally pay more attention to personal grooming these days than we did 10 years ago.

We tell ourselves that we're trying to remain reasonably fit and healthy, which is true. But if we tell you that we're not secretly, half-consciously trying to hang onto our youth, don't believe us for a second.

Oh, Dale and I *resist* that tremendous cultural pressure to privilege youth, all right. We *deny* that a woman's value or even physical attractiveness is dependent on her age. And we're right. We're right to resist. We're right to deny. But the cultural pressure to believe otherwise, to cave in and accept the idea that for women, youth is everything is far more powerful than the combined force of our resistance and denial.

Just because cultural pressure outweighs us though doesn't mean that we intend to accept as right that some men our age and older should want to dump their partners for younger and younger women in their own pathetic attempt to recapture youth and virility. And it certainly doesn't mean that we accept the notion that we'll have less and less to offer the world as we age.



We may strive hard to be mature and responsible adults, but that doesn't mean that we're going to accept somebody else's idea of "age appropriate behavior." I for one refuse to trade in my black leather jacket for a wool car coat. I won't give up the idea of buying myself a pair of roller blades as my next birthday present to myself either. And I hope to God that neither Dale nor I retreat into the fusty, reactionary conservatism so typical of so many aging radicals.

By the same token, I refuse to deceive myself. I refuse to lie and pretend that things are other than what they are. I'm not going to look in the mirror and say to myself "You look 17. In fact, you look a whole lot better than when you were 17." I may look better than I did when I was 17, but I definitely look older. Youth, if in fact I ever possessed it, disappeared from my mirror, my assets, my perspective, long ago.

However, when I consider where I was emotionally and physically--let alone politically or professionally--20 or even 10 years ago, I have to admit that aging is not such a bad thing. Especially if I stop to consider the alternative.

--Dr. Attitude



Letters

Where's my Post?

Post,

It's not that I don't support your work--as a B/N resident I regularly bought the paper. When I moved to Chicago, I bought a subscription and haven't received one paper in the last year.

Sorry that I am not prepared to make a donation at this time.

Kurt Gottschalk

Postnote: We apologize for any problems you have had with receiving your subscription to *Post Amerikan*. We are entering a free one-year renewal for you at your new address.

However, if you received our fundraising letter, then your name is on our subscriber list. We would suggest you talk with your postal carrier or any fascist neighbors you may have had at your old apartment. Please let us know sooner if there is another interruption of your subscription.



Words of encouragement

Dear Post,

Here's a sub and donation. Take heart! I'll pass a copy around to see if we can't get some freedom of speech types interested here. Arkansas NEEDS liberating in many ways!

I wish you'd run an article on the political outrage the AMA, et al staged in your state recently--the governor signed a bill outlawing midwives without licenses! So much for freedom of choice for birth. So much for independent women healers. So much for "aboveground" home birth--which is statistically SAFEST for most births.

Sue Frizzell

Postnote: We hope you read last issue's "Another reproductive right bites the dust," by Holly Foy. We would like to take this opportunity to apologize to Holly. Because of production errors on our part, some of the paragraphs of her story were run out of order. A collective "sorry" to Holly and to anyone who had difficulty reading the article.



What does Magic mean to AIDS activists?

AIDS in a new package

It's hard to be continuously angry.

But AIDS activism has been built on anger, anger over prejudice and intolerance, anger over ignorance and indifference.

Anger has motivated AIDS activists into the 1990's, keeping the movement alive through ten years and over 125,000 deaths.

And so, with great skepticism caused by my continuous rage, I listened to Magic Johnson announce to the world that he was HIV+, infected with the virus that is thought to bring about AIDS. I listened to every word he said, anxious to pick apart every slip up that would reveal his misconceptions about AIDS and people with AIDS.

And I listened, too, as countless sports figures were interviewed about Magic's test results. I read columns and editorials in the *Pantagraph*, *ISU's Vidette*, and the *Chicago Tribune* by people who had not once considered writing about AIDS until they found out about Magic.

I reread and relistened to these many words from new voices, searching for something to make me angry.

And you know what. All I did was get tired. I got tired of being angry. Tired of looking for prejudice, intolerance, ignorance, and indifference. In the scheme of the AIDS epidemic, Magic's frank and hopefully honest disclosure about the nature of his infection is a good sign, plain and simple.

Not perfect, of course

Sure, not every aspect of his revelation was perfect. Not every fact and every word he used was completely accurate. And not every media commentary has been fair and true. Did I really expect it would be? For the most part, I'm happy (and surprised) that Magic chose to undergo certain personal criticism and put a new face on the epidemic.

His announcement has already had a tangible effect on the media. Newspeople and even sports reporters now have to know the difference between infection with HIV and having full blown AIDS. Idiots like Andy Rooney claim that it is "splitting hairs" for most Americans, but I couldn't disagree more. While Rooney's comments show how prejudice has shaped people's willingness to be uninformed about AIDS, many people now realize that people who contract HIV can be healthy and strong both before and after infection.

A column in the student newspaper *The Vidette* clearly shows this transformation in thinking. Susan Cooper, writing a sports commentary, says how she was horrified by the announcement. "Then and there, my whole concept of (my own) immortality was shattered. If someone as strong and healthy such as Magic could contract HIV then it could happen to anybody—even somebody who thinks she will never grow old and die: me."

Of course, in her statement about Magic being "strong and healthy," Cooper reveals the deep-seated prejudice about people with AIDS that has remained unchanged, that PWAs led unhealthy and destructive lives and that AIDS is a natural consequence of their lifestyle. But to AIDS activists, Cooper's and the country's lingering prejudice comes as no surprise. As much as we have yelled and screamed and ranted, we have not reached everyone with our message, and, like it or not, Magic can.

Magic as AIDS spokesperson

As AIDS activists, we will have to approach Magic with cautious optimism, though it goes against the very nature of our movement to trust an outsider, especially from the popular mainstream.

As I see it, his biggest flaw early on has been his eagerness to simplify the fight against AIDS into the promotion of "safe sex." Educating people about safe sex has its limitations. No matter how many people know about safer sex practices, human nature is too predictable and human will too weak. Knowledge about safe sex will probably only slow down the spread of AIDS, not stop it entirely.

And what about the religious and moral baggage that sex retains? With many Americans being told by their religious leaders that condoms are a sin, espousing condom use will be additionally hampered.

And, as many conservative Americans are shouting in Magic backlash, there is essentially no "safe sex." Unless you buy into Dan Quayle's foolish and unrealistic espousal of abstinence, for most of us there can only be safer sex, sex that lowers the risk of HIV infection, but does not guarantee against transmission.

And Magic must also realize that any activist agenda to combat HIV must take on all issues surrounding AIDS, including discrimination against people with AIDS and the groups in society they come from, including gay men. Until Amerika starts caring about all people with AIDS, they will resist getting behind an anti-AIDS agenda, especially if they think it can kill off all the faggots (which it won't, of course).

As an AIDS activist, I am encouraged by Magic Johnson's openness and welcome him into the AIDS activist community. Let's hope we can "straighten" him out and get him the facts about the nature of the AIDS epidemic before he's brainwashed on Bush's National Commission on AIDS.

—Peter Howells



Magic Uppers & Downers

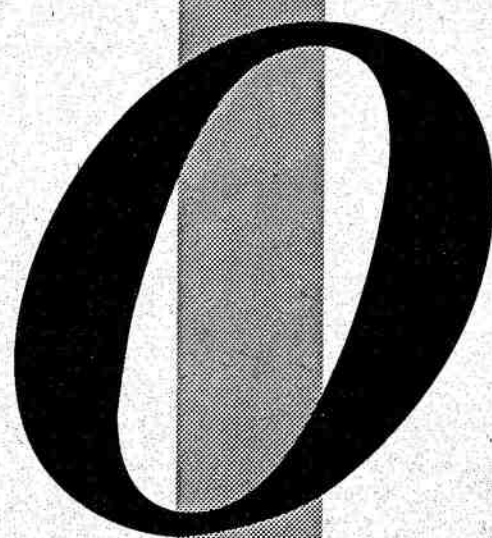
Uppers... to George Bush for appearing decisive in his appointment of Magic Johnson to the National Commission on AIDS. The Commission needs increased visibility and hopefully Magic can get his shit together and make a difference.

Downers... to George Bush for his appointment of Magic Johnson to his Commission on AIDS. What a cynical and shitty move on his part, continuing to ignore the other heroes with AIDS including many gay men who have fought courageously in the face of AIDS despite years of oppression. Wouldn't it be better to have a PWA who was a little more knowledgeable about AIDS rather than a sports superstar?

Uppers... to the Fox Network and local Fox 43 for airing condom commercials. On-air statement by local management stated how airing these commercials is imperative considering the AIDS crisis. Let's hope that Magic can convince the other networks to do the same.

Downers... to the McLean County AIDS Task Force for its ill-planned and ill-timed community forum in response to Magic Johnson's announcement that he is infected with HIV. The forum, which was poorly attended, was not-so-coincidentally scheduled at the same time as a bi-weekly ACT UP meeting.

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News from Voice for Choice

President Bush has vetoed the Title X Family Planning bill that removed the gag rule. Bush attempted to soften the administration's stance on the issue by sending a letter to the House the day before they were to vote on the legislation. Either Bush thinks the American public is naive or Bush is stupid or a little of both; Bush's letter does nothing to change the status of the gag rule as it currently stands. The gag rule remains in place. Bush can write as many letters as he chooses; it does not change the gag rule.

Representative Tom Ewing recently held a town meeting. Ewing was asked about his position on the gag rule. He is under the impression that Bush's last ditch effort to avoid a veto override somehow changed the gag rule.

When asked whether he thought that low-income women should be able to access the same healthcare information as more affluent women, Ewing did not respond. Bottom line, Ewing supports the gag rule. Mr. Pro-life Ewing also opposes family medical leave and does not support a national healthcare plan.

Those of us attending the meeting were offended by Ewing's attempt to joke about sexual harassment. Despite yells of "it's not funny" from several audience members, Tom went on laughing. Finally when one audience member confronted him, he apologized.

The Title X veto went to the House November 19 and was upheld. Ewing voted to uphold the veto.

Men with HIV are 17.5 times more likely to spread the virus to women than women are to spread the virus to men.

