

COLORADO BOYCOTT MOVE GETTING TENSE

Aspen, Colorado - Colorado's ski resorts, which draw some 10 million visitors annually, are concerned about the effects of a national boycott of the state called by gay rights activists because of a new anti-gay law. One Aspen resort, which hosts the annual Gay Ski Week, says it has already had cancellations because of the boycott even though Aspen joined with Denver and Boulder in a lawsuit challenging the state's newly passed Amendment 2. Concern over the boycott move rose further when tennis ace Martina Navratilova wrote that she would move from her adopted home state if the anti-gay law isn't toppled by the courts. "If Amendment 2 is not overturned," Navratilova wrote, "I will move out of Colorado, I will not pay taxes in a state that does not recognize me as an equal citizen."

U OF IOWA BEGINS PARTNER BENEFIT PLAN

Iowa City, Iowa - While Harvard and Stanford have been slowly inching toward extending domestic partner benefits for the past several years, the regents of the University of Iowa quietly went ahead and added partner benefits for its gay and lesbian employees. The Iowa plan goes into effect at the beginning of 1993 as a 3-year trial. In 1996, the regents will review the self-insured health plan to determine if the program can be put into effect permanently at the Midwest campus.

This month's NEWS comes from Washington Blade and IN.

RIGHTS FIGHT MOVES NORTH

If you thought that the Maine queer rights struggle was moving to the back burner of municipal politics after Portland's anti-discrimination ordinance was upheld on 11/3, think again, *and get out your letter-writing equipment as soon as you finish reading this article*. On 1/6, a similar ordinance is being presented to the Lewiston City Council by members of the Lewiston Police Department's Hate and Bias Crime Task Force. The proposed ordinance, which is almost identical to Portland's, would ban discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in the areas of employment, housing, credit, and public accommodations.

Although few had heard about the Task Force's plans to propose the ordinance before news of it appeared on 12/7 in the Lewiston-Auburn *Sun Journal*, activists mobilized immediately to ensure the ordinance's passage. On Sunday, 12/13, a meeting organized by Task Force members Ray Robichaud and Roland Blais was held at a local queer bar, the Sportsman's Athletic Club, to discuss strategies for passing the ordinance. Attending the meeting, in addition to numerous Lewiston queers, were a variety of other supporters, including Lewiston mayor James Howaniec, Lewiston Police Chief Laurent Gilbert, State Senator Dale McCormick, MLGPA luminary Paula Aboud, Portland City Councilor Peter O'Donnell, who proposed the ordinance in that city, and a number of people involved in Equal Protection Portland - EPP Steering Committee members Larry Bliss, Mary

McLean, Barb Wood, and the EPP consultant Al Caron.

The first points of discussion were the goal and the timing of putting forth the ordinance. Chief Gilbert and Mayor Howaniec both emphasized that the ordinance was designed to be an anti-discrimination ordinance as opposed to a "gay rights" bill, since it would protect heterosexuals as well as homosexuals and bisexuals. They also expressed confidence that they could muster the votes for passage. After a general consensus on the feasibility of moving on it now, the rest of the meeting was devoted to figuring out how to get this ordinance passed in the short amount of time before the hearing, although discussion was also initiated on long-term strategies for defeating a referendum to overturn it, for which opponents will almost certainly petition if the ordinance passes. EPP representatives outlined some necessary features of pro-ordinance activism - fundraising, outreach, securing testimony, etc. - and discussed some of the strategies they considered to be effective, including EPP's attempt to focus debate on the issue of anti-discrimination rather than on the issue of queer rights. EPPers' accounts also indicated some EPP failures that the newly formed Equal Protection Lewiston can work to avoid.

More LEWISTON ➤ page 6

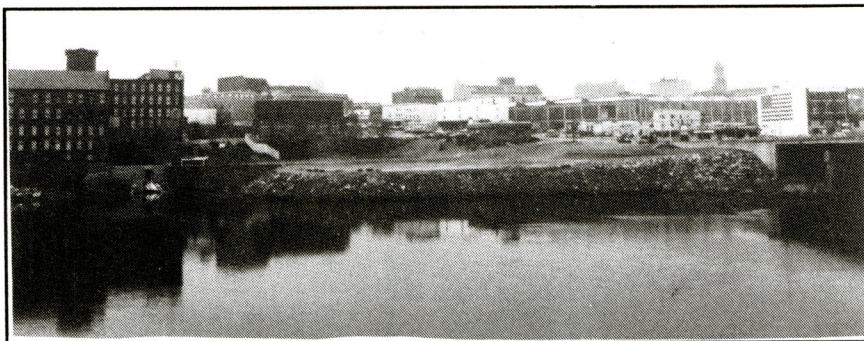


photo by Annette Dragon

LEWISTON WAITS

LETTERS

The Collective

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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Phoenix Press is a collectively run organization whose purpose is to build and empower our community by providing positive lesbian/gay images. We will be a forum for the exchange of ideas through debate and discussion. The collective will work to reflect the political and social diversity of our community.

SUBMISSIONS

All submissions should be typed and double-spaced if at all possible. Please include your name and phone number in case we have any questions. Your name will be withheld at your request, but any material received without a contact name or number will not be published. Submissions *must* be received by the 20th of each month. Thank you for your contributions.

