

Women
Behind
Bars

See page 6.



Newsbites



Passing the torch from former owners to new. Standing (L-R), George Bands and Charles Roberts; sitting, William E. Beardemphl and Tom Murray.

THE SENTINEL IS SOLD!

San Francisco, CA — *The Sentinel*, San Francisco's most widely respected and journalistically professional publication in the gay/lesbian community, has been sold, according to publisher and founder William E. Beardemphl. The new owners of the 11-year-old publication are Tom Murray and Charles Roberts, who have pledged to maintain the newspaper's high standards of journalistic excellence. The new owners will assume control of *The Sentinel* as of May 1, 1984, and the paper will be published under the auspices of GayFirst, Inc.

DUKE NIXES GAY WEEK AGAIN

Sacramento, CA — For the second year in a row, Governor George Deukmejian has refused to issue an official proclamation for Lesbian/Gay Freedom Week (June 17-24). Konstantin Berland, president of the board of directors of the Lesbian/Gay Freedom Week Committee, made the request by telephone to Sacramento. In a letter from the governor's office dated April 2, 1984, Peter J. McBrien, a special assistant to the governor wrote, "We appreciate your support and concern for Lesbian/Gay Freedom Week." As stated previously, the Deukmejian administration makes it a policy not to issue proclamations that would advocate one lifestyle over another.

HOMOPHOBIA AT THE Y?

Santa Barbara, CA — YMCA Executive Director Norman Curtis publicly agreed with Sen. John Glenn that gay people don't belong in the Y, he recently told a local newspaper. "If you state that you are a practicing homosexual, then you are not welcome as a member," he said. The statements have sparked a letter campaign against Curtis. He can be written at YMCA, 36 Hitchcock Way, Santa Barbara, CA 93105. (Equal Time, 4/4/84)

MURPHY TO GAYS: 'KISS MY...'

Hollywood, CA — Did the pressure against comedian Eddie Murphy for his homophobic remarks have any effect? Apparently not, according to an interview Murphy gave the *Rolling Stone*. In it he tells the gay community to "kiss my ass." Murphy says the furor over his remarks about homosexuals, AIDS, and his own backside actually helped sales of his latest album "because the majority of his country is heterosexual, and they read that homosexuals don't like Eddie Murphy and they think, 'Hey, all right.'" But when asked what he would think if a white comedian told jokes about blacks, Murphy responded, "That's not funny." (Gay News 4/5/84)

GAY ENMESHED IN WALL STREET SCANDAL

New York, NY — The *Wall Street Journal*, in a front page story on April 2, charged that a columnist fed the week before had leaked market-sensitive information to investors, including his male lover. The Securities and Exchange Commission is investigating R. Foster Winans for allegedly giving friends tips that would affect stock prices in time for them to make transactions before the information was published in his "Heard on the Street" column, which the *Journal* called one of its "best-read features." The stocks of 21 companies may have been affected, and the Justice Department may take up the investigation. (GayLife, 4/5/84)

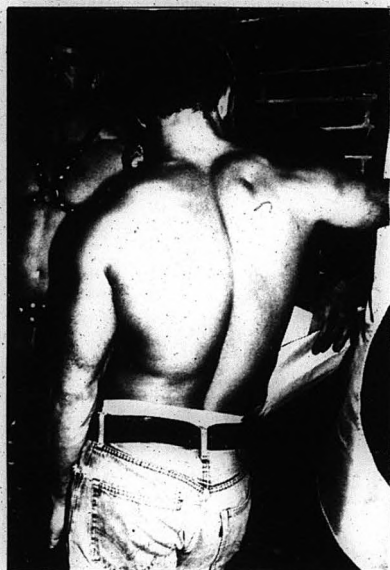
GRNL GETS NEW DIRECTOR

Washington, D.C. — At the annual board of directors meeting, the Gay Rights National Lobby chose Vicky Monrean as the new executive director. Monrean is the former special assistant to then president of the National Organization for Women, Eleanor Smeal. Currently, Monrean is regional director for the U.S. Committee for UNICEF. "The opportunity to work with GRNL is very exciting," Monrean exclaimed. "The work that they have done and the work that we will do is challenging and important. Our work will create a movement that cannot be denied."

HOLY FORESKIN!

Milan, Italy — Thieves have absconded with the foreskin of Jesus Christ, according to Milan's *Corriere della Sera* newspaper. Legend says that Jesus' mother, the Virgin Mary, gave the foreskin in a vase filled with oil to Mary Magdalene. Seven centuries later, it was presented by Emperor Charlemagne to Pope Leo III. For centuries it has rested as a sacred relic, the Holy Foreskin of Our Lord, in a church in the town of Calcata. It is shown to the public only once a year, but when priests went to bring it out recently it had disappeared. (GayLife, 4/12/84)

Major Breakthrough in AIDS Research



A winning bare back at the Arne's recent Bare Chest Contest.

by Gary Schweikhart

Secretary of Health and Human Services Margaret Heckler announced last Monday that there has been a major breakthrough in AIDS research. Federal researchers have isolated a virus which they believe is the cause of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, the mysterious disease which has already stricken more than 4,000 Americans, the majority of them gay men.

Researchers have dubbed the virus HTLV-3, and they've also figured out a way to mass produce it. This will enable scientists to develop means of eventually combating the dreaded disease.

At almost the same time, medical experts in France have also announced that they've isolated an AIDS-causing agent which they call LAV. Secretary Heckler said last Monday that she believes the two viruses "will prove to be the same."

"Finding the cause of AIDS will not necessarily lead to any treatment of the disorder soon, nor will it necessarily result in a method of prevention. But the finding led the U.S. researchers to express the hope that a vaccine would be developed and ready for testing in about two years," according to an article in the *San Francisco Chronicle* (4/24/84).

While the value of this discovery for people who now have AIDS is questionable, it could be helpful in early diagnosis for those with AIDS and in testing blood products. Ed Power, the acting executive

director of the San Francisco AIDS Foundation, had the reaction:

"Basically, this is a wonderful step and we are all hopeful and optimistic, but a few cautionary notes remain. Even if we have found the cause of AIDS, the final cure and vaccine is still years down the line. The happy ending may now be in sight, but a lot remains to be done between now and then."