Source: Associated Press

Voice for Choice will be holding its annual (and possibly last--depending on the Supreme Court) Roe v. Wade demonstration in January. The demonstration will be held either January 19 or 21, and we promise to hold it inside. We have invited Attorney General Roland Burris and Senatorial candidate Carol Mosely Braun. We hope you can join us.

Big thanks to all who participated in and attended the Lefty Follies Variety Show and Harvest Moon Dance. The evening not only helped raised money for Voice for Choice, it was fun, too. Special thanks to Sherrin, Jim and Melissa for serving as judges, and to Lainie, David, Dave R. and Mark, who donated prizes. We really appreciate your support and assistance.

The 5.2 million member Evangelical Lutheran Church of America approved September 3 a statement that abortion could be a morally responsible choice in a limited number of cases. The denomination's Churchwide Assembly approved the statement 905-70.

"The strong Christian presumption is to preserve and protect life. Abortion ought to be an option only of last resort," the statement read in part. It opposed laws prohibiting abortion or barring public financing of abortions for low-income women in cases involving a clear threat to the woman's life, extreme abnormalities of the fetus, rape or incest. It did not take a position on other possible legal barrier to access to abortion.

The statement further said that laws regulating abortion should aim at both "protecting prenatal life" and "the dignity of women and their freedom to make responsible decisions in difficult situations."

Source: *Insider*

Under the "can you answer this" category:

Can anyone tell us why three of the television networks have no problem advertising feminine hygiene products but refuse to advertise condoms?

Can anyone tell us why our governor felt that it was appropriate for the state to intervene in forcing businesses to provide medical coverage for infertility but believes it is inappropriate to intervene in matters such as family medical leave?



Fed up with Alan Dixon? Wonder why he voted for Clarence Thomas? Wonder why he voted with Jesse Helms in an effort to restrict NEA funding? Well, cheer up! Alan has a contender in the Democratic primary.

Carol Mosely Braun, currently Cook County Recorder of Deeds, has announced her candidacy against Dixon. Braun is a very strong supporter of women's rights, including reproductive rights. She also has a strong record of supporting lesbian and gay rights. Braun was supported by the Harold Washington party in her last election and if enough support can be mustered downstate, she has a shot at Dixon.

Operation Rescue was expected to blockade clinics in Chicago on November 23. The Emergency Clinic Defense Coalition coordinates clinic escort activities there; they may be reached at (312) 845-6838.

According to the U.S. Conference of Governors, there has been a 7% increase in the number of mentally ill homeless people over the last two years.

According to a report published by the General Accounting Office, the U.S. already spends enough money on healthcare for everyone in the U.S. to be covered. However, 37 million Americans do not have any form of healthcare coverage. Consequently, their only method of accessing healthcare when ill is through an emergency room. Of course, the costs of that are much greater than what preventative care would have cost. The cycle continues as hospitals increase rate, then insurance companies increase rates and so on.

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Decide Roe now

Pro-choice activists have asked the increasingly conservative Supreme Court to decide the fate of *Roe v. Wade* once and for all. If the court agrees, the landmark 1973 decision that established a constitutional right to abortion could be overturned as soon as next year.

"The decision to try to force the Court's hand is an acknowledgement that we've lost the battle to defend *Roe*," said Jane Larson, an associate professor of law at Northwestern University who specializes in women's issues. "Now you will have the real fight start."

The imminent possibility of the Supreme Court's abolishing the right to abortion hastens the shift to the state level and to Congress, where a bill to guarantee the right to abortion has been introduced. The Freedom of Choice Act would codify the right to abortion, making any Court decision moot. Senator Paul Simon has already signed on as a supporter of the bill; Alan Dixon has yet to commit. Without the Act, the right to an abortion would be left entirely up to the states. The result would be the creation of a legal, political and moral patchwork.

The Freedom of Choice Act is pending in the Civil and Constitutional Rights subcommittee of the House Judiciary Committee. Even if the bill is passed, it is unclear whether it could withstand an almost certain presidential veto.

Since the *Webster* decision in 1989, over 600 pieces of legislation have been introduced in 44 states. Twelve of these have passed. Nevada, Delaware and Rhode Island have already passed legislation protecting the right to abortion should *Roe* be overturned.

On November 5, voters in Washington state voted on a similar referendum. As of this writing, the vote count is too close to determine an outcome. Nine other states are trying to get abortion rights or "let the people decide" measures on their ballots, and anti-abortion initiatives could appear on the ballots in five other states.

Pro-life right up to birth

Child health care prevention programs have proven their effectiveness in saving lives as well as dollars. Yet federal expenditures have only permitted a small percentage of those eligible to be served, with little or no improvement in the last eight years.

Federal funds for public health programs, including the Maternal and Child Health Block Grant, Community and Migrant Centers, Immunizations and Health Care for the Homeless were reduced 5% between FY81 and FY 88, after adjusting for inflation.

In FY 79, federal immunization grants to states totalled \$25 million and 17.4 million doses of vaccine were purchased. In FY 86, grants totalled \$45 million, but only 16.2 million doses could be purchased because of inflation.

We are reminded of anti-choicer Gregg Cunningham, who had the audacity to lie in front of several hundred people at the debate sponsored by the Reproductive Rights Action Network [Postnote: RRAN is now SFC, Students for Choice] and the Christian Action Council. Cunningham, a former member of the Reagan/Bush administration, was asked how he reconciled being "pro-life" with being part of an administration that cut nutritional programs for children, housing programs for low-income individuals and families, childhood immunizations and so on. Cunningham lied, stating that the Reagan/Bush administration did not cut these programs.

The Reagan administration made massive cuts to social services directly and made additional cuts indirectly by eliminating Federal Revenue Sharing dollars, millions of which went to assist social service programs at the state and local levels. Cunningham was also apparently unaware that when funding is not adjusted for inflation it results in a decrease of funding via lost purchasing power.

Cunningham also never addressed the fact that while Ronnie was slashing social services and healthcare, he was proposing massive increases in defense spending and the budget deficit grew. This should not surprise us since Gregg was less than upfront about other things.



It continues to amaze us how the so-called "pro-lifers" can be so unconcerned with the quality of the lives of children once they are here. Perhaps the answer lies in the fact that at least locally so few of them work in social services. Voice for Choice studied the Christian Action Council's last signature ad. We investigated everyone on the list, including their employment, and discovered that 1-2% worked in human/social services, most of them in education. In comparison, approximately 40% of those on the Voice for Choice mailing list work full-time in human services; the majority of those people worked for not-for-profit organizations serving women, children and low-income individuals.

Could it be that the lack of concern and compassion on the part of the so-called "pro-lifers" comes as a result of denial? Could it be that these folks are so far removed from the pain and suffering in our community that they have no idea to what extent it exists?

If we remember that Ronald Reagan grew up in an alcoholic home, the 1980's make much more sense. Denial and blaming were the code words. If it's not working it must be the fault of women, minorities and the poor. If we don't talk about the pain that exists in our society or acknowledge it, we won't have to deal with it; we won't have to feel it.

Source: Children's Defense Fund, with comments from VFC

Barefoot and pregnant

Recently Randall Terry claimed in print that most women don't have to work; they could stay home and be supported by their husbands. The reality is that employment trends over the last decade indicate that families now rely on having both parents in the work force to maintain family living standards. Between 1973 and 1984, the loss in real family income would have been three times as great if both parents were not working.

In March 1988, 65% of all women with children under 18, 73.3% of women with children age 6-17, 56.1% of women with preschool children and 51.1% of women with children under age one were in the labor force. The number of working mothers has increased by nearly 50% since 1975.

Nearly 60% of working mothers with preschool children are married to men earning less than \$25,000. On average, in married couple families with children, working mothers contribute 41.3% to total family earnings. Sixty-eight percent of mothers with children under 18 and whose husbands earn \$15,000-19,000 are in the work force, compared with 53% of mothers whose husbands make over \$50,000.

These figures aside, let us not forget the real message behind Terry's words. Women should not work; only men should be allowed to have jobs outside the home. Men are losing ground because women are gaining it, therefore women must be stopped. Sound familiar? Neo-Nazi David Duke claims to be "pro-life" too. Isn't it interesting that Terry and Duke have both from time to time advocated the use of violence, recommended the elimination of welfare programs and attempted to strip a group of people of the gains they have made towards equality?

Terry's organization, Operation Rescue, struck in Champaign in November and they are expected to return. In their first Rescue, held November 2, about 60 protestors showed up outside the Turpin clinic. The Champaign police moved in with a SWAT team and placed those blocking clinic doors on stretchers, depositing them on a waiting bus. Police response was so swift that the protest was over in less than an hour.

Many of the protestors were from other communities and several were from out of state. Anyone interested in being a clinic escort should they strike again may contact Debbie Murphy of Planned Parenthood at (217) 359-3418.



If you want to talk to one of us
Call PATH 827-4005
and ask for the
RAPE CRISIS CENTER

Crisis Center of McLean County

We're a non-profit volunteer group whose main purpose is to offer assistance and support to victims of sexual assault and their friends and families.

Female volunteers answer your calls, but both male and female volunteers are available for crisis assistance, information and speaking engagements.



Those G[uerilla] G[irl]s

WHO ARE THEY AND WHY DO THEY DO THE THINGS THEY DO?

They're not Gibson girls, glamour girls, *Gidget Goes* . . . girls, or girls who are goody-goody. Mass-media activists with a feminist twist, they're one-part gorilla, one-part guerilla, and many-parts woman.

In public "appearances," the anonymous members of this group combine gorilla masks and guerilla antics with their female bodies. Spoiling the sex appeal of leather minis and sheer black stockings with "bestly" faces and aggressive behavior, these women stage publicity stunts in order to pressure "the powers that be."

The Guerilla Girls self-consciously make the news—from television to video, special interest magazines to general newspapers, and from

The Guerilla Girls' main weapon has always been information—the shock, embarrassment, and humiliation of facts which reveal the unfortunate compromises—the collateral damage—of power.

formal exhibits to street posters. Their multi/mass-media revisions of the postures of concerned citizen and angry activist have reconfigured hilariously (and seriously) what it means to be a woman in the public eye.