P.O. Box 4743
Portland, ME 04112
(207) 282-8091

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The following is a copy of a letter that was originally sent to the co-chairs of the Matlovich Society. Ed.

Greetings:

While there is no question that the Matlovich Society has presented an interesting series of lectures and is undoubtedly pointed in the right direction, I have decided not to renew my membership.

I am doing this because it is my impression that the Society is a bit too closed. For example, I have never seen a list of officers or board members, nor have I been notified of membership or board meetings or seen an accounting of finances. I could be in error, but I think the Society is run by a tight, inbred group of (well-intentioned) people who are somehow reluctant to open the Society to its membership. Again, the lecture series is most impressive. And I am sure the offices are very nice and it is good that community groups can use them. But, it is my impression that the officers and board members of the Matlovich Society have made a point to keep themselves above the scrutiny of the membership.

Nonetheless, I certainly wish you well. But I do know, too, that my sentiments are shared by others who, similarly, do not intend to renew their membership.

Perhaps I am in error. Are there such things as membership meetings? Are board meetings advertised and open to the members? Who are the officers and board members? Are there committees and is the membership encouraged to join them? Could you answer these questions for me?

Sincerely,
Sturgis Haskins

apex \ˈā-peks\ *n.* 1 **a**: the uppermost point: VERTEX (the ~ of a mountain) **b**: the narrowed or pointed end: TIP (the ~ of the tongue) 2: the highest or culminating point (the ~ of her career) **syn** see SUMMIT.

An open letter to Bee Bell:

Dear Bee,

I hope you will view this response to your article in last month's *APEX* as part of a continuing dialogue, a letter from one friend to another, and a serious effort to respond to some of the very important issues you raise about Equal Protection/Portland and our recent campaign.

As I consider your arguments, they seem to divide into two major concerns. I'd like to address those concerns separately, though I realize they are connected; the first has to do with strategy, and the second with process.

The strategy we used in EPP was designed to convince at least 51% of the voters of Portland to vote "no" on the Nov. 3 referendum. Insofar as we achieved that goal, our strategy worked. Along the way, significant decisions were made about the message and direction of the campaign. Some of those may have helped us win and some may have detracted from what would have been an even bigger win; but none was designed to do anything but convince as many voters as possible to vote "no." One of these decisions, probably the one that caused the most pain and dissension within EPP, was the choice to force a referendum on discrimination rather than gay/lesbian/bisexual/queer identity.

More LETTERS ➤ page 7

Editors' Note: We inadvertently omitted Chris Newcomb's name as a contributor in December's issue. Thanks for the cartoon, Chris!

The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the views of the collective.

NO BUSINESS AS USUAL - this month in local activism

by Bee Bell

About last month's "Business": many arguments have been made, battles fought, beers drunk, since my December diatribe on Equal Protection Portland's queer civil rights campaign hit the stands. My favorite comment came from a dyke reader in central Maine: "I find all your impressions appropriate and I'm sure they're valid, but I'm an anarchist, and the only thing I don't understand is why you expected anything better from the electoral process in the first place." Another useful comment was canvass organizer Bob Gordon's: don't write just about the steering committee. This was merely one part of the campaign; look at all the groovy shit that happened as well. This advice I take to heart below, with the first biz of 1993.

But first, a challenge. It remains to be proven that either (a) EPP was not an assimilationist campaign or that (b) assimilationism does not hurt queer people in the long run. I say it does: now it's acceptable to beat up sissies and diesel dykes but not city councilor fags. It's also not clear that assimilation is what won; in California's famed Briggs initiative, honest, *out* street-based canvassing efforts won the day (see the Times of Harvey Milk). Closets ain't a prerequisite to victory. **VOICES FROM THE FIELD** - Campaign volunteers talk about EPP:

SERENDIPITY • *Bill York*. "The most exciting, adrenalin-rushing part was election night. Next to that were

Monday nights, standing out on the street corner holding our 'Vote No' signs. It was that kind of stuff that got to me - interaction with the public. Because you'd see people get it that you didn't expect to: guys in big pickup trucks would drive by and give you a thumbs-up."

COURAGE • *Karen Geraghty*. "It's true that the volunteer effort was incredible, very powerful. All kinds of people who'd never done anything before were right in there, working hard. But people were disrespected, not always treated as though *their* contributions were valuable.

The art show was outrageous. It was good that it raised so much money. But some people were really specific about what kind of face they wanted on the event, and that was kind of mean. In the campaign, if you raised a lot of money that was respected. If you were just doing 'grunt' work, like pounding signs into lawns or phone work, you often went unthanked.

I loved what we accomplished, which is that people in Portland now know gay people. I don't know how they got the courage - maybe they got it from the group - but millions of people did this coming out. Some took baby steps, some giant leaps. It seems that Portland changed. Maybe now they'll lose the courage to live out...I don't know. Lots of personal steps ended up creating this huge overall effort. I think that's how we won: people

opening their mouths and talking. We won because people had courage."

USEFULNESS • *Laurie Holt*. "I don't think it went exactly as it should have. I didn't like what went on at the auction, not so much as a gay-snobbish crowd as because of an artsy-snobbish crowd. I knew enough to stay away because I'd just be totally pissed off the whole time.