Power said that the gay community needs to keep three things in mind:

"First, we need to remember that those people who now have AIDS or who will still come down with it during the interim need support, both personal, professional and financial, from individuals and from those organizations geared to serving them."

"Second, gay and bisexual men should adopt the one-time campaign slogan of Richard Nixon... 'now more than ever.' Now more than ever they need to maintain the changes in their sexual lifestyles and continue to follow safe sex procedures. Just because we've found the cause, doesn't mean that people can jump back into their previous sexual lifestyles."

"And third, we have to insist that the federal government pour tremendous amounts of money into research so that we can move from this first step — finding the cause — into the later steps, which are finding a cure and finding a vaccine. For now, this first step is the last step." Power declared.

Convention Marchers List Demands

The San Francisco-based National March for Lesbian/Gay Rights has issued a list of tentative demands to all sponsoring organizations nationwide. The list is for "their suggestions/approval," according to a press release.

The March, planned for July 15 (The Sunday before the opening of the National Democratic Convention), could attract tens of thousands of gay men and lesbians. The tentative demands of the march organization include:

- Immediate and massive federal funding to end the AIDS epidemic.
- An Executive Order prohibiting discrimination against lesbians and gay men in the federal government, including the military and government contractors.
- Passage of the National Lesbian/Gay Rights Bill and broad anti-discriminatory legislation at state and local levels.
- Enforcement of all existing Civil Rights legislation in society as a whole, including within our own community.
- Passage of the Equal Rights Amendment.
- The right of women, regardless of their sexual orientation and economic status, to choose if and when to bear children, as well

as the right to safe, legal and accessible abortion with freedom from forced sterilization.

- An end to violent attacks against lesbians and gay men, including police abuse and entrapment.
- Eliminate all immigration and naturalization restrictions and international human rights violations against lesbian and gay people.
- Repeal all "sodomy and solicitation" laws.
- Legal recognition equal to those afforded to marital relationships and economic benefits for lesbian and gay relationships.
- Eliminate all discrimination

against lesbians and gay men in child custody and visitation rights.

• Provide necessary social services for lesbian and gay youth, seniors, disabled, prisoners and low-income people and increase, above prior levels, funding to federal programs cut by the Reagan administration.

Final ratification of these demands will be made at the next general meeting of the National March for Lesbian and Gay Rights. It will be held on May 9, 7:30 P.M., at the new headquarters, located at 2301 Market Street, suites A, B & C. For more information, call 552-4287.

Wolfred Defends Bath House Stand, Plans Re-Election

by Gary Schweikhart

Gay community activist Tim Wolfred wears several hats. Not only is he the first openly gay president of the Community College Board, but is also active in the Harvey Milk Lesbian & Gay Democratic Club. It was in the latter capacity that he was one of several gay leaders who signed the controversial letter to Dr. Mervyn Silverman, the city's director of public health, urging him to close the gay bath houses because of the AIDS epidemic. Earlier this week, *The Sentinel* talked to Wolfred about the bath house controversy, the Community College Board and his current bid for re-election.

The Sentinel: What was your exact role in the bath house flap?

Wolfred: I was one of the signers of the letter to Dr. Silverman to close the bath houses. Prior to that, I had been vehemently opposed to closure all along. I argued strongly to friends, political colleagues and associates that closure was not the way to go. What we needed was education to help change people's behavior.

But that week it was presented to me that there was medical evidence indicating that the bath houses were a major source in the spread of the disease. I was told that the rectal gonorrhea rates had gone way up again after a

major drop, and the gay physicians were pressuring Silverman to take the closure action and that he had agreed and was going to do so. I felt that we as a community needed to support our physicians and through them Dr. Silverman.

So I signed on believing the closure was going to happen and that we needed to sign on as a community behind our medical experts.

Well, as it turned out, the rectal gonorrhea rate was not as it was

on the bath houses has had the effect of waking people up, people who hadn't been fully aware of what is going on with AIDS. It has been on the front page of every newspaper, gay and straight, so the shock value has reiterated to people that this disease is not declining, that it is still dramatically on the increase.

Do you now regret having signed the letter?

I think we should have had more discussion prior to the presen-

"Sometimes it is better to take any action than no action. In the heat of battle we might wish that we had taken a different action, but I think the gay community expects its leaders to do something."

presented to me, the rates have not gone back up. Furthermore, I later found out that the gay physicians were far from united on closure and, in fact, the majority of them even opposed it. And, in fact, Dr. Silverman was not ready to do what we were told he was going to do.

So I am back in the position that we, as a gay community, have to take care of our own. In the middle of this health crisis, we have got to change our sexual behavior. However, I do not think that closing the bath houses is going to have a great effect on doing that.

I do think that this whole row

about the bath houses has had the effect of waking people up, people who hadn't been fully aware of what is going on with AIDS. It has been on the front page of every newspaper, gay and straight, so the shock value has reiterated to people that this disease is not declining, that it is still dramatically on the increase.

Do you think it was a mistake

that could come back and haunt you during this election year?

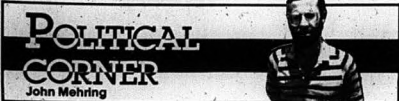
I don't know. There are people who feel strongly on all sides of this issue. And I think we have to remind ourselves that people on all sides of this issue all want to do what is best for our community. In signing the letter, I was signing with a house that was best for the gay community. As I did last year on the recall. Sometimes it is better to take any action than no action. Sometimes in the heat of battle we might wish that we had taken a different action, but I do think the gay community expects its leaders to do something.

I think people are freaked out by the fact that 1,700 people have already died from AIDS, and that in February alone another 40 cases were reported here in San Francisco. Something needs to be done. People may disagree with the positions I've taken, but I think I deserve respect for at least moving on the issue.

There has been extensive coverage in the gay press on the backstage maneuverings over the bath house issue. How fairly do you think you, in particular, and the Milk Club in general have been represented on this?