A VOICE AGAINST THE ART WORLD

Established in the spring of 1985 to "combat racism and sexism in the artworld," the Guerilla Girls began as a group primarily concerned with, and located in, that community's center—New York City. It's not surprising that—during the mid-eighties, as the work of young male artists was collected and set sale records for work by living artists—female artists would start to resent a market and museum complex which seemed indifferent to their work.

Unlike most groups associated with that nexus of galleries, museums, magazines, and organizations which control and define the art world, the Guerilla Girls (as a collective) don't perceive their activities as within the traditional definition of art—to be commodified and stockpiled—they consider themselves a voice against the way in which that world operates. As the name "Guerilla Girls" would suggest, they don't want to be known as individuals—or to build their images in the "larger than life" form associated with the (mostly male) tradition of Western art.

They subtitle themselves the "Conscience of the Art World." In an interview with *Art Forum*, one member explains, ". . . we really are about the meaning of conscience, meaning that something that's inside someone. We're inside saying to ourselves, you know, What is this? We've always had this spirit of self-criticism."

Since the Guerilla Girls' objective as "real" women artists is to be individually recognized and admired by an official community in ways

that are official, their position has many ironies. Many (in their actual identities) are accepted and supported by the very institutions they anonymously criticize. When they outed themselves a few years ago, the group's ranks were seen to include most of the women (artists, art critics, art collectors, art dealers) respected and active in U.S. arts communities.

ATTACKING PUBLIC IMAGES

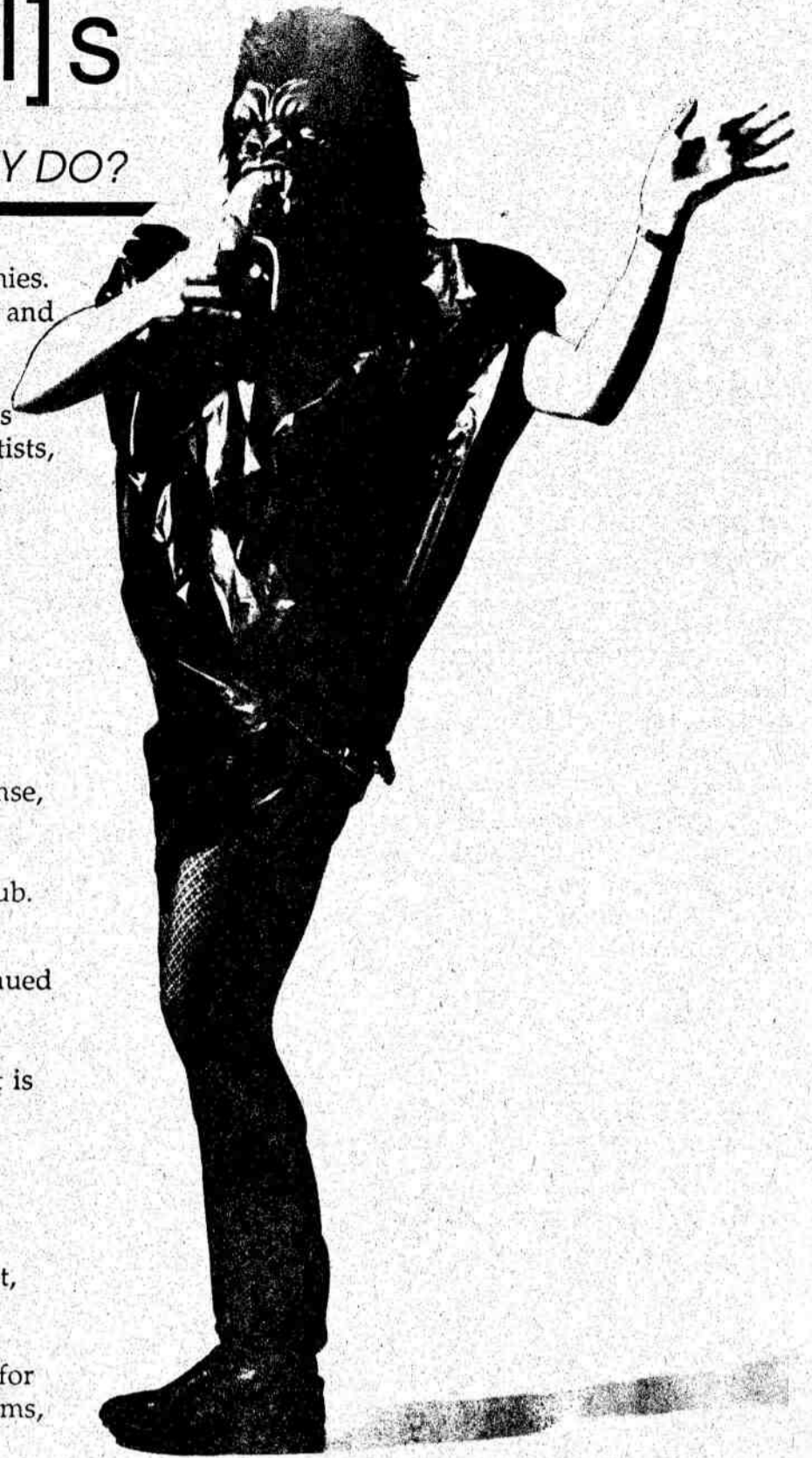
Their first public complaint was that the Museum of Modern Art's "International Survey of Recent Painting and Sculpture" included only ten percent women. In response, they organized a show of over one-hundred women artists ("The Night the Palladium Apologizes") at a Greenwich Village nightclub.

Since that date, Guerilla Girl style has continued in a tit-for-tat manner. The militant directness of their messages emphasizes how all advertisement is an attack on cultural beliefs, identities, and values.

The Guerilla Girls' main weapon has always been information—the shock, embarrassment, and humiliation of facts which reveal the unfortunate compromises—the collateral damage—of power. With a tabloid-like lust for unsavory facts, they have challenged museums, galleries, art critics, and other artists for supporting a system they see as discriminatory to women and racial minorities. Their "versions of the story"—whether written, publicly announced or plastered on buildings—try to create the feeling that the public framework of representation enforces a system of injustice.

Whether preparing defiant reviews of art exhibits such as the Whitney Biennial, or casting unflattering looks at Jesse Helms or George Bush, the Guerilla Girls focus on those usually left out of the advertisement—those not publicly celebrated—by "outing" the privileged. In threatening the image of a personality, publication, or institution who is an insider in some sense, the Guerilla Girls seek to involve the public in a gaze which critiques the exclusiveness of that position. They seem to change the targets of their messages (watcher and watched) into something a lot less comfortable—something different from a stance which accepts a present or "normal" state of public relations.

During the past six years, the Guerilla Girls have responded to events significant to their political



Mass-media activists with a feminist twist, they're one-part gorilla, one-part guerilla, and many-parts woman.

agenda, emphasized "marginalized" facts, and discovering consistent patterns of art world behavior. In doing so, they have intensified and refocused the art community's sense of being watched.

The tone and wording of their announcements make this watchdog function obvious. A 1986 poster announces those, "Under surveillance this year." Another poster from that year is entitled the "Guerilla Girls Report Card." Many of their headlines, such as the following, identify target groups' crimes in "hit lists:"
What do these artists have in common?
These galleries show no more than . . .
These critics don't write enough about. . .
Which art magazine was worst for. . .

Corner

101 South Linden
Normal IL 61761

Artists

used adult and kid's books

Monday-Saturday
1:00 pm-5:00 pm



The following organizations are suggested by the Guerilla Girls for those interested in finding out more about women and minority artists.

Asian Arts Institute
26 Bowery
NY, NY 10013

Kenkeleba House
214 East 2nd Street
NY, NY 10002

Museum of Contemporary Art
584 Broadway
NY, NY 10012

PEST
P.O. Box 1996
Canal Street Station
NY, NY 10013

The Schomberg Center
NY Public Library
515 Lenox Avenue
NY, NY 10027

The Women's Caucus for Art
New York City Chapter
229 East 21st Street
NY, NY 10010



G.I.s face drug experiment

It alarms me how few people know that the Department of Defense received permission from the FDA to use experimental drugs on troops in the Persian Gulf! I spent some time in the library looking at back issues of such great right wing rags as the *Paragraph* only to find that experimental drugs were renamed additional protection against chemical attack! Instead of additional protection, I would like to have seen something like... On December 21, 1990, the bafoons at the Defense Department obtained a special waiver necessary to require US troops to take experimental drugs.

It seems that the Pentagon health officials whipped up pills and vaccines they called pyridostigmine bromide and diazepam to help deter the effects of a nerve agent attack. Also included was a botulism vaccine to counter a deadly bacterial toxin that could be used by Iraq. Pyridostigmine bromide was provided by the chemical company Duphar B. V. of Holland. It served as a pre-treatment tablet that unit commanders could have their troops begin taking anytime they decided to stomp on the panic button or when the orders came down from a higher command- whoever stomped first.

In the event of an actual nerve agent emergency, you were instructed to jam your syringe full of diazepam into the fatty part of your thigh. However, if you decided to escape, for a while, the tension of a Scud alert while sitting in your shabbily constructed bunker and administering your diazepam, you could be charged under the Uniform Code of Military Justice with using an illegal drug! Yeah, narcotics- you're busted!

If you weren't feeling good enough about the amount of foreign chemicals you had surging through your bloodstream already, you could run back over to medical and be punctured by a two shot series of anthrax injections. No kidding. That stuff Churchill wanted to dump on Berlin. Fortunately, or unfortunately, whichever way you look at it, they (the Allies of 1940) decided to dump a bottle of the junk on an island off of Scotland. All animal life died on the island, and they say that it may be safe to go back in 2050! Talk about your Stephen King horror novel! Then, to really make us feel protected, we were given pills they called really powerful penicillin, to be taken only as ordered.

To make something bad seem a hell of a lot worse, we were told that taking the nerve agent pills too closely together would result in symptoms of a nerve agent poisoning! That involves a lot of twitching, convulsions, and some other involuntary nervous system functions we hadn't experienced since we were two years old. Well, by now we had grown kind of used to the "involuntary" stuff. Hell, why worry, this stuff may not even work! And that was exactly what I was doing when I was told that the different drugs I had taken were no longer a confidential matter.

I was also told to be sure to include my medical adventures in Saudi Arabia in my medical records. Of course, they added there was nothing to worry about. Nothing wrong with my blood. Someone tell that to the Red Cross. Seems they don't want my B negative in the U.S. blood pool. Of course, the "real" problem with my blood was caused by some pesky fleas or flies or something.