It's a shame that Edie quit. She is a wonderful, strong lesbian. [Note: *Queer Nation's Edie Hoffman resigned from the steering committee. See APEX Vol. 1, No. 11.*]

The straight-looking, straight-acting white males, they served their purpose to us. So we gave them what they wanted to see, and we won.

...I love ACT UP, and it has a wonderful purpose, but that's not how I would do things. Partly I admire ACT UP; it takes a lot of guts to lay in front of cars 'n' shit. But I have a different style and that's not how I would do it. I talked to everybody about this vote. The way the message was worded - Vote No to End Discrimination - left me open to talk about it with people I'd never have gotten to talk to otherwise: construction guys I work with, for example. 'Discrimination is wrong, no matter what,' I'd tell them. It allowed me to get the word out. Otherwise, I wouldn't have felt comfortable bringing it up. That's the facts."

More BUSINESS ➤ page 9



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WHERE WE'VE BEEN - an exploration of lesbian and gay history

by Stan Clough

Pink and Black Triangles: Part II

On November 11, 1918, the guns fell silent. The First World War was over, and 10 million lay dead. The Allies, with the help of the Americans, had pushed the Germans nearly out of France. On November 9, the Weimar Republic had been proclaimed over the corpse of the failed Second Reich. The Kaiser had fled to Holland, and the General Staff was forced to capitulate to the inevitable. But the militarists surrendered ungracefully: they claimed they had been stabbed in the back by Jews and communists. Hindenburg and Ludendorff angrily proclaimed that republican pacifists and traitors had castrated the German army. All that was left was profound bitterness.

The punitive provisions of the Treaty of Versailles added to the atmosphere of resentment. Germany's military forces were reduced to levels that were unthreatening to its neighbors. Germany was required to surrender territory to Poland, Czechoslovakia and France, while the Allied army occupied the industrial Rhineland. In addition, the Germans were obligated to pay France billions in reparations for the destruction wreaked upon northern France.

The government that negotiated this treaty with the Allies was never successful, nor did it enjoy the confidence of the German people. Political and social strife continually plagued the Weimar Republic in the 1920s. Communists and fascists battled in the streets; political leaders were assassinated; and workers struck for better pay. The Great Depression that afflicted the United States in 1929 also crippled Germany: it required a million *Deutsche Marks* to purchase a loaf of bread. And always there was the bitterness.

Some of this resentment was heaped upon the intellectuals and artists of Weimar society. Berlin in the Twenties rivalled Paris in *avant garde* culture. Many of these artists were Jewish - always a dangerous thing to be in Germany. More still were lesbian and gay. Rabid nationalists equated

the failed policies of the Weimar government with the "Jews and queers."

Weimar has been described as a culture where outsiders became the insiders. Though Paragraph 175 was still in force, Berlin's lesbians and gays were relatively safe from police harassment. Poet Stefan George travelled about Berlin with his coterie of young gay disciples. Thomas Mann was hailed by gays as Weimar's greatest novelist. These artists continued to support Magnus Hirschfeld's initiatives to repeal P. 175. His Institute for Sexual Science (1919) was a clearing house for lesbian and gay groups seeking to end sexual oppression in Germany.

Despite P. 175, gay and lesbian bars flourished in Berlin in the Twenties. Male transvestites openly walked the streets of Berlin seeking lovers. They opened night clubs, and provided drag shows for visiting foreigners. Lesbians also had their own clubs. Their idol was Josephine Baker, an African-American bisexual. She frequently performed in the nude, and blazed an entertainment trail that Madonna would follow seventy years later. Baker exported the rich culture of the Harlem Renaissance to eager lesbians and gays in Europe's urban centers.

Many found all this to be decadent. They saw Berlin as another Sodom. One group that shared this belief was the Nazis. Their leader was a fanatical Austrian corporal named Adolf Hitler, who had tried unsuccessfully to overthrow the civil government of Munich in 1923. Hitler learned his lesson from this failed *putsch*: he would now use legal means to seize power. In his future vision of Germany, sexual heretics would have no place.

Next month: Hitler and the Nazis come to power.

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QUEER ON THE QUADS

edited by Erica Rand

Anonymous

Queer Activism at Central Maine Technical College (CMTC)

Editor's note: In my introductory column last February, I brought up some problems for queers on the quads that have been reiterated by many subsequent columnists: dealing with institutions that are all talk and no action on homophobia issues; combatting the often-veiled homophobia of colleagues and peers, etc. This month's column serves as a reminder of how much work has already been done, and how many barriers have already been torn down, at any school where queers even have permission to meet on campus property. As such, this column testifies, not only to the bravery of the students it describes, who accomplished much in the face of open hostility and laid the groundwork for future queers on their quad, but also to our potential to force further changes in the future.

Watching 20-25 year-olds chase each other around with tools and yelling "Come here, honey" was rather humorous in the beginning. It started not to be so funny when that's all that came out of people's mouths - "fag this" and "fag that" coming from a large majority of the younger students from all the programs. I thought I had a high tolerance for this foolishness, but I was mistaken. I found myself enraged during their "play," and began to look for outlets of safety and reinforcement.