Well, in *The Sentinel's* last editorial cartoon, it had me and three other people putting a "no

Continued on page 2.



Milk Club Not Anti-Sex

As I write this column (April 22), I want to emphasize that my political club. The Harvey Milk Lesbian & Gay Democratic Club has no official position on the bath house controversy which has so agitated our community over the past several weeks. Nor am I able to impart any special knowledge of the events leading up to Dr. Meyron Silverman's final decision. What I do offer, however, is a perspective on the conflict informed by extensive involvement in AIDS educational and political work both as a health-care worker and as a gay political activist.

From the beginning of the AIDS health crisis, the Milk Club has been among those few organizations which has engaged in across-the-board activism to combat this epidemic. And the club has met vociferous, entrenched opposition every step of the way.

For example, within our own community:

- It was not so long ago that certain elements in our community stubbornly resisted even acknowledging the existence of AIDS, the agent's transmittal through sexual contact, and its unique impact on the gay male population. (And people still insist the information presented in articles is "too depressing," is somehow "unrepresentative," or besides, "has not been 100 percent proven!")

- Do you remember the outcry when safe-sex guidelines were developed from an article for our community? (The guidelines were trashed, of course, as anti-sex and anti-gay!)

- And last year, before the annual influx of tourists to the Lesbian/Gay Freedom Day Parade, did our community join forces to adequately inform these visitors of the danger surrounding indiscriminate sexual activity in the age of AIDS? (Last summer, it was seriously argued that disseminating such information would ruin gay businesses and, by extension, the gay community!)

Not only has the Milk Club been on the cutting-edge of every major initiative to alert our community to the AIDS danger, but the club has also been instrumental in devising and implementing strategies to win this fight for our lives.

- The Milk Club was among

the first organizations to present an AIDS forum (in early 1983) which underlined the need for gay men to both assess and modify their sexual practices.

- The Milk Club has been critical of the disorganization and lack of urgency which has characterized much of the Department of Public Health's AIDS educational work. Going ahead on our own last year, in six short weeks the Milk Club wrote and produced the phenomenally successful safe-sex primer, "Can We Talk?", which is now being distributed by the tens of thousands locally and throughout the world!

- The Milk Club from the beginning has pushed for a serious examination of information available to customers of the baths and other sex businesses. Against the foot dragging and calculated evasiveness of bath house owners, the Milk Club has consistently promoted a tougher stance in favor of publicizing and reinforcing safe-sex practices in the city's sexual establishments.

- The Milk Club raised \$4,000 last autumn as the first San Francisco contribution (our share being \$40,000) to the Federation of AIDS-Related Organizations (FARO) lobby fund project in Washington, D.C. (Months later, San Francisco still has not raised anywhere near its goal.) A full-time lobbying effort is intended to put continuing pressure on the Reagan administration and Congress to increase funds for AIDS research and related social services.

- Milk Club members and congressional aides Mike Houss (Barbara Boxer) and Bill Kraus (Sala Burton) have been instrumental in impressing upon their employers the importance of the AIDS issue to our community and their constituents. Moreover, both men have been effective resources nationwide for our AIDS concerns.

- Milk Club President Carole Migden and former Internal Vice President Russ Fields, as chair and co-chair respectively of the Lesbian and Gay Caucus of the California Democratic Party, garnered a commitment last year from Speaker Willie Brown for \$2.9 million in state funds for AIDS research and educational projects.

While one of the few things we as a community can agree on is

the desperate need for further funding, the entire question of the degree of responsibility we have as individuals and communities to modify our lifestyles in order to slow, and hopefully halt, the progression of the epidemic, has been volatile and emotionally charged from the very start. So it should come as no surprise — no matter how painful it is — that the divisions we are experiencing now are in fact very similar to the divisions I alluded to at the beginning of this article.

Yet in every case, with every step that we have taken to combat AIDS, the Milk Club's position has been invariably persevered and has been subsequently vindicated. Even the most forceful defenders of the bath houses now concede that they need a more aggressive AIDS educational program. Last year, this concession would have been thought treasonous.

So what do we do with the baths? I don't presume to know

the answer. I myself remain conflicted regarding this complex and thorny issue. But I am in a position to proffer several options:

- A ballot initiative (Larry Littlejohn's) calling for the closing of the baths is a far more serious threat to our community's future than the temporary closure or stricter regulation of these establishments by public health authorities.

- Closing the bath houses will not — by any stretch of rational thinking — be the first domino of a series which would inevitably and with our demise in the ovens of the Moral Majority. (I think we desperately need some reality-testing on this one.)

- There is no simple separation as implied in the common dichotomy of what sex one can engage in (safe-sex, please!) vs. where one does it (it really doesn't matter...). Far from feigning indifference to the locale, we cannot absolutely ignore it. Do to so

would be naive as well as intellectually dishonest. This, I will stress, is not to give license to dramatic government intrusion into our sex lives, but thoughtful people should accept the reality that bath houses are currently set-up to encourage, indeed promote, the very kind of sexual activity that is antithetical to the pursuit and practice of safe-sex.

Finally, it is an unfortunate fact that more anger and invective have been produced over this issue than occurred over the recent veto of lesbian and gay employment rights by Governor Deukmejian.

It is very troubling to me to see that a significant part of our community is mired in the defensive "sexual liberation" posture in devoting more constructive energy for the health, well-being, and economic security of the entire gay and lesbian community.

Wolfred Runs for Re-Election to College Board

Continued from page 1.

... which, in fact, was not our purpose. I don't think we have had the chance to put out what our position really is... which is wanting people to take a look at what is happening and reduce their high risk behavior.

It has been a very hot issue, and I think it is unfortunate that people on the other side of the issue immediately attack us as people, rather than fostering a real debate on this. I think there has been too much personal attack and not enough discussion. I don't think anyone on this issue wants to do evil to anyone, yet we are somehow presented as evil people. I don't think that is the case at all.

One of the perceptions — maybe misconceptions — is that the Milk Club, which is supposedly the most progressive of the gay Democratic clubs, has suddenly become puritanical and even anti-sex. Is this true?