This old German guy I heard about, Goethe (the same one that died a couple hundred years ago, but didn't stop the Bush money-sucking vortex of an election machine from sending the language institute with the same name a letter that started, "Dear Goethe,"), once said, "We are never deceived, we deceive ourselves."

Just a Normal G.I. Joe

THE ATTACK SPREADS

The Guerilla Girls' concerns have spread out from the art community to include criticism of the U.S. government. A number of 1991 posters question not only U.S. participation in the Gulf war, but the idea of war itself, contrasting it with social situations within this country which need attention. These posters address foreign and military policies, health issues (healthcare, AIDS research, reproductive rights), and social programs (poverty, homelessness, and education).



DID SHE RISK HER LIFE FOR GOVERNMENTS THAT ENSLAVE WOMEN?

Other war-related posters suggest ways in which the Gulf war supported practices which undermine human rights. A few of these messages specifically target treatment of women who participated in the Gulf war. One poster emphasizes the irony of women fighting for a country in which they must: "Expect to ride in the back of public buses. Expect to be excluded from some stores." This "advice to female soldiers" is printed in the U.S. Army's *A Soldier's Guide to Saudi Arabia*. The poster contrasts the tips in the manual to the treatment a person of color might expect in Montgomery, Alabama, 1955.

UP FRONT GALLERY

A Local Artist's Cooperative Featuring Contemporary Exhibitions of Art

UP FRONT gallery
102 N. Center, 2nd Floor
Downtown Bloomington

Phone 827-3457
Gallery Hours:
12 - 4, Wed. thru Sat.

One anti-war poster, in the form of a letter, mimics how "A REAL American" might respond to how they've seen the war. Writing to "Uncle Sam and the News Media," this caricature treats the war as a piece of entertainment which lacks the intensity, the "BLOOD AND GUTS," of Rambo and Vietnam. Here, the Guerilla Girls, instead of attacking an institution or a individual, represent the average audience in a way clearly meant to be offensive.

IS NORMAL'S GORILLA REAL?

Since October, reproductions of "real" Guerilla Girls' materials have appeared taped to walls in ISU's Center of Visual Arts. These black and white photocopies address issues non-Bloomington/Normal specific.

Recently, an 11" x 8 1/2" flier has appeared in CVA which, in true Guerilla Girl style, presents statistics which reveal an unbalanced relationship of women, racial minorities, and men in various positions in the arts community. What is different about this "Public Service Announcement from the Guerilla Girls" is that it critiques the building which "houses" it. Noticed during Tuesday night's faculty exhibit opening, this piece presents in chart form the gender and minority ratios of ISU's undergraduate art majors, and permanent and temporary faculty.

Where are the Women and Minorities in the I.S.U. Art Department?????????

	Male	Female
Undergraduate art majors	48%	52%
Permanent Faculty	62%	38%
Temporary Faculty	28%	72%

Minority Faculty - 0%
Minority Undergrad art majors - 7%

A Public Service Announcement from the Guerilla Girls

While this flier presents itself in the blunt, sparse graphic style of the Guerilla Girls, and demonstrates similar concerns, it is not necessarily the work of a "real" girl. Has the group been misrepresented, or is there someone legitimately acting for them in this community?

The Guerilla Girls do encourage "like-minded" behavior, but are careful about the image they cultivate. The packet the New York-based group distributes to those interested in their activities includes a form on which Guerilla Girls representatives can select a statement encouraging recipients to start their own Guerilla Girls-style group. The form clearly specifies that such enthusiasts *use their own name*.

Those interested in finding out more about the Guerilla Girls can write to them at: 532 LaGuardia Place; #237; NY, NY 10012. Their publicity packet includes a resume listing exhibits, lectures, grants and awards. Full size posters, for which there is also a list, are available for \$20 each. Contributions are appreciated.

Play review

Cloud 9

This is a difficult review to write. I don't know exactly what to say about this play or its production. "Beauty" is an overused word for the most part. "Joy" is another. I'm always frightened of using these words. They reek of cliché. This play, however, has beggared my supply of adjectives.

To begin, the plot is immensely complex. So much so that I am not going to go into it much. If you want a plot synopsis, find someone who knows the play and give that person a few hours in which to summarize it. I want to talk almost solely about who did what and how, and in that way, you'll get the ghost of a synopsis.

The first act is set in Victorian colonized Africa. The second is set in London, one hundred years later, in 1980. For the characters, though, it has been only twenty-five years. Each actor plays two parts in the course of the performance, per Churchill's direction. There is one exception. One of the actors plays three roles.

This play centers on the comings and goings of one family. Their interrelationships and the intricacies that evolve and are uncovered in the course of this work are astonishing. Any set of actors that can reflect the changes and movements of these people are to be congratulated.

Happily a cast was chosen that could do just that. I want to focus here on specific relationships between characters, while giving each actor his or her own due.



The first of these that comes immediately to mind is the relationship between Betty and Clive. This relationship is centered in the first act. Clive is played by Kelly Van Kirk, Betty by Jeff Grafton. These two are married, and their relationship is truly, truly strange.

Grafton does a marvelous job of playing a woman that is torn between husband and mother. Clive seemingly wishes Betty to be a wife of Empire, a woman that will pump out babies to fuel further conquest and glory. Her mother, Maud, played by Anne Latta, wants the same, although for Betty more than for Empire. Latta-as-Maud is a lost soul. She does a wonderful job of presenting a woman so bent under patriarchy that life without a man is unendurable torn, torment. Her pain has made her bitter and dark. When Grafton and Latta are on stage together, sparks fly.

Nonetheless, it seems that Betty is built for something else. Witness her affair with Harry Bagley, played by Kevin Will, an explorer who strives to hide his homosexuality from his people. Harry is sexually abusing Betty's son, Edward, played by Elizabeth Forte. The relationship between these two is strained and painful. Will does a fine job of showing us a man who is torn between his needs and his self-loathing. Forte, in her turn, shows us a sweet, confused child, only shown love by the man that abuses him.

A word must be said about Van Kirk's work with Clive. Clive is an imperious bastard. We find ourselves absolutely despising the man on more than one occasion. Clive's relationship with his African servant, Joshua, played by Pat Healy, is worked with great strength and subtlety by both actors. Healy is beautiful as a man that has had his identity systematically destroyed by the wishes of white society. He considers Clive a god, and himself genetically tainted, his only hope being to devote himself to something clean, namely Clive. These two actors move around one another, Clive alternating between respect and loathing for Joshua, Joshua feeling occasional twinges of pain over his lost self. The first act closes with Joshua levelling a pistol at the back of Clive's head during a family portrait.

The second act opens in London in 1980. Latta, now a woman named Lin, walks on stage with a boom-box splaying *Cloud 9* theme music. Victoria lounges on a park bench reading. Victoria is Clive and Betty's daughter, played by Elizabeth Forte. Lin is in love with Victoria; they've become friends through talking in the park.

Forte's job as Victoria is a fine thing to see. She plays the educated, upper-class feminist to Latta's slightly lower-class, struggling-to-get-by, single mother character. Their relationship intensifies throughout the course of this act. Lin is deeply in love with Victoria. Victoria learns to love Lin. Watching them move back and forth is beautiful. Watching them come together is more so. Eventually Victoria leaves her husband, Martin, played by Will, to move in with Edward and Lin. There is no easy transition for this, so I'll just say it. Healy plays Lin's daughter, Cathy, a four-year-old. He was stunning. I am still slightly dazed that a twenty-year-old man was able to play a four-year-old girl.

Edward is a young gay man, struggling to accept what he is. He has just left a two-year relationship with a strange, lost man named Gerry. Gerry is played by Grafton. Their breakup is sad, since we sense tremendous love between the two. But there is a conflict of needs. Edward needs home, sanity, peace, whereas Gerry needs sex, fun, and excitement. Van Kirk and Grafton circle each other, constantly being deflected from what they both need--to be together--by surface difficulties. There is evidence that Gerry hates women. He confronts Edward, at one point, with the fact that Edward is living with Victoria and Lin, spitting the word "women"

But something happens to him. He meets up with Edward's mother, Betty, played by Pat Simmons. Simmons was cast as two other characters in the first act. Her performances were on par with anything else in this production, but I particularly want to talk about her as Betty. Betty has left Clive, and is trying desperately to find a life that is her own. Betty casually makes advances toward Gerry. She knows who he is--Edward's ex-fiance--but she doesn't know that either of them are gay. Wonderful things happen in this scene. Betty learns that she can be sexual with a man again. She also learns, after Gerry reveals his sexual orientation, that Edward is gay. She begins to make her peace with this, and understand her son better. Gerry learns not to despise women so much, and even makes friends with Betty.

But back to Betty particularly. This act is about many things, but I think it mainly concerns itself with healing the wounds of the past. In Betty's final monologue, which is beautifully delivered by Simmons, she comes to terms with herself as a separate person from Clive and Maud. She learns to love herself. After the monologue, which must be read, Betty from the first act comes on stage and embraces Betty from the second act. This is a rare joy.

All the characters in the second act, in one way or another, learn to love and treasure themselves. Lin, in one scene, repairs her damaged relationship with Cathy by protecting her from some thugs that have given her a bloody nose. Up until this time, their relationship is strictly "friendly". Edward finds a way to stand up for himself and confront Gerry, making an ultimate truce between them. Gerry learns to focus on what he really needs. Even totalitarian Martin finds a certain compassion within himself. Victoria learns to love without over-intellectualizing. She also finds herself finally loving her mother.

There is a strength, a joy, and almost painful beauty in this play. The cast was focused on one thing--the movement of these characters from darkness into light--and it showed. There is a lesson here. If a twenty-year-old man can play a four-year-old girl, then can we truly be separate from one another? Churchill tells us that there is something basic about us that makes us human. And that one thing is what she, and this cast, managed to make real. It is rare and fine.

--J. Guzzo

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Dear Ms. Hippie



Dear Ms. Hippie,

I've only been in the area for a couple of years, but I know you've been around for decades, so I appeal to you. Please tell me, what's happened to this place? Some friends of mine who've been active in the left since the early '60's are always telling me about the hundreds of people who would turn out for marches and demonstrations. Now we're lucky to get 10 or 20.