I found little to help me. I read through all the clauses related to discrimination, and found nothing that enabled me to make a formal complaint. Going to an instructor did not feel safe at all, as they were obviously homophobic. The only place I found any kind of solace was with the people in the student services department. But even then it was all behind closed doors.

After a year of dealing with this, I decided that I would form a "Gay, Lesbian, Straight Union." I thought that from this coalition could be devised a support group to talk about the issues gay and lesbian students are faced with every day. So I made posters and put them up everywhere. The next morning I went to school early. When I walked in the door I found little shreds of paper on the floor. People had torn down all the posters. When this happened repeatedly, I was very discouraged, especially when I was told that an instructor had been seen tearing down one of the large posters. I brought this to the attention of an advisor, and found that nothing would be done.

Yet some of my friends and some other students got something organized and met weekly in one of the classrooms. Soon after the meetings began, fingers began pointing at us from all directions - I now know what it's like for a deer during hunting season.

The meetings lasted about two months. Then I was told that I needed at least three regulars that attended the schools. (By this time, the students who had attended at the beginning had become angry and discouraged, and were not coming as often.) How could we get more people to come if the posters informing people of the meetings' time and place don't stay up overnight? I asked this question repeatedly to all involved. But instead of helping us with publicity, they took our room away, and the group dissolved.

I wish I could have taken this issue to the top. But safety issues prevented this - and the feeling of having been chased into the depths of submission is a hard hole to crawl out of. All I can do now is to voice my fears of the past two years. ▽



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CALENDAR

SATURDAY 1/2

Shared Times Dance at VFW Hall, 190 Plain St., Lowell, MA. \$7.50/adv. tickets only. FMI ☛ Mary or Gloria (508) 689-9396.

SUNDAY 1/3

Seacoast Gay Men annual brunch at Cape Neddick Inn in Cape Neddick, ME, 1pm. Resv. ☛ Al Santerre (603) 898-1115.

MONDAY 1/4

Gay/Lesbian Support Group 7pm. FMI ☛ (207) 594-0752.

FRIDAY 1/8

MAW business meeting. 7pm at Marty and Sue's, Keene, NH. Social mtg afterward. FMI ☛ (603) 357-5757.

SATURDAY 1/9

Amelia's meeting at Mandy's (NH), 5pm. Potluck at 6:30pm. FMI ☛ (603) 632-7146.

SUNDAY 1/10

Auditions for Maine Gay Men's Chorus, 1st Parish Church, 425 Congress St., Portland, ME, 1-5pm. FMI ☛ (207) 839-4506. First rehearsal 1/13 (see below).

MONDAY 1/11

Susan Werner Thoresen of Dean Witter Reynolds speaks about *Secrets to Financial Freedom* at Seacoast Gay Men, Unitarian Church, Portsmouth, NH, 7pm. FMI ☛ Al Santerre (603) 898-1115.

WEDNESDAY 1/13

Maine Gay Men's Chorus first rehearsal, 7-9:30pm. FMI ☛ (207) 839-4506.

THURSDAY 1/14

John Greenberg, Director of Treatment Alternatives Research Project, NY speaks on *AIDS - A radical new understanding, its context and treatment.* Matlovich Soc., Rines Aud., Portland Library, Ptd, ME 7:30-9pm. WC accessible.

SUNDAY 1/17

1993 Gay Pride Committee meeting, Portland, ME FMI ☛ (207) 871-0432.

MONDAY 1/18

Michael Rosetti will speak on the new outdoors club, Time Out at Seacoast Gay Men, Unitarian Church, Portsmouth, NH, 7pm. FMI ☛ Al (603) 898-1115.

SATURDAY 1/23

MAW goes bowling or ice skating, depending on the weather. FMI ☛ Karen (603) 826-5067.

Spaghetti Supper in Bangor, ME to Benefit Symposium 20. \$5. FMI ☛ Kathy (207) 469-7916 or Becky (207) 789-5957.

SUNDAY 1/24

Self-defense Workshop - Police Station Aud., 109 Middle St., Portland, ME., 1-5pm, Pre-reg. \$25; \$35 at door. Scholarships available. Sponsored by the Rape Crisis Center. FMI or to register ☛ (207) 879-1821.

MONDAY 1/25

APEX, a Queer Newsjournal in No. New Eng. will be the focus of a talk by its staff at Seacoast Gay Men, Unitarian Church, Portsmouth, NH, 7pm. FMI ☛ Al (603) 898-1115.

THURSDAY 1/28

Gregory Anderson, Supervisor at SAGE (Senior Action in a Gay Environment) speaks on *Youth & Aging in Lesbian & Gay Lives.* Matlovich Society, Rines Aud., Portland Library, Portland, ME 7:30-9pm. WC accessible.

FRIDAY 1/29

MAW Advisory Board Meeting at Shelly's in Keene, NH, 7pm. FMI ☛ (603) 352-6741.

SUNDAY 1/31

Contra & English Country Dance Party! 7pm, YWCA, 7 Temple St., Cambridge, MA, \$6. FMI ☛ (617) 489-1571 or (401) 331-8262.

MEDIA

WMPG'S Women's Music Fest on 90.9 FM 3-5pm Sundays.