No. Just take a look at our "Can We Talk?" brochure, which we put out a year ago. It is not an anti-sex brochure. In fact, it has even been condemned in some circles as being too sexual.

I do think the Milk Club has taken the lead in educating our community on just what this epidemic is, how it is spread and how we can reduce the spread of the disease while taking care of our own health. That is all we have been out to do from the start. It was the Milk Club with BAPHR (Bay Area Physicians for Human Rights) that raised the money to put out this brochure, because we felt that other institutions were dragging their feet on getting the word out on risk reduction and safe sex. So I think our stand is very pro-sex and not puritanical at all.

The latest story going around is that the next wave of AIDS education is going to be pro-biblical, that the only safe sex is no sex. Could you support that?

It sounds absurd on the face of it. I would have to see what evidence and reasoning would be behind such a campaign and how they will propose to help gay men be celibate. It sounds like an overwhelming task.

Has the gay community even yet comprehended the magnitude of

the AIDS crisis?

I think we are all at a different place on this. Some parts of the community may have accepted and come to grips with it more than others. Having a friend die of AIDS is an experience that makes it more real, I think, and that hasn't happened yet to everyone in our community.

We're talking about something which is unprecedented in our experience, and people take that in at different rates. There is also a whole lot of psychological games that go on around death, and one of the biggest is denial. And in the American culture in particular, denial of death is pretty strong. All of this makes it that much harder for our community to come to grips with something which is



Tim Wolfred

lethal and is killing us. So I think we have a ways to go yet.

As president of the Community College Board, you don't really have to get into the AIDS issue... yet you did. Why?

I am a gay man first. Quite secondarily, I am on the Community College Board. The AIDS epidemic is a major force in my life right now as a gay man, and in the lives of my friends whom I love. So I have to get involved in the AIDS crisis.

If that has some negative impact on my status as an elected official in this city, then so be it. My first concern is me, my friends and my community, so I have to be involved in doing something.

But the Community College system is not totally independent of gay people. There are gays

working in the system, gays in college, and some of them have AIDS. So the college system itself is coming to grips with the AIDS crisis too. As a gay man and as president of the Community College Board, people look to me to provide leadership in this area.

How beneficial is it to our community to have you as president of the Community College Board?

Well, I think it is extremely important. I think the system had benevolently ignored the gay community prior to my being on the board. There were no courses in the Castro, there are now. There were no gay and lesbian administrators, there are now. The district is now trying to meet the needs of the gay community, and it is doing so in large part because I am

Having me as president of the board now is particularly important because we are in a year of potential cutbacks. Because of what the governor has done to our budget, we are facing a \$5 million deficit for the first time in our history. As president, I will have some oversight as to where those cuts are made, so I can help protect some of the vital services now going to our community.

In terms of education in general, some people have been wary of having openly gay people in the field. My being president of the Community College Board is a very strong statement that we have a place in education. It shows that we are there, we are visible and we intend to be a part of this system. There is now going to be research on us, courses taught about us, we will be fully a part of the educational scene.

How does it look for your re-election bid this year?

It is still too early to tell. There is an advantage in being an incumbent, as there is in any campaign in this city. I want to run a strong campaign. Again, I think it is important to the gay community that I run a good race. It'll be a statement as to how our clout as a gay community works, and that we can elect people to office and keep them there. So I plan to mount a strong campaign.

I've already organized a campaign committee, and one of the first things we have to do is raise money. So both I and the committee welcome volunteers. Anyone interested should contact my campaign manager, Stafford Buckley, at 221-1304.

Any closing comments?

I want to say to the gay community that in addressing the AIDS epidemic, maybe we should turn the volume down a little bit. We need to have a good, open discussion without flinging retribution or accusations in any direction. We are in a health crisis where many people have died already, so I would like to see us come to better grips with this epidemic and develop as a community our strategies for taking care of ourselves, and thus reduce the risk of AIDS.

Notebook

April 26 (Thurs.) — Robert Bocol for Assembly committee party with quest of honor Assemblyman William Bocol. At the Forest Hill Clubhouse, 381 Magellan (at Moravia), 6 to 8 P.M. AKA-1772.

Gay Area Gay & Lesbians in Science sponsors an informal lecture on Doby Note Reduction for Arts, at 424-0784.

Golden Gate Business Association sponsors a poetry/theater performance, "BEYOND a word," at the Valencia Room, 8 P.M. 52-0200.

April 27 (Fri.) — Gay and Lesbian Outreach to Elders is starting an eight-week support group for lesbian women over 60. Fridays, from 5:30 to 7 P.M., at Operation Compass, 1853 Market (at Guerrero). For details, dial Mob at 521-5273 or Sherry at 626-7000.

Golden Gate Business Association sponsors a poetry/theater performance, "BEYOND a word," at the Valencia Room, 8 P.M. 52-0200.

Nicholas, Glover & Wray of the Great American Music Hall, 859 O'Farrell, 8:30 P.M. 885-0750.

Lesbian/Gay Celebration Committee presents "Reach Out and Dance," a musical revue, at the Alamo Reddick Hall, 9 P.M. 52-0200.

Video Gallery celebrates its third anniversary with a multi-media exhibit of work by members of its collective. At 3543 18th St., through June 2, 264-VIDA.

April 28 (Sat.) — **Lesbian/Bisexual Women**, sponsored by March Winkless Expeditions, (415) 527-5544.

April 29 (Sun.) — **KSAW's "Gay Life"** airs a forum on AIDS and the bath houses. At 6 A.M. on KSAW (95.1).

Golden Gate Business Association sponsors a poetry/theater performance, "BEYOND a word," at the Valencia Room, 8 P.M. 52-0200.

May 1 (Mon.) — **Lesbian/Gay Celebration Committee** presents "Reach Out and Dance," a musical revue, at the Alamo Reddick Hall, 9 P.M. 52-0200.

May 2 (Tues.) — **Golden Gate Business Association** sponsors a poetry/theater performance, "BEYOND a word," at the Valencia Room, 8 P.M. 52-0200.

May 3 (Wed.) — **Golden Gate Business Association** sponsors a poetry/theater performance, "BEYOND a word," at the Valencia Room, 8 P.M. 52-0200.