I know that that generation of activists has grown older and moved away and died and stuff, but didn't any of them stay? Didn't any of them reproduce? Has the Reagan revolution got my generation completely brainwashed?

Please help me, Ms. Hippie. I'm tired of seeing the same dozen faces at all the meetings.

--Looking for radicals

Dear Ms. Hippie,

Do you find any cause for rejoicing in David Duke's gubernatorial defeat? I mean, personally, I'm as pleased as a well-groomed cat that he lost the Louisiana Governor's race by such a wide margin. But that hardly means that he and other white-sheeted, hate-spewing demagogues with good PR firms and competent plastic surgeons can't reinvent themselves right into the White House.

So do you think his presidential race might split the Republican party? Do you think that good lefties like me can regard Duke's defeat and presidential ambitions as a moment to hope? Will programs for social justice rise from his ashes?

Please, Ms. Hippie, may I gloat in good conscience?

--Any reason to hope

Dear Readers,

Clearly, Ms. Hippie now needs to guide her readership concerning what type of questions may properly and profitably be put to her. The examples above do not belong to this type.

Ms. Hippie is pleased to answer questions of etiquette, language, interpersonal relations, domestic arrangements, library enhancement, and sometimes fashion--in brief, matters of the heart. She attempts to give an educated and thoughtful response to each query; in some cases, she settles for a humorous reply that may gently instruct her readers.

However, the kinds of questions that are posed in saloons after the brew has been flowing freely should best be answered in their native environment. For example, "What happened to all the real women?" and "Since when can't ya even tell a little ethnic joke?" This month's readers, though showing a good deal more vision, require the same type of yeasty, rambling exposition to do their inquiries justice.

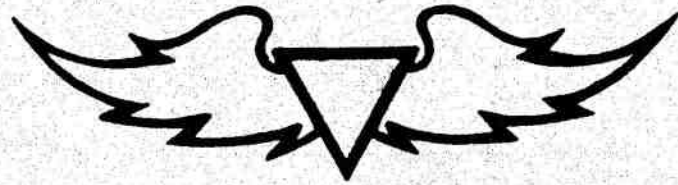
Got a problem? Write Ms. Hippe, c/o Post Amerikan P.O. Box 3452 Bloomington, IL 61702



Gays bash back

Chicago's Pink Angels, Chicago's first volunteer gay/lesbian/bisexual anti-violence project, announced recently its ongoing street patrol and its partnering with the Guardian Angels. Both organizations will patrol Chicago streets beginning December 6 and 7 to deter and report all crimes, especially hate crimes.

Founded in September 1991 by Alan R. Toler, the Pink Angels will work closely with the Chicago Police Department's Beat Patrol Program, patrolling the Lakeview and Andersonville neighborhoods every Friday and Saturday night. The organization hopes to deter crimes against everyone, but especially hate crimes against non-heterosexual people.



**PINK ANGELS
ANTI-VIOLENCE PROJECT**

"Our goal is to make our community safe for everyone," explained Toler. "We will make sure each hate crime is reported to the Police Department."

In addition to reporting hate crimes, the Pink Angels aim to educate the community with self-defense seminars, sending a clear message to perpetrators; that lesbian, gay and bisexual people are not isolated, acceptable targets, but members of a strong community that can and will defend itself.

The Pink Angels have been trained in defense techniques by the Guardian Angels and equipped with walkie-talkies. Their main objective will be to create a presence in order to deter crime.

According to the Pink Angels Anti-violence Project, 198 anti-gay hate crimes were committed last year in Chicago alone. This figure does not include the multitude of bias crimes that go unreported. In response, local communities and organizations like the Pink Angels are beginning to take more of an active responsibility for their own safety and the security of their neighborhoods.

"Crime will continue to rise until people work together to control it," said Mike Fuentes, Chicago chapter leader for the Guardian Angels. "The Pink Angels are an example of the community involvement necessary to control crime. Their presence on the streets will act as a strong deterrent to people who commit hate crimes."

For more information on the Pink Angels, call (312) 549-7215.

Lesbian writers fund accepting submissions

The Lesbian Writers Fund of the Astraea National Lesbian Action Foundation is now accepting entries for its annual awards in the categories of fiction and poetry. Prospective applicants must send for guidelines and an application form. Deadline for the 1992 cycle is March 13, 1992.

Now in its second year, the Lesbian Writers Fund was established by the Astraea National Lesbian Action Foundation to support the work of emerging lesbian writers of fiction and poetry. Five awards of \$11,000 each, two in poetry and three in fiction, will be made in June 1992.

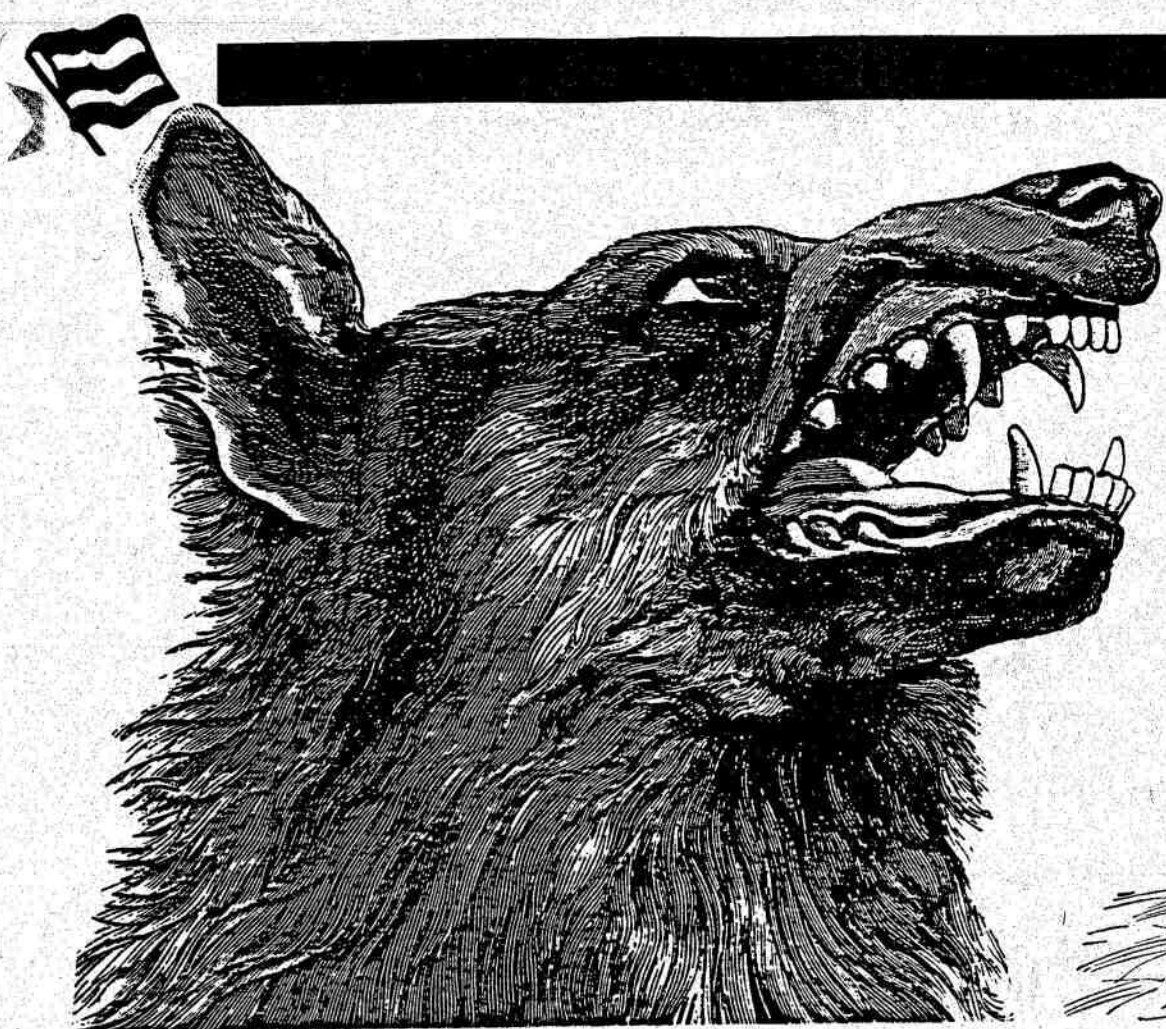


Astraea, the first nationwide lesbian foundation, has been a grassroots-oriented organization since its founding in 1977. Started by a multi-racial, multi-cultural group of feminist activists, Astraea has always worked with and on behalf of projects that contribute to the well-being of women and girls. 1990 marked the beginning of Astraea as the National Lesbian Action Foundation.

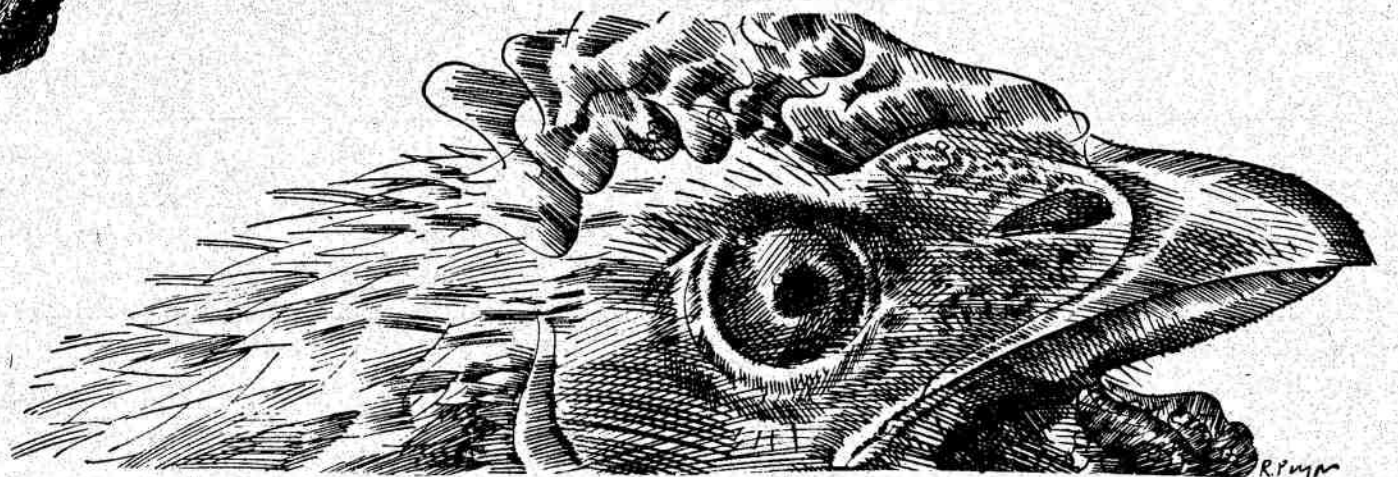
Applicants to the Lesbian Writers Fund must have published at least one piece of work in a magazine, literary journal or anthology. A completed application and writing sample must be submitted by March 13, 1992, to be considered for a 1992 grant.