NOTICES

North East Gay and Lesbian Folk & Country Dance Society (NEGAL) Winter Dance Camp will be held Fri.-Sun., 2/19-2/21 at Beckett/Chimney Corners YMCA Camp, Beckett, MA. FMI ☛ Bev (413) 863-3757/NEGAL 1-800-484-7113, Code 1112.

March on Washington - 4/25/93 Bus trip to Washington from Keene, NH leaving 4/24 at 9pm and returning to Keene 4/25 (arriving by 9am on 4/26. This is not an overnight stay). \$75 roundtrip, \$40 non-refundable deposit must be made by 2/15. FMI and/or sign up now, send check or money order made payable to Frank Kellom, Monadnock AIDS Project, POB 348, Keene, NH 03431 or ☛ (603) 357-0979 (wknds/eve.).

More LEWISTON from page 1

Primary among these is the construction of a steering committee. According to Bliss (who did not mention counterclaims that a more deliberate politics of exclusion had been at work), EPP's steering committee was formed relatively haphazardly, with the primary criterion for membership being the willingness to work very hard. As Caron pointed out, however, the result was an insufficiently diverse steering committee which, among other dubious effects, hampered attempts at community outreach; he urged EPLers to work harder than EPP had done to secure broad-based steering committee membership.

Another important point of discussion was the impact of the ordinance vote outcome on efforts to add sexual orientation to the state's anti-discrimination law - a proposal that will be considered again by the state legislature this year. Proponents of the Lewiston ordinance hope that by passing the ordinance, Lewiston, the second largest city in Maine, will be sending a message to the state government that the time has come for a state law - and that Portland residents are not out of step with the rest of the state. The flip side, of course, is that if the ordinance fails to pass, or, worse, if the council votes to send the issue to referendum - thus validating the idea that civil rights should be decided by majority rule - the "message" would greatly hurt state efforts. The stakes, thus, are high, and people left the meeting with determination to assure passage.

Activism is now well underway. At a second meeting held the next evening, activists organized committees to work on a variety of tasks: mobilizing support from local schools and religious organizations, finding speakers for the City Council meeting on 1/6, raising money, dealing with media and publicity. This meeting had many encouraging features, including a huge amount of energy and willingness to work, and the participation of people who varied greatly in terms of class, age, religion, ethnicity, and queer-group affiliation (although people were not trumpeting group allegiances, a cursory inspection of the room revealed members of MLGPA, ACT UP/MAINE, ACT UP/PORTLAND,

OUTRIGHT, and students affiliated with (overt or covert) activism at L-A College, CMTC, Bates, and UM-Farmington).

But we need your help immediately. By the time you read this, there will be less than a week until the hearing, at which a vote will either be taken or deferred until a second hearing. Please write immediately to the following city councilors: Paul J. Poliquin, Lionel Potvin, Peter R. Grenier, Leona G. Carpentier, Lionel R. Goulet, Normand Poulin, Edouarde G. Plourde. Please write even if you do not live in Lewiston, although for Lewiston residents, writing is doubly crucial; Councilor Poulin has indicated that councilors will read mail from outside the city as well. If you can, please send a letter to each; if not, start up at the top of the list and work down. Councilors can be reached c/o Lewiston City Council, Lewiston City Building, Pine Street, Lewiston ME 04240.

And, of course, *we also need money.* Checks can be sent to Equal Protection Lewiston, P.O. Box 7804, Lewiston, ME 04243.▼

More LETTERS from pg. 2

Like many in EPP, I was initially uncomfortable with this strategy. I wanted to talk about the struggles of my lesbian and gay friends, the appalling suicide rate among gay youth, and most of all, the devastating effects of homophobia in public schools - all subjects about which I feel strongly and have some knowledge.

Eventually, however, I came to believe that our decision to focus on discrimination rather than gay identity was the right one, because I became convinced that it was the only strategy that would work in an electoral campaign. Affirming the gay community, educating the homophobic public, and confronting heterosexual institutions are all urgently important missions, and no electoral victory will ever mean anything without them. But they are not tasks that can be accomplished in an election. Elections are not, and have never been, revolutions. An electoral victory can raise some issues in the public mind and provide opportunities for future legal action; to expect more, I believe, is unrealistic. Someday before too long, a gay man or lesbian will go to court to challenge an eviction or a firing, and some homophobic landlord or employer will have to change his or her behavior. And it

won't matter how blatantly queer the plaintiff looks or acts (personally, I'm hoping it's someone really outrageous), or how old or young or rich or poor they are: the court will have to decide on the basis of equal protection. Given all the struggles gay people wage everyday, these limited legal possibilities may not seem like a lot. But they're something. They're more than we had before. They make people's lives a little safer while we're trying to build a world where gay/lesbian/bisexual/ queer people are seen as fully human by everybody else, and where the power really does belong to the people. I want that world too, and I've been working toward it for a long time.

The second issue raised in your article involves process, and here I find much to sympathize with. No matter how noble the cause, all of us bring our own personal and political baggage when we try to work together. I don't think it's possible to grow up surrounded by racism, classism, ageism and homophobia, without internalizing a lot of the ugly stuff we are trying to undo. Additionally, our culture is so violent and dehumanizing that we are all hurting in one way or another, especially those of us who are poor and/or young and/or gay

and/or female and/or black or brown. When we work with others who profess to affirm us, we want all the understanding and respect that the outside world denies us. But alas, all of us are still learning how to be kind to each other, and it's a lesson that takes a long, long time.