May 4 (Thurs.) — **Golden Gate Business Association** sponsors a poetry/theater performance, "BEYOND a word," at the Valencia Room, 8 P.M. 52-0200.

May 5 (Fri.) — **Golden Gate Business Association** sponsors a poetry/theater performance, "BEYOND a word," at the Valencia Room, 8 P.M. 52-0200.

May 6 (Sat.) — **Golden Gate Business Association** sponsors a poetry/theater performance, "BEYOND a word," at the Valencia Room, 8 P.M. 52-0200.

May 7 (Sun.) — **Golden Gate Business Association** sponsors a poetry/theater performance, "BEYOND a word," at the Valencia Room, 8 P.M. 52-0200.

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Whispers

Octavia Hayes



Gimme a Break, Mona!

The latest hubbub from the Castro Street hubbubarium: Beware of bible-thumpers bearing sweet promises. Octavia is talking about **Mona**, a nonstop recruiter for the SOS Jesus movement. She can be frequently found at the **Donut Shop**, where she tries to make points with the street people by promising them food, shelter, clothing ... all if they join SOS Jesus.

"One young gay man, a short-lived convert, told this story: 'Once you're in, if you begin to question ... you're thrown back out onto the street. Mona now comes up to me and lays a guilt-trip on me and tells me that gays just want to use me for sex.'"

Mona is also a consummate rumormonger. She recently scrawled on one Castro Street poster, "I recently heard two policemen from San Francisco share how they were ordered by city officials not to arrest certain individuals for crimes being committed as long as it did not hurt anyone. Even men who were running around almost nude in front of women and children. The officers shared how a bomb was planted in the police station, it exploded injuring many. They shared ... that both lesbians and homosexuals are allowed on the police force in San Francisco."

So next time you are in the Castro and a bible-waving, bible-spouting Mona starts trying to save your soul, just tell her to shove off.

One last note: Last week **Community United Against Violence** received a report from a lesbian who had been assaulted on Castro. She was clobbered by a woman with a bible. Draw your own conclusions.

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The **Watering Hole** is mad as hell ... and owner **Bryan R. Todd** isn't being quiet about it. He just sent off a fiery letter to five supervisors, including Sir Harry, and the gay press. What follows are the reasons — all justifiable — for Todd's discontent: "We are a small business that is being relocated by the open space project and/or for Parks and Rec Dept., so that a park can be built on the corner of Sixth and Folsom streets."

"We have been attempting to locate suitable space now for about some two or three years. Last September, we did indeed locate a space that was approved by your Redevelopment Agency. We had some close contact ... with that department ever since then. The problem is, we were advised that we most likely would be able

to move into the new location some time in February, so we signed a 10-year lease in October so things could progress. It is now April and we find that work cannot even start until the Building Permit is obtained (approx two weeks), and then it will take approximately 65 days to complete the work, if there are no complications!

"We will be losing one year of our new lease plus approximately some \$20,000 in rent that has to be paid to hold onto the new location that took so long to come by. (It seems we) are constantly being put off and/or extended due to obvious bureaucratic nonsense at our expense. When will this end?"

So far there has been no response. Surprised?

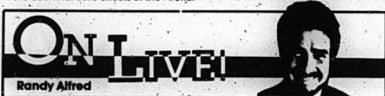
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Pam Oren, the owner of **Mike's Ice Cream** on the corner of Fell and Laguna, was robbed and brutally beaten on April 8. At this time, she is still hospitalized and it appears that it will be many, many months before she will be able to earn her living once again. Of course, during this recuperation period, her business, personal and medical expenses are certain to mount.

Well, because Pam is such a popular member of the Hayes Valley community, her friends and neighbors are rallying to her behalf. They will be tossing a two-day benefit rummage sale on May 5-6. However, now they need donations of usable items in working order. Cash donations would also be appreciated. A bake sale is also being considered. To make your donation or for more info, call Wayne at Metropolis at 864-5512.



More bountiful bare chests at the Arena.



Interesting Times

PAULA-TICS: Why do some people in our community continue to engage in high-risk sexual activity? Perhaps they've been misinformed, or disoriented. The study by McKusick, Horstman, and Carfagni on behavior change in the wake of the AIDS epidemic may shed some light on this. Over 80 percent of the men they surveyed felt that the epidemic had had an impact on their sexual behavior. Yet the only behavior change they seem to have actually made was that they rimmed new partners less than they used to. Other precautions such as reducing the number of sexual partners, reducing receptive anal intercourse without condom, or switching to mutual masturbation were not involved.

What could account for this? Think back some 14 months. When this city's first weekly gay tabloid suddenly discovered the AIDS crisis (openly admitting it had previously downplayed it), the editor went on a two-fold crusade. First, that paper adopted parasitic infection as its pet theory of the cause of AIDS. The idea is fascinating, and these Castro-intestinal diseases may indeed play a contributory role in the development of AIDS. Nonetheless, most research is leading us elsewhere. (Or perhaps the virus rides piggyback on a parasite.)

In any event, a campaign to inform the men in our community of the considerable proven dangers of parasitic infection would be salutary. The healthier one is, the better equipped he is to fight off known and unknown infections alike. The healthier we are as a community, the fewer diseases we will be passing around like lethal shuttlecocks.

But this selfsame weekly tabloid compounded its single-minded devotion to the parasite theory with espousal of a simple-minded approach to preventing infections of amebiasis, giardiasis, and shigellosis. Its instructions, repeated endlessly in cutesy, "don't be tongue in cheek" fillers, don't rim. That's a start, but it's not that simple. It's good advice for good health, but there are lots of other ways to catch parasites, too. For instance, you could lick them off the body parts of someone who's been exposed to the feces of a third (or fourth through tenth) person. There's a pretty good chance of that at our baths and sex clubs, you'll have to admit.

In fact, you can pick up parasites by exposure to feces from just about any animal. (The last time I touched (or touched last week) someone who just touched his penis that was just inside the rectum of someone else. And you

didn't even get any fun in that exchange. All risk, no pleasure.