For guidelines, eligibility criteria, and application form, write to:

Lesbian Writers Fund
Astraea National Lesbian Action Foundation
666 Broadway, Suite 520
New York, NY 10012



Animal Magnetism



Disabled activists, former poster children oppose animal experimentation

The Health Care Consumer Network (HCCN) has issued a challenge to research-sponsoring organizations to begin phasing out animal research policies by the end of 1991. HCCN is an organization of people affected by illnesses and disabling conditions that is committed to raising public awareness of issues and concerns of importance to patients that may remain unaddressed by other organizations.

Lawrence Carter, Director of HCCN and former poster child for the United Fund, criticized the current state of medical research. "Most organizations continue to accrue enormous amounts of money by exploiting stereotypes of people with disabilities through crippled children telethons and the like, but to what end? We continue to hear of countless experiments that proved useful in animal studies, but were unsuccessful when applied to humans. We're talking about more than a grant application here. We're talking about people's lives. People aren't rats. We deserve better than false hope and broken promises."

For your information

The Easter Seal Research Foundation conducts all of its research without animal experiments. YAY!

Gene-altered blood factories

DNX Corp., a Princeton-based firm, has announced the development of genetically engineered pigs which will produce large quantities of human hemoglobin. Hemoglobin is the oxygen-carrying component of blood.

DNX has reportedly created three gene-altered pigs which were injected when they were day-old embryos with sets of two genes that control the manufacture of hemoglobin. The goal is to provide a cheaper and virtually unlimited alternative to human blood.

From the desk of...

Edward Abbey— "I'm in favor of animal liberation. Why? Because I'm an animal."

The Bird— "I'm in favor of animal liberation. Why? Because every three seconds an animal dies in a U.S. lab."

Computer alternative to practice surgery

Scientists from NASA have developed a three-dimensional computer simulation of a human leg that may mean the end of the use of animals to practice leg surgery. The computer model was developed, in part, to train surgeons to perform delicate tendon transfer operations in which the end of a detached muscle is repositioned on the bone surface.

So the next time someone tells you that a computer model simply can't replace practicing on animals, you can just say, "Not!"



Victory for professor and animal rights

The University of California at Davis (UCD) has agreed to the entry of a permanent injunction prohibiting the University from taking any punitive action against a veterinary professor who objected to forcing his students to kill healthy nonhuman animals as part of an eye surgery lab exercise.

Dr. Nedim C. Buyukmihci, a professor of ophthalmology at UCD and an internationally recognized animal rights advocate, claimed in a 1989 civil rights lawsuit that the University threatened to fire him, removed him as the leader of an ophthalmology course and denied him a merit pay increase because he exercised his free speech rights. Dr. Buyukmihci had advocated offering alternatives to students who objected to killing healthy animals.

In addition to a permanent injunction prohibiting it from taking any punitive action based on Dr. Buyukmihci's statements about animal rights and student rights, the University is prohibited from pursuing faculty discipline charges filed against Dr. Buyukmihci in 1988 and from depriving him of the departmental support he received for his merit pay increase. Dr. Buyukmihci will also receive \$75,000 in damages plus payment of his attorney's fees.

Dr. Buyukmihci said, "This is a critical victory for the First Amendment as well as for the animal rights movement. The University is to be commended for its decision."

General Motors has taken up vivisection

Ferrets are being used to determine "the influence of contact velocity and level of deformation on the anatomic and functional severity of brain injury." In other words, the ferrets' heads are bashed in order to see what types of injuries occur at different speeds. These ferrets suffer anything from "no apparent anatomic injury . . . to immediate fatality," including spinal damage, contusions and physiological alterations.

To protest these cruel and needless experiments, please write to GM and ask that they be stopped immediately. Contact: Dr. James Lighthall, Biomedical Science Department, GM Research Laboratories, Warren, MI, 48090.

Where do experimenters obtain animals?

Approximately 90 million animals are used each year in research in the US. They come from a variety of sources, including breeding farms, animal shelters, zoos or they may be stolen pets.

From the desk of Mahatma Gandhi

"I abhor vivisection with my whole soul. I detest the unpardonable slaughter of innocent life in the name of science and of humanity so-called, and all the scientific discoveries stained with innocent blood I count as of no consequence."

—All news compiled from A-V Magazine by the Bird 2

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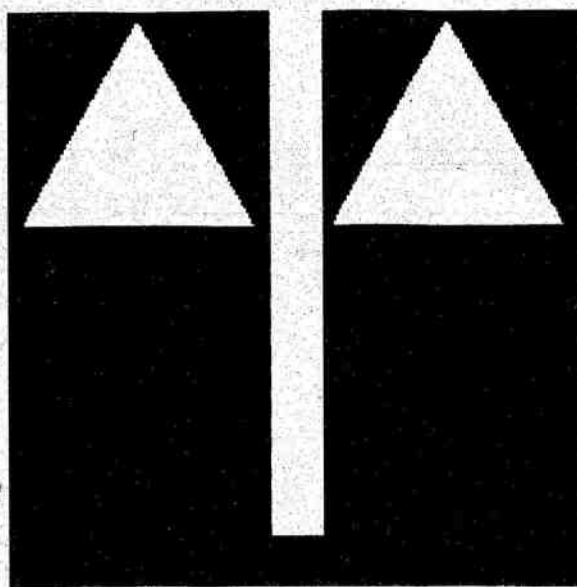
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Lambda News



Homophobic and AIDS-phobic initiative blocked

AUGUST 25: Opponents of a proposed municipal initiative to repeal Riverside, California's existing AIDS discrimination ordinance and prevent the city from taking any action or expending any funds that would "promote, encourage, endorse, legitimize or justify homosexuality" won a major victory when the Superior Court of Riverside County refused to force the city to place the initiative on the November ballot.

Intervening on the side of the city were Lambda as lead counsel and co-counsel ACLU Foundation of Southern California, who jointly represented the Riverside Coalition Against Discrimination (RCAD) and individual plaintiffs Dr. Francis Carnot and E. June Forman.

The initiative had been circulated in Riverside churches by Riverside Citizens for Responsible Behavior, a group believed to be linked with Lou Sheldon's rabidly homophobic Traditional Values Coalition. The group garnered over 15,000 signatures in a hate campaign that targeted Riverside's non-heterosexual residents. Greg Bredbeck, a spokesperson for the opposing RCAD, called the initiative "a clear example of hatred being foisted upon our community by spiteful agitators."

After the initiative qualified for the ballot, Lambda Staff Attorney Mary Newcombe, with the assistance of Cooperating Attorney Michael Colantuono, advised the city not to place the initiative on the ballot because it was legally invalid. The city agreed, and following a heated debate with supporters of the initiative, refused to place the measure on the ballot. The proponents then sought a court order to force the city to place the measure on the ballot. On August 19, Judge Charles Field issued an opinion siding with the city.

Newcombe stated, "Judge Fields not only recognized that the proposed initiative violated the city's charter, he also recognized the discriminatory intent of the initiative toward the city's gay and lesbian residents and those who are fighting HIV disease. This decision bodes well for our future challenges against right-wing legislation across the country." Anti-gay legislation similar to the Riverside initiative is pending in the States of California and Colorado and the City of Concord, CA.

In his decision, Judge Field stated, "the proposed ordinance is designed to permit and encourage private discrimination against homosexuals and persons with AIDS... the invectives directed towards the homosexual community and persons with AIDS make this purpose unmistakably clear... The equal protection guarantees of the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution...[safeguard] any group whose rights to equal protection are being violated."

Georgia Supreme Court hears lesbian contract case

October 1—The Georgia Supreme Court heard oral arguments the week of September 23 on whether the joint property contract of a lesbian couple is legally enforceable under state law. The case, *Crooke v. Gilden*, is the first of its kind to be decided by the Georgia high court, and is one of only a handful of legal cases involving the enforceability of contracts entered into by same-sex couples.

The women, Patricia Gagne Gilden and Florence Crooke, began their relationship in 1982. Shortly after Gilden moved into Crooke's home, they retained a lawyer to draft a joint ownership agreement setting forth the terms of their ownership of the house and other personal property. The written agreement stipulated that Crooke would convey one-half ownership interest in the house. In exchange, Gilden would contribute money towards renovations on the house. The contract also stated that all property owned by the women before the agreement or acquired during the relationship would be considered joint property to be divided equally between them.

When the couple ended their relationship in 1989, Gilden asked for her share of the house and the personal property. Crooke refused and Gilden filed an action asking the court to enforce the written agreement. In response to Gilden's suit, Crooke took the position that the contract was unenforceable because their lesbian relationship violated the state's public policy and criminal laws.

The trial court accepted Crooke's arguments and refused to enforce the agreement on the grounds that the women entered into the contract "to facilitate a relationship which in Georgia is considered illegal and immoral."

Lambda, along with the National Center for Lesbian Rights and the assistance of Boston-based law firm Tesca, Hurwitz and Thibeault submitted a friend of the court brief to the Georgia Supreme Court arguing the importance of court enforcement of contracts between members of same-sex couples.

Traditionally, courts have been reluctant to enforce contracts between two unmarried people who live together on the theory that allowing unmarried people to designate their own rights would denigrate the institution of marriage. The Georgia case is thought to be the first lesbian couple contract enforcement case to go to a state's highest court.

"The case is about the autonomy of a lesbian couple to make their own decisions about how to divide their property," said Lambda Legal Director Paula Ettelbrick. "The more we push for greater autonomy for unmarried couples, the more marriage is perceived as irrelevant. This concept scares the courts to death."