Bee, I have no answers, only observations and imperfect reflections. One thing I'm absolutely sure of, though, is that when we stop listening to each other, we really are in trouble. I hope all of us, myself included, can be better listeners in the future, and I hope our dialogue can continue as we move on together.

Yours in struggle,
Rita
(Rita M. Kissen)

APEX -

I love Bee Bell! She is the most fabulous shaggy baba evah! I think that she was totally a right on sista for her critique of EPP (and those of us who didn't get involved). I too, wondered why nearly all of the spokespeople were heterosexual. Bee, you are definitely the bravest, baddest dyke to ever hit this beautiful seaside city! You groove on your own fab plane of life! If people don't like you, Bee, don't worry because they are total straight-acting, straight-appearing capitalist swine. Go Girl!

With exuberant fagosity,
Joe McLaughlin

P.S. James Melanson is the world's finest example of feminist fagness ever!

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ASK THIGHMASTER

Dear Thighmaster:

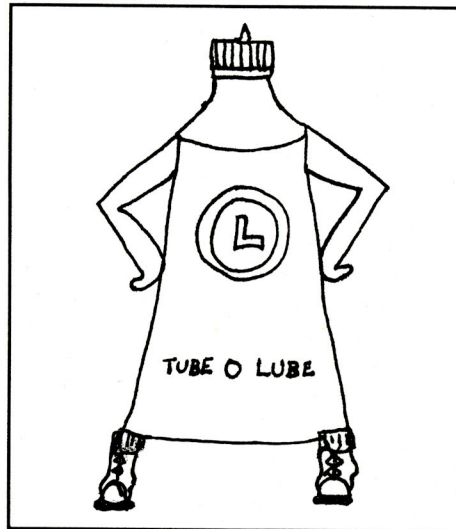
For 41 years, my body has served me predictably and efficiently. Suddenly, after 27 years of regular periods, my menstrual cycle is totally screwy, and my doctor suggests the advent of menopause. Well, I have no need to cycle with the moon, and it would be convenient to blame every mood swing and bitch attack on "the change" (as one of my ex-lovers did). But the prospect of more hot flashes - I've already had some - and of drying up "down there" bothers me a lot. I don't know how I would deal with a drop in my exceptionally active libido. Also, a few nights ago, I happened to hear a radio show all about menopause, during which they mentioned two other features of which I hadn't even heard: the first one was memory loss, which must be true, because I can't remember the second. Any words of advice?

Too Young to Get Old

Dear Too Young:

When the infamous Meese commission gets revived so that a bunch of hypocritical, patriarchal creeps can spend six months immersed in porn in order to issue some 600-page statement proclaiming that pornography does permanent damage to everyone but them, they might well ask you to testify at their hearings, for you, o aging one, are a victim of pornography. Actually, the Meese Commission does not really want to hear from you, because you are a victim of something that these scumbags don't care about: pornography's ageism. Thighmaster would bet every sex toy in Northern New England that you have read about eight million lesbo sex stories in which one hot young thing says to another, "If you're not interested, how come you're soooo obscenely wet?" and maybe one in which a hot older thing says "I don't get that wet anymore but you can expect me to respond in other wildly exciting ways that will make *you* so turned on that you will be desperate to experience every pleasure that 40 years of experience has made me able

to give you." On drying up "down there," as you put it, Thighmaster has three things to say: get over it, get lube, and get a lover who can deal. Youthocentrism has made wetness seem like a necessary sign of arousal



drawing by Naomi Falcone

and crucial component of hot sex; it isn't. And one of the most insidious effects of ageism regarding sex is the lube double standard: Lube seems like the kinkiest thing around when we're using it to get into some places, which the demure Thighmaster will refrain from naming, that are naturally unlubricating from cradle to grave, or to insert seemingly too large objects and appendages. But it seems like some kind of failure when it's needed to deal with menopausal dryness. If you start to "dry up," look for lovers who do, or can be trained to do, vaginal lube erotics. It's not too much

to ask; compared to asking someone to wear fur lingerie or administer some mind-bending amount of pain, asking her to get into lube should not require her to confront political angst, to dredge up her tortured family history, or to spend hours in the library wading through the textural relics of the feminist "sex wars."

As importantly, there are a variety of holistic approaches to dealing with all of the menopausal effects you mention, which, face it, may well be in your future. (Or they may not; some women, for instance, report increased libido during menopause.) Thighmaster recommends two books: *Ourselves Growing Older*, by Paula Brown Doress, Diana Laskin Siegel and the Midlife and Older Women Book Project, and *Menopausal Years*, by Susun S. Weed, which must be the only book in history to be endorsed by Olympia Dukakis, Zsuzsanna Budapest, and sex goddess Annie Sprinkle. Thighmaster recommends that you briefly take your mind off this issue to imagine these three women getting naked together, which will certainly release your tension in one way or another, and then start intoning the following Annie Sprinkle line until you believe it: "Wow! Now that I know hot flashes are erotic, I can hardly wait for menopause!" If the queen of fluid can get turned on to menopause, so can you. ▽

Thighmaster eagerly awaits your submissions. No problem is too complicated or twisted! Thighmaster, c/o Phoenix Press, PO Box 4743, Portland, ME 04112.