Parasites are a health problem, and it's irresponsible to make people believe rimming is the only way to get them. And if you believe parasites are implicated in the development of AIDS, it's inconsistent to write that risk is dependent only on sexual acts and not on sexual locale.

What this item from the McKusick study reveals to me is that an influential medium in our community has not only failed to inform gay men of the nature of the risks that face us, it has dis-informed us. The tabloid's double message was: parasites cause AIDS, and rimming causes parasites. Many gay men who wisely trusted it have apparently failed to make any further changes in their behavior.

We know the possible results all too well, but many in our community still treat the issue only in terms of symbols and not of lives to be saved or lost.

SING A SONG: If the diehard facts of "I Left My Heart in San Francisco" refuse to allow that maudlin ditty to be replaced as official city song, I have a suggestion. Let's adopt the rousing "San Francisco" as our official county song and leave the other be.

After all, aren't we the county that knows how?

SACRED CLOSETS? British churchmen are making a holy furor over a three-part commercial television series that purports that Jesus Christ may have been homosexual and his miracles the result of hypnosis. Even before it aired, they condemned it as "dis-

Short takes: The second annual **Operation Home Run**, a benefit softball game pitting the media vs. politicians, has just been announced. And, again this year, the gay press isn't considered part of the "media."

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Be sure and catch **Reginald McDonald** in his performance of "Sweet and Hot," a Harold Arlen Songbook. He'll be at the Plush Room on April 30.

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And on May 6, songbird **Robin Heller** will perform in two post-brunch concerts. The first is at 2 P.M., the second at 3:30. **Pam Anton** will be at the piano.

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Who's on First? The latest wacky rumor going the rounds in San Franseshow has to do with the next big educational campaign against AIDS. It seems **Dr. Marcus Conant**, the former chairman of the on-again/off-again **National AIDS/KS Foundation**, and researcher **Andrew Moss** are now attempting to woo mega-bucks from the city coffers to launch a giant pro-celibacy campaign within the gay community. Their slogan will be: "The only safe sex is no sex." Anybody want to sign on with that particular campaign? How about you, **Harry Britt**?

+++++

Randy Stallings, the one-time prey of the Toklas Club, has been receiving the royal red shaft in his recent job hunt. He was up to be **Rick Crane's** successor as executive director of the **San Francisco AIDS Foundation**, but his bid was sabotaged in large part by two other former Alice heads, **Steve Walters** and **Frank Fitch**. The word Octavia hears is that **Bob Ross** was the real string-puller out to nail Randy. But don't despair, Stallings will soon start working out of the office of **Mayor Dianne Feinstein**.

+++++

Kudos to **The Advocate** for their splashy, flashy new slick magazine, **Advocate MEN**. Editor/art director **Dennis Forbes** can be proud ... Not so with another gay skin-and-sin publication, **Blackboy**. One time editor **John Galeado** has been given the heave-ho, while the magazine is once again months and months behind in paying its bills ... And a wonderful, exciting, full-color, hour-long documentary on the **Gay Games** is now in the works. **Tom Waddell** and **Jon Berliner** have joined nogginns on this super-neat project.

torted and unreliable," according to the *Daily Record* of Glasgow.

CONVENTIONAL WISDOM: From **Roz Wyman**, executive director of the Democratic National Convention: "The Democrats made the right choice in coming to S.F. (I) represents more of the feelings and the different groups that are the backbone of the Democratic Party today than probably any city in America ..."

"You are all very adult people, and you all know the problems that you faced and do face, and you know that (gay rights) are a controversial issue in America. There is no question that what you do, affects people in Iowa, affects people all across the nation in your own group and in other groups. I think that there are many delegates who don't have the slightest understanding of the gay issue, and I'm not sure whether they will ever ..."

"I think the party's importance is (in) what we do in the platform and that your planks in the platform are spelled out loud and clear. But I don't think anybody is kidding anybody if you think there are not problems surrounding it ..."

"We as a party believe that we have clearly taken a position, that we understand and care about this issue, and as a party it is something we believe in. We are in San Francisco because we believe that the mixture of interests in S.F. represents what we think is right as a party ..."

"But I think that if you don't understand what the issue is as Americans, then you're not sensitive to what is going on in the political process. And I can't believe you're not ..."

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A RESOLUTION REGARDING AN OBJECTIVE RESPONSE TO AIDS:

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WHEREAS, acquired immune deficiency syndrome (A.I.D.S.) is a mysterious malady affecting gay men in disproportionate numbers to the rest of the population and urgently requires research and education as to its cause and prevention; and

WHEREAS, uncaring and unscrupulous theocrats have stooped to manipulating public fears about the A.I.D.S. problem in order to serve their own private political goals of eliminating first the gay baths, then the gay bars, then all gay businesses and organizations, and possibly the jobs of every gay person;

NOW THEREFORE, be it resolved by the independent Gay Health Clubs and the Northern California Bath Association that our members will cooperate fully with legitimate scientific and humanitarian efforts to disseminate objective information about A.I.D.S. to our patrons; and

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I'll Be Seeing You

by W.E. Beardemph

This is the last issue of *The Sentinel* published by yours truly. The ownership of the paper is changing. *The Sentinel* will continue in the commitment of publishing a newspaper for our community that contains the truth.

Over the years there have been many changes that have occurred in the homosexual community and to *The Sentinel*. Life, after all, is change. In order to live responsibly, it is obvious that one needs a means of communication within our community — one that is reliable, that is not rife with embarrassing gossip and speculation pandered as fact, that is not engulfed with offensive second-rate porno, that does not promote itself through fear, that does not limit itself to a one-sided bias. This *Sentinel* tradition of responsibility and pride has not changed over the years. We are convinced that the new owners, Charles R. Roberts, Jr. and Thomas Murray, will continue the same policies. Those changes that are planned will only improve and expand these past commitments.

Our biggest gratitude must go to the wonderful, devoted persons who have staffed *The Sentinel* and made it always come out on time. Without people who give more than they take out of life, institutions like *The Sentinel* could never survive.