Illinois Lesbian makes good

October 31—Lambda announced the appointment of Penny Perkins as its Public Education Coordinator. As Public Education Coordinator, Perkins oversees the development of publications, including *The Lambda Update*, Lambda's newsletter which chronicles the group's legal cases, political analysis, and educational and fundraising events. Perkins also coordinates Lambda's public relations and educational forums and conferences.

Perkins commented, "Like other civil rights legal groups, we're putting a new focus and new energy toward moving the mind of the public regarding lesbian, gay and HIV/AIDS issues—it's an essential strategy in transforming the community, especially since the courts, particularly the federal courts, have moved so far to the right under the appointments of Reagan and Bush."

Perkins grew up in Altamont, Illinois. She graduated with honors in Philosophy from Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut and holds a Masters degree in English from the State University of New York at Albany. Before coming to Lambda, she worked as a grantwriter for the Museum of Modern Art. In her spare time, Perkins is a devoted fiction writer; she will have several short stories published this winter.

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Those who can



Who will do the difficult things in this life? Those who can.

—Italian proverb

A few weeks ago, not long after Clarence Thomas' depressing confirmation to the United States' Supreme Court, an old friend, now living in Northern California, sent me a brief note, part of which expressed her depression over Thomas' confirmation and apparently deepening cynicism over the prospect of finding *any* sort of social justice in this country.

If you can't attack her credibility, then impugn her character

I have to admit I understood exactly how she felt. Her note brought back vividly recent memories of those grim days, when I was glued to my set. My mood darkened with every successive minute as I sat watching all those pompous men. They were so righteously tailored, so smugly certain of their sexual superiority, that they didn't even *try* to conceal their smirks as they questioned Professor Hill.

And the conceptual gyrations those sanctimonious demagogues went through to account for Professor Hill's "hidden" motivation for coming forward with very serious charges of sexual harassment still boggle my imagination.

No justice

First Professor Hill's detractors declared her politically motivated. Obviously she was one of those liberal/feminist/radicals who those in power still unaccountably persist in asserting "really" run the government, the schools, the media—you name it. However, once Professor Hill's assiduous campaign on behalf of Robert Bork's Supreme Court nomination came to general attention, she was next declared delusional. Once again, witness after witness testified, as did Professor Hill's own demeanor, achievements, and personal history, to her sanity.

Then it was suggested that she was motivated by sexual rejection. With no evidence to support this suggestion other than innuendo and supposition on the part of some of her examiners, some suggested that Professor Hill was motivated by revenge. Possibly, they said, she'd had a "crush" on Justice Thomas, was rejected, and her accusations of sexual harassment was her revenge, the revenge of a "woman scorned."

Once again, old friends and acquaintances came forward to testify on oath that Professor Hill seemed to conduct a perfectly normal, healthily active social life. What's more, these same witnesses testified that to their knowledge, there was never the slightest suggestion on her part of her having any other than purely professional interest in Justice Thomas.

Finally, having failed at all else, Professor Hill's detractors suggested, in an especially offensive innuendo imbued with racist and sexist stereotypes, that Professor Hill, tenured Professor of Law at the University of Oklahoma, allowed herself to be manipulated and exploited, as though she were some sort of mindless marionette, by those mysterious liberal forces who sought to derail Justice Thomas' nomination.

And no mercy either

In a system of justice predicated upon the presumption of innocence, Clarence Thomas, like any other person accused of wrongdoing, possesses a constitutional right to be presumed innocent until proven otherwise and ought to be allowed the benefit of the doubt. But to give someone so accused the benefit of the doubt does not extend to turning the accuser's life into a tawdry carnival, nor does granting that benefit depend upon sneering at the charges as being by their very nature insignificant, inconsequential, immaterial and irrelevant anyway.

The Anita Hill/Clarence Thomas controversy over sexual harassment, like this past summer's controversy over the movie "Thelma and Louise," did not, as the political commentator and cultural critic Ellen Goodman suggested in her recent *New York Times* Book Review of Susan Faladi's *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women*, come out of nowhere.

Maybe you can die laughing

I understand that the contemporary Canadian novelist, Margaret Atwood (*The Handmaid's Tale*, *Cat's Eye*, and so on), when teaching as a visiting professor at various North American colleges and universities, routinely asks male and female students what they most fear from the opposite sex. The women invariably answer that they fear violence, sexual and otherwise, from men. The men, however, routinely answer that they're afraid women will laugh at them.

Whether we want to admit it or not, we live in a rape culture, a culture where women of all ages deal with as part of their daily lives the constant threat of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence, where they still have to prove themselves twice as competent at their careers or avocations to be considered half as good as a man, where their ambitions, intelligence, and characters can be called into question instantaneously by the most casual and crude of innuendos about their marital status, sexual orientation, or body parts.

There are many depressing aspects about Thomas' confirmation. There's his highly questionable competence, not as a judge sitting on the Circuit Court of Appeals, but to sit on the highest court in the land (no legal scholarship worth noting). There's his clear, breathtaking, intellectual dishonesty. He claimed, for example, that he never thought about or expressed an opinion, one way or the other, of *Roe v. Wade*. That decision has made abortion legal in the United States since 1973. *Roe v. Wade* is without doubt the most controversial Supreme Court decision of the last twenty years. And that decision was handed down while Justice Thomas was a student at Yale Law School.

Finally, there's his downright cultural opportunism. Conveniently, cleverly, Justice Thomas, in a particularly offensive move, claimed racial discrimination before the Senate Judiciary Committee over the charge of sexual harassment. In other words, he did not hesitate to benefit from the hard-won accomplishments of a Civil Rights Movement which he has consistently repudiated throughout his career.

Even Herbert Hoover sought to maintain balance in his Supreme Court appointments, conservative and stuffy as he was.

The emperor wore no clothes, and the justice wears no robes

And if all that doesn't depress you, campers, then consider who Justice Thomas replaces. Thurgood Marshall. *Thurgood Marshall*. The great litigator of the Civil Rights Movement. The attorney who successfully argued "Brown vs. The State Board of Education" before the United States Supreme Court. That 1954 decision became the judicial watershed which ended legally sanctioned segregation in the United States. Forever. Or so we thought.

To be fair, not many Supreme Court appointees could fill Thurgood Marshall's gigantic shoes. And I think it imperative that minority voices be represented on the Supreme Court. But surely we could have found a legal scholar worthy of the name. But I forget myself. Recent presidents consistently attempt to legislate through Supreme Court appointments. Justice Thomas' appointment is all of a piece.

We can forget the attempts at balancing the political spectrum—representing conservative, liberal, leftist political views—in Supreme Court appointments. Even Herbert Hoover sought to maintain balance in his Supreme Court appointments, conservative and stuffy as he was.



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You mean it gets worse?

All that aside, perhaps the most depressing aspect of Justice Thomas' confirmation hearings was that many of the members of Congress who gave credence to Professor Hill voted to confirm Justice Thomas anyway. As far as our government is concerned, sexual injustice, like other forms of social injustice, just doesn't matter.

Like my friend, I've been battling cynicism and world weariness myself. Part of that, as I suggested to my class the other day, is one of the hazards of age. Amazing what being knocked around by life and experience can do to your idealism and commitment to social justice.

Amazing what being kicked around by life and experience can do to your idealism and commitment to social justice.

So why bother?

I find myself asking what's the point? Why bother to complain, to write, to teach, to come forward, to sign petitions, participate in demonstrations, to donate my time and energy to the *Post Amerikan*? Why should I give my money to NARAL (National Abortion Rights Action League), ACT-UP, the United Negro College Fund, Battered Women's Shelters and Rape Crisis Centers, or even WGLT? Why should I maintain my membership status in the ACLU or Teachers for A Democratic Culture? What good am I doing?

Report from the front

If and when I leave the Bloomington-Normal area for greener career pastures, should I even bother to donate an afternoon to the local soup kitchen or work with the local literacy program? I'm only one person, and I can do so little relative to our overwhelming national problems of poverty and illiteracy and injustice.

Besides that, it seems clear to me that the forces of the Right are not satisfied with gutting the fourth, fifth and sixth amendments. Now many conservatives seem to be gunning for the first, second and third. We're definitely losing the war, children.

Is it really better to die on your feet than live on your knees?

My friend, whose terrifically compromised, terribly frustrated position as a secondary school teacher in Northern California I outlined in some detail for "R is for... Readin' Writin' and 'Rithmetic" (*Post Amerikan*, October-November 1990, 16-17), told me one night, several weeks subsequent to her letter, that the school district she currently works in will be building a new school in a wealthier part of town. This new school will be one with better working conditions—full-size classrooms with windows and enough desks and chairs for all the students. She'd be able to thumb her nose at the administrative personnel who gave her such grief at every turn. Those administrators threw bureaucratic roadblocks in her path every time she tried to rectify a problem, no matter if the problem affected the students, the faculty or the general community.

Highly qualified, eminently competent, and trilingual to boot (she speaks both Italian and Spanish), she could easily transfer to that cushier job. But she told me she's decided to stay where she is, inadequate facilities, incompetent administrators and all, because she figures that that's where she's most needed. The school she teaches in now will increasingly serve as a holding pen for future generations of the underclass. But she believes that it will be there where she can remain true to the ideals that led her into education in the first place.

Occasions for courage may be dramatic or they may be ordinary, but acting courageously is never easy.

Ideals? Oh those

She believes that quality education is a public right. Commitment to quality education is a mandate for a cultural progress. Quality education is the tool essential to overcoming poverty, despair, ignorance, and historically entrenched social injustice. Flamingly radical, irresponsibly leftwing positions like those. Those positions constitute her ideals.

If neither justice nor mercy, then perhaps redemption

Courage is an odd quality. Occasions for courage suddenly appear in circumstances where you never expect to see it, and in the last people you thought capable of it, such as yourself. Often you don't realize how brave someone's been until much after the fact.

The occasion for courage can be flashily romantic, such as rushing into a burning building to rescue first the people, and then rushing in again to save the cat. Or it can be resoundingly ordinary, such as Rosa Parks refusing to give up her seat to some white man. Either way, each of those scenarios prove the truth of that Italian proverb. Occasions for courage may be dramatic or they may be ordinary, but acting courageously is never easy.