UNITED WAY TAKES STAND ON HOMOPHOBIA

The recent decision of the Greater Portland United Way to discontinue funding for agencies who discriminate against queers means the Pine Tree Council of the Boy Scouts of America will either have to change, or kiss goodbye about eighty grand a year. Backlash from the decision was immediate; phobes have been cancelling pledges left and right. Terry, the Portland Lesbo Mom whose efforts to become a scout den mother started this whole process (see *APEX*, Vol. 1, No. 1), urges everyone to phone the United Way at 874-1000 and applaud their progressive policy.

More BUSINESS from pg. 3

DISREGARD • Del Wilson. "I had to deal with the steering committee people one night a week, and during the week I got to deal with the volunteers. I did a lot of behind-the-scenes work, where people turned up who didn't fit the image 'deemed appropriate.' Behind the phones, that didn't apply.

This [2d] group of people was diverse, but not as diverse as it could have been because some people were obviously offended and left, early on. I recently moved here and wanted to meet people through EPP. But there are a lot of cool people in this town that I've heard a lot about but never saw. I did not meet certain people because of the campaign itself and what it turned into.

I kept my criticisms to myself at the meetings, because I thought the plan was going to work. I disagree, though, with the plan of keeping people who were 'offensive' behind the scenes. *Everybody* did a lot of work. But the recognition wasn't there; sometimes I felt I was working for this one man.

And we [young phone bank coordinators] were doing an immense amount of work, far beyond the original expectations. Meanwhile, decisions were made 'above' us, behind our backs, and then handed down by people not doing the work. I felt like a child, answering to my parents, being required to check in constantly to show I was doing things correctly. There was blatant disregard for our feelings throughout. I felt like there was this

little core group that I hadn't been invited to, some qualification I didn't meet."

AMBIVALENCE • Johannah Burdin. "What I liked most was the whole big community of people working together to get the ordinance passed, although the bigness sometimes fucked it up. There were problems. But as much as I didn't like it, I did agree that we had to just get things done.

I was disappointed that so little was said about including bisexuals, although it was in the ordinance. And I found the assimilationism really frustrating, the whole debate: keep a low profile or not, and what have you lost in the meantime? And there is a pretty big loss. Although I thought this was bad, I wasn't sure how to remedy it. It was disappointing not to have more of the 'hey, we're queer, get used to it' stuff.

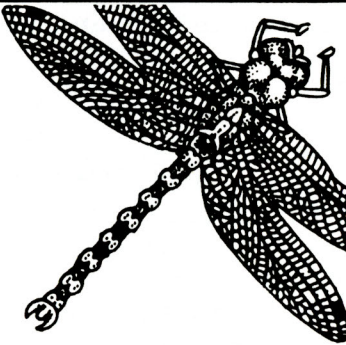
I don't have my mind made up. I don't know if we would have won if we hadn't done it the way we did. But if we'd done it differently, there might have been a stronger sense of respect among the gay/lesbian/bi community. A lot of people left the campaign, left unhappy. Yet other g/l/b people might never have been a part of it any other way."

NAIVETE & JUSTICE • Suzanne Hunt. "I liked winning. I liked it a whole lot. I just want you to be clear about that.

I loved seeing all the people work together, and share a common goal. I liked to see people respect each other, cut each other a little slack.

I also liked seeing all of the signs go up, all of a sudden, all over town - in stores, on lawns, someone going by with a sticker on their hat or their jacket. And some conservative-looking car would go by and yet you'd see a Vote No sticker on the back bumper. Such numbers of people participated.

What won it for us? That we were right [laugh]. And that people basically don't believe in discrimination. When you present people with a fair argument and the facts, people will go on the side of right. And we won because we were able to explain to people *how* we were right. People believe in justice. Great, now I'll never get another job in this town - everyone'll think, 'God, she's so naive.'" ▼



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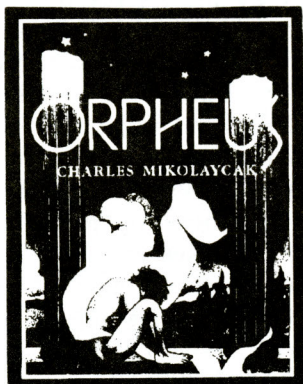
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BOOK REVIEW

by Alexander Wallace

NUDE ORPHEUS FOR KIDS

Charles Mikolaycak (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich)



Orpheus, a book I came upon through a really weird review in *The New York Times*, is perfect for those of us who recoil from patriarchal, Judeo-Christian homophobia and would like to give a young person another, more gay-lesbian-friendly, mythology to contemplate. *Orpheus* would also be a wonderful book for the young person who's begun to discover that his or her sexuality doesn't fit the Jim-and-Jane pattern. *Orpheus* doesn't push gender-diversity but the illustrations are sexy as Hades! Lush, physical and accurate: a beautiful book.