We want to thank our readers. Those who read *The Sentinel* are the reason for publishing. We know that our 18,000 press run (that has been our minimum press run in the last 2 1/2 years), has never been enough to go around. We have had to keep within a tight budget. Even when we put out the larger 25,000 press runs for election issues, *The Sentinel* was picked up within a couple of days, if not hours, of delivery. For those that missed out on an issue because of our limitations, we apologize.

If there is anything that has been confirmed to me in this past 2 1/2 years of bringing *The Sentinel* out of bankruptcy during one of this area's most desperate economic recessions, it has been that all anyone can really do is to face up to the facts. No one can beat the truth into a community; we can only report what the truth is.

Look at the most important story of these years — AIDS. Almost simultaneously with the inception of AIDS we revived *The Sentinel*, and for all practical purposes, we are ending our stint at *The Sentinel* with the resolution of most of the issues concerning AIDS. At all times we reported the facts and the real concerns while others were bleating, crying "full on their chests," spreading false rumors, engaging in preposterous political posturing, putting hands in the cookie jar, looking for lucrative jobs, etc.

As of now, a virus in the blood has been isolated as the cause of AIDS. This is still not the epidemiology of the disease. It is very probable that treatment, vaccinations, etc. will be available before the epidemiology is fully understood.

Meanwhile, look at the statements made by politicians regarding sex clubs and bath houses. Dr. Silverman: "After six hours of deliberation concerning all available options, it was the opinion of this group that altering the behavior in these bath houses, sex clubs and other facilities could have an important effect on the incidence of AIDS. It was the unanimous position of this group that all sexual activity between individuals be eliminated in public facilities in San Francisco..."

This means the *de facto* recognition that licensing bath houses is for sexual activity. This was publicly affirmed also by Mayor Feinstein and other politicians in their ass-backwards statements. So we have a very interesting legal situation arising, along with the cure and control of AIDS. When we have a cure and control of AIDS in place, we have one more giant step forward for sexual freedom accomplished by political ineptitude. Think about it.

Next, look at the story about the California Health Department TV tapes on "gays." We were invited to a political meeting at the offices of Art Agnos who had one of the controversial tapes and was attempting to make a political issue of the damned thing. I listened to the anguish and breast-beating of the "gays" in attendance, and of some homosexuals who were also inadvertently invited, went back to *The Sentinel* office, made one phone call, was delivered all the tapes by messenger, then turned the tapes over to Art Agnos in public. (Really, Art, the whole thing was beneath you.) Now I read in a publication from the East that Agnos obtained the tapes in a secret meeting in a garage at midnight or some such nonsense. Agnos has since turned the tapes over to the incompetent Virginia Apuzzo of the National Gay Task Force. These particular tabloids from the East that carried the story had received and read the

front page story in *The Sentinel* that contained the truth. Why are they printing — for their own homosexual community's consumption — stories that they know are not true? Think about it.

Talk about some of the media printing lies... I have a thick file and one-and-a-half years investigating the Coors Boycott incident. The first surprising fact I discovered was that Coors has been the first in the brewery industry to recognize and support the rights of minorities including homosexuals. Yes, they are political conservatives, many are ardent Christians, Joe Coors does serve on Reagan's kitchen cabinet (How do you think it got to Secretary of Health Heckler about funding AIDS research?), and some members of the extensive Coors clan have given money to the likes of Falwell The Faithful Fool, but Coors is not anti-homosexual in their business — or in their politics. The Coors Boycott, as we reported, was started as a San Francisco political deal and was continued in the homosexual community as a rather sick, inept political organizing tool. The San Francisco homosexual community barely masks its indulgence of its own turnout who is still pathetically trying to perpetuate this farce. Maybe some people are being duped about the Coors Boycott, but not the regular readers of *The Sentinel*. Think about it.

As long as we go on living we will have news that will be misrepresented, manipulated, faked, etc. There are those who seem to delight in this bitchiness more than in being happy. So, it is essential to our community that there is someplace to find the truth about our community despite those who try to practice the maxim, you can fool most of the people most of the time. There is a need — a desperate and real need — for a newspaper that is dedicated to the traditions and principles of *The Sentinel*.

We have new owners of *The Sentinel* now who are dedicated to these principles, who are very capable, and who are gentlemen. Their plans for *The Sentinel* are very exciting. We wish them and the whole homosexual community well.

We will be in touch
Thank you.

LETTERS

CRUEL CARTOONS

Your cartoonist, Vaughn Frick, is irresponsible at best and cruel at worst. His head-in-the-sand view of AIDS is more dangerous than anything the ignorant attitudes that help AIDS spread further. He should keep his suicidal impulses to himself and not promote them under the guise of wit.

In fact, I wonder if his opinions are his own, or if they're just part of the editorial "line" of a paper that runs prominent ads for Coors Beer. If you'll accept advertising dollars from a man who is vociferously anti-gay (and recently, anti-black) and if you run ads for bathhouses on your editorial page, you've got to expect readers to form their own conclusions about the motives behind your editorial "opinions."

John Zimrowski
S.F., CA

SHAME ON SHILTS

Re: Randy Shilts interview says he is "well respected in his profession." Evidently by the apologetic standards of the gay press and the *Chronicle*, only.

There are very few declarative sentences in his articles (which are mainly direct and indirect quotes) when he is referring to AIDS, but there are a lot of loaded with sensationalistic adverbs and adjectives (there is never an "increase in AIDS cases" which is not also "shocking," "alarming," etc.).

I pointed out to Mr. Shilts that one of his favorite "sources" was an habitual liar and was in fact not competent to make statements Shilts was quoting. His response: "I'm not interested." Is

this the sort of reporter who is respected nowadays?

He does not report facts, he makes up stories. Witness the March 7 story "Experts Predict Nightmare Over AIDS Cases" which was not a single factual item in this article, it was entirely speculation about what "may" be the case "if" and "what" is believed, etc.

Shilts' AIDS articles are never reporting, they are selective manipulations to fit a preconceived dogma. Shilts does not quote, for example, American Association of Physicians for Human Rights, he quotes only those people who will support his position. (To suggest he doesn't have one is a cynical and dishonest lie.) This is the Pravda school of reporting. I can't imagine his fellow journalists cannot tell the difference between news and propaganda, the strict line is followed throughout all the AIDS series; the need to close the baths to stop the spread of AIDS.

Shilts says he, like Dianne Feinstein, is a "door." What Shilts is doing is trying to sell himself up as a self-proclaimed Messiah who should tell everyone else what is good for them. I don't need "doors" to make decisions for me. I appreciate the "grippers" (like Youniss) who have no sympathy for the plight of those who feel they are God's gift to save us from ourselves, whether they are religious fanatics or the misguides likes of Shilts or Littlejohn. Given Mr. Shilts' negative contributions, I think the gay community has been overly charitable to him.

Jerry Jensen
S.F., CA

BATH HOUSE ETC.

Every week, I'm reading papers, and this week, all three carried the story

about the closing of the bathhouses.

When Larry Littlejohn, a founder of the Society for Individual Rights, no less, made the announcement on March 27th, that is finally was, to stop sexual activities among men in the bathhouses, in order to prevent further spread of AIDS, it stirred up a storm of protests, because he was interfering with our individual rights.

Mayor Feinstein was immediate for it, to close the bathhouses, because, although she didn't say that openly, it could really harm the upcoming Democratic Convention, specially, when it is held in a city, openly accepting the gay life style and God forbid, some of those convention delegates, gay, bisexual and not to forget closet cases, may want to have a good time at night, by visiting the gay bathhouses and/or sex clubs, instead of after a busy day at the convention, after a nice dinner, going back to the room, watch TV for a while and then after a good night sleep, arriving well rested the next day at the convention.

The Mayor, Dr. Silverman and others, including the gay doctors, knew, that it was not that easy, to close the bathhouses as it was questionable, if you legally could do so and how difficult that was, was confirmed by the city's attorney's office.

Finally, the announcement came, baths open but no sex at all. When you really think about that, who wonder, who is using common sense and who doesn't. It is like living a birthday party, everything is there, booze and food, but when arriving, you're told, just have a good time, don't eat or drink anything, just talk to each other. In the baths, you have the same situation. Get undressed, put a towel around your waist, just walk around, be very nice to every one, introduce yourself to every one, by shaking hands, have a drink and something to eat, all on the house, of course, but don't forget, nothing else, no sex, don't even think about it and after you've seen and talked to every one, just get dressed and go home and tell every one, what a nice time you had at the baths.

All three papers mentioned AIDS epidemic, but if you count all the gay and bisexual men in San Francisco, you don't even get one percent. When you do get that for the entire U.S.A., you even get less, not even one percent. There are also AIDS cases in other countries and they have gay baths, too. As it hasn't been proven, that AIDS comes definitely from having sex, either male/male, male/female, female/female, those baths are still open and sex would have been the main cause of getting AIDS, we would have had more cases world wide. If it really would have been declared an epidemic, you can be sure, that the World Health Organization would have stepped in and after careful evaluation and consulting with various governments, having declared AIDS an epidemic, then measures would have been undertaken, to close all bathhouses, not only here, but world wide.

Hopefully, we'll soon have something, to combat AIDS, but every year more people die of a heart attack and cancer related diseases than AIDS. We have that we are living in the 20th century and 16 years from now, the 21st will start. Gays have been around since the 1st century and will

still be around in and through the 21st one. We also know, even Mayor Feinstein, the gay doctors and Dr. Silverman, that leaving the baths open was a silly and stupid action, politically motivated. What we need is more research and up-to-date information about AIDS, because just closing (you may as well say that, having baths with no sex) the baths in San Francisco, will definitely not secure a decline in AIDS cases. R. Dulcer
S.F., CA

SHILTS VS. HENNESSEY

Randy Shilts has done some good writing over the years. "The Mayor of Castro Street" was excellent. However, Randy shouldn't receive any journalistic awards for his "Chaps" article. A third of the way through I lost interest. It was, in attempting to create a story when you really don't have one. San Francisco cops never survive without this article. It was not entertaining; it didn't work, and few people were amused. Randy said he thought the piece was funny. A person could be thought to have a strange sense of humor when he's the only one laughing.

On the other hand, Sheriff Hennessey was unwise to go to Chaps to recruit because the bar targets too narrow a segment of the gay community. He might have done better setting up a table at Hibernia Beach at 18th and Castro Streets contacting much of the "Chaps" crowd as well as many other types of gay people who don't usually go South of Market. One might also debate the merits of recruiting in a bar. And speaking of bars, how many straight or lesbian bars did Sheriff Hennessey go to? Chaps was just a bad idea from the day it was conceived to execute to Randy Shilts reporting the event. George Collins
S.F., CA

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Dance

Prodigal Returns in Triumph

by Mark Woodworth

The *Prodigal Son*, recently performed by the San Francisco Ballet on a mixed bill, was the last ballet the impresario Serge Diaghilev produced for the Ballets Russes before his untimely death in Venice in 1929. The appeal of the Biblical parable must have been strong to both that Russian theatrical genius and his fellow countryman and staff choreographer, the 24-year-old George Balanchine, for neither could go home again to the kind of welcome given a prodigal son.

Both were likely regarded by the artists they left behind as morally sullied — like the wayward son of their story. For in effect they had forsaken their patrimony. But only by turning their backs on the court-stultified system, on the frozen-in-amber classical Russian ballet traditions, could they be free to trailblaze new forms of theatrical expression, artistic collaboration, and choreographic innovation that would change the face of dance.

As with most ballets from that enchanted era when *tout le Paris* was agog at the exotic flower that was the Ballets Russes, many curious stories about the creation of *The Prodigal Son* have come down to us.

One (from Balanchine himself) tells of the Fauvist and religious painter Georges Rouault being locked in his hotel room in Paris to produce some usable design sketches. He made hundreds for scenery, but none for costumes. Panicking, Diaghilev finished some sketches away from him, which he gave to Vera Stravinsky to whip up appropriate outfits.

Another story has the work's composer, Prokofiev, arriving to conduct the first performance at the Théâtre