So am I too one of those who will do the difficult things in this life? I don't know, because I've never done a brave thing in my life. I certainly can't claim that as an adult I've ever been called on to prove my courage.

Only on one occasion, many years ago when I was twelve, did I find myself in a situation where I should have showed if not bravery, then certainly courage. But I failed miserably, then. I failed both the person I should have defended and myself, for I behaved with truly unconscionable cowardice. Some other girls started to bully her and I just walked away.

Nearly twenty-five years later, that act of cowardice still haunts me. To me that act of cowardice represents a failure for which I can't afford to forgive myself.

Brave? Me?

We never know what circumstances into which life will put us. We may find ourselves called on to do the right thing. And doing the right thing always comes at some personal cost, or at the very least, some personal risk. Money. Status. Career. Reputation. Acting courageously can mean we risk losing those things.

Should I ever again find myself in circumstances requiring courage, I hope that then I will rise to them. Like Anita Hill. Like my friend. Two of those who can.

—Dr. Attitude

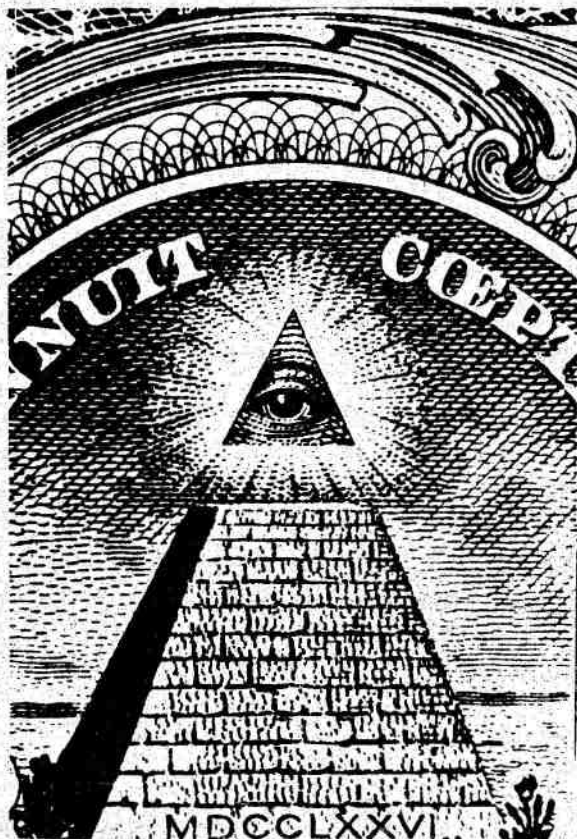
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What does Magic mean to AIDS activists?

AIDS in a new package

It's hard to be continuously angry.

But AIDS activism has been built on anger, anger over prejudice and intolerance, anger over ignorance and indifference.

Anger has motivated AIDS activists into the 1990's, keeping the movement alive through ten years and over 125,000 deaths.

And so, with great skepticism caused by my continuous rage, I listened to Magic Johnson announce to the world that he was HIV+, infected with the virus that is thought to bring about AIDS. I listened to every word he said, anxious to pick apart every slip up that would reveal his misconceptions about AIDS and people with AIDS.

And I listened, too, as countless sports figures were interviewed about Magic's test results. I read columns and editorials in the *Pantagraph*, *ISU's Vidette*, and the *Chicago Tribune* by people who had not once considered writing about AIDS until they found out about Magic.

I reread and relistened to these many words from new voices, searching for something to make me angry.

And you know what. All I did was get tired. I got tired of being angry. Tired of looking for prejudice, intolerance, ignorance, and indifference. In the scheme of the AIDS epidemic, Magic's frank and hopefully honest disclosure about the nature of his infection is a good sign, plain and simple.

Not perfect, of course

Sure, not every aspect of his revelation was perfect. Not every fact and every word he used was completely accurate. And not every media commentary has been fair and true. Did I really expect it would be? For the most part, I'm happy (and surprised) that Magic chose to undergo certain personal criticism and put a new face on the epidemic.

His announcement has already had a tangible effect on the media. Newspeople and even sports reporters now have to know the difference between infection with HIV and having full blown AIDS. Idiots like Andy Rooney claim that it is "splitting hairs" for most Americans, but I couldn't disagree more. While Rooney's comments show how prejudice has shaped people's willingness to be uninformed about AIDS, many people now realize that people who contract HIV can be healthy and strong both before and after infection.

A column in the student newspaper *The Vidette* clearly shows this transformation in thinking. Susan Cooper, writing a sports commentary, says how she was horrified by the announcement. "Then and there, my whole concept of (my own) immortality was shattered. If someone as strong and healthy such as Magic could contract HIV then it could happen to anybody—even somebody who thinks she will never grow old and die: me."

Of course, in her statement about Magic being "strong and healthy," Cooper reveals the deep-seated prejudice about people with AIDS that has remained unchanged, that PWAs led unhealthy and destructive lives and that AIDS is a natural consequence of their lifestyle. But to AIDS activists, Cooper's and the country's lingering prejudice comes as no surprise. As much as we have yelled and screamed and ranted, we have not reached everyone with our message, and, like it or not, Magic can.

Magic as AIDS spokesperson

As AIDS activists, we will have to approach Magic with cautious optimism, though it goes against the very nature of our movement to trust an outsider, especially from the popular mainstream.

As I see it, his biggest flaw early on has been his eagerness to simplify the fight against AIDS into the promotion of "safe sex." Educating people about safe sex has its limitations. No matter how many people know about safer sex practices, human nature is too predictable and human will too weak. Knowledge about safe sex will probably only slow down the spread of AIDS, not stop it entirely.

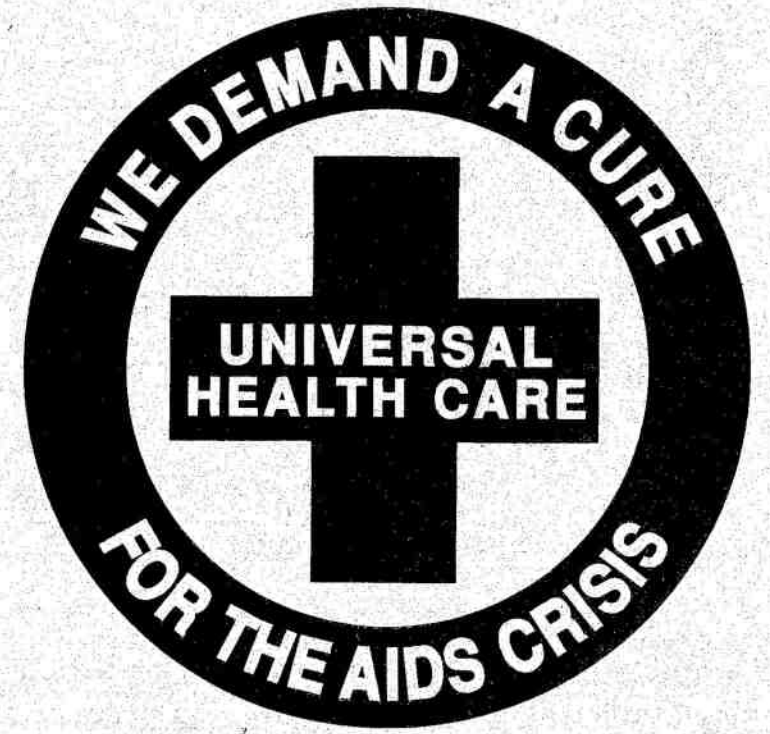
And what about the religious and moral baggage that sex retains? With many Americans being told by their religious leaders that condoms are a sin, espousing condom use will be additionally hampered.

And, as many conservative Americans are shouting in Magic backlash, there is essentially no "safe sex." Unless you buy into Dan Quayle's foolish and unrealistic espousal of abstinence, for most of us there can only be safer sex, sex that lowers the risk of HIV infection, but does not guarantee against transmission.

And Magic must also realize that any activist agenda to combat HIV must take on all issues surrounding AIDS, including discrimination against people with AIDS and the groups in society they come from, including gay men. Until Amerika starts caring about all people with AIDS, they will resist getting behind an anti-AIDS agenda, especially if they think it can kill off all the faggots (which it won't, of course).

As an AIDS activist, I am encouraged by Magic Johnson's openness and welcome him into the AIDS activist community. Let's hope we can "straighten" him out and get him the facts about the nature of the AIDS epidemic before he's brainwashed on Bush's National Commission on AIDS.

—Peter Howells



Magic Uppers & Downers

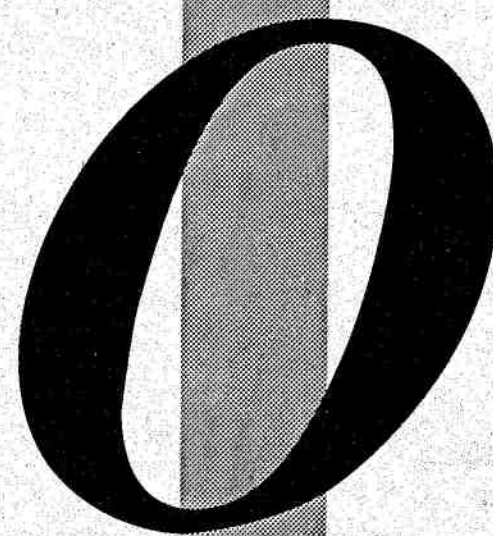
Uppers... to George Bush for appearing decisive in his appointment of Magic Johnson to the National Commission on AIDS. The Commission needs increased visibility and hopefully Magic can get his shit together and make a difference.

Downers... to George Bush for his appointment of Magic Johnson to his Commission on AIDS. What a cynical and shitty move on his part, continuing to ignore the other heroes with AIDS including many gay men who have fought courageously in the face of AIDS despite years of oppression. Wouldn't it be better to have a PWA who was a little more knowledgeable about AIDS rather than a sports superstar?

Uppers... to the Fox Network and local Fox 43 for airing condom commercials. On-air statement by local management stated how airing these commercials is imperative considering the AIDS crisis. Let's hope that Magic can convince the other networks to do the same.

Downers... to the McLean County AIDS Task Force for its ill-planned and ill-timed community forum in response to Magic Johnson's announcement that he is infected with HIV. The forum, which was poorly attended, was not-so-coincidentally scheduled at the same time as a bi-weekly ACT UP meeting.

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