First, the Orpheus myth: Orpheus, a prince of wild Thrake and an Argonaut, was given a lyre by (perhaps, his first lover) Apollo, with which he tamed the wild northerners and all of Natura. He was adored by the Nymphae, protectresses of the woods and water, hills and dales and married one of them, Eury-

dike. She was pursued by Aristeus, a bee-keeper and was bitten by the proverbial snake-in-the-grass as she fled him, dying. As punishment, all of Aristeus' bees died too. Orpheus pursued Eurydike to Hades and so charmed were its co-rulers, Pluto and Proserpine, by Musik, that they restored Eurydike to Orpheus on the condition that he not look back at her until they had both quit Hell. Unable to resist, Eurydike was lost to Orpheus forever: in his grief, his Musik turned to dirges, he forsook all women, turning his attention, again, to the men of Thrake: it is from Thrake that male-love is said to have spread to all Hellas. The Bakkae, Thracian women devoted to Bakkus, offended at Orpheus' coldness to their amorous passion for him or by his renewed interest in men, tore Orpheus to pieces. His tomb, still visible, became the site of the Orphic Mysteries. The conclusions to be drawn from the Orpheus-Eurydike myth about the ability of art to tame man's animal nature, the fury of the elements, the regenerative powers of Nature and the diversity of gender and sexual choice are many and not above an amateur interpreter.

Mikolaycak's retelling of the legend is accurate and quite mature; he does stop short of Orpheus' invention

of homosexuality, which is mentioned, however, in a detailed afterward. His illustrations derive from Maxfield Parrish: Musik is represented throughout by a Parrish-like white stolae, wafting on the breeze and around the genitals of a truly hunky, teen-aged, nude Orpheus. And now for that strange *Times* review. David Sacks dishes the book, calling it "in dubious taste" and commenting that "Orpheus' buttocks and torso play major roles in this version: Euridice's breasts . . . are also lovely." He carps about emphasizing Orpheus' sexuality in a "childrens' book" (aimed at teens and young adults, who are already experimenting with drugs AND sex) and about showing Orpheus as a "muscular lad of about 19 . . . naked . . . with genitalia concealed." So up-tight!

I was surprised that a

Times reviewer would not know that young Greek heroes of both sexes were always depicted nude - symbolic of purity - as they worked their way up the deification ladder, through their Promethean efforts on Gaia's behalf, from mortal to hero to demi-deity to full deity. Hellenic deities did not suddenly burst on the scene fully self-deified, as the paternalistic, divine-right Christian versions did, but worked hard at it, through the several long and difficult stages. However, homophobia still haunts the pages of the supposedly impartial *New York Times*, even under its new, pro-gay editor publisher, Pinch Sulzberger, and this one reviewer's snide comments are not exceptions. *Orpheus* is a gorgeous book; one for us and our kids, from Mikolaycak and his wife, Carole Kismaric. ▽

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PASSAGES

AUDRE LORDE, 58, award-winning author, poet and activist, as well as a major influence in the lesbian/feminist community, died Nov. 17 after a 14-year battle with cancer.

Lorde's 17 volumes of poetry, essays and autobiography include *The Cancer Journals*, *Coal*, *The Black Unicorn* and *From a Land Where Other People Live*, which was nominated for a National Book Award.

By winning the 1991 Walt Whitman Citation of Merit, Lorde became New York state's poet laureate last year. Homophobia apparently kept many newspapers from noting her

outspoken lesbianism and feminism. Lorde served on the board of the Feminist Press in NYC. She was an English professor at Hunter College and lectured throughout the U.S., Europe and Africa. She was a founding member of Women of Color Press and Sisterhood in Support of Sisters in South Africa.

Lorde lived for the last seven years on the island of St. Croix, where she was known by her African name, Gamba Adisa. She is survived by her companion, Gloria Joseph, a daughter and son, and four sisters. ▼



photo by Annette Dragon

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WHAT WE'VE DONE IN 1992:

- Protested George Bush and his HIV/AIDS policies whenever he set foot in Maine.
- With our actions, we publicized discrimination against veterans, health care workers, prisoners and others with HIV infection.
- Coordinated the Portland vigil and march after the brutal bashing of a gay man with AIDS, and co-organized a huge New England march for universal health care.
- Brought condoms and latex gloves to nine Maine high schools, from Kennebunkport to Bangor.
- Demonstrated against Pat Buchanan in Kittery, Bush/Quayle "family values" in Portland, and Linda Bean everywhere.
- Worked in coalition with other groups for women's right to choose, for civil rights for lesbians and gay men, and in protest of the Rodney King verdict.
- Helped teens organize to demand comprehensive HIV education in their own high schools. ACT UP/Portland members addressed school boards, educated parents, and testified before legislative committees about AIDS.
- Monitored state government, and met regularly with legislators and officials to voice concerns and change state policy (e.g., proposed HIV+ names reporting).
- Created a proud and visible presence for our community in Maine. Our office in downtown Portland affirms the presence of lesbians, gay men, and straight allies who will not stand by silently in the face of injustice.

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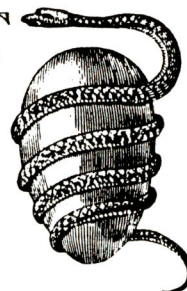
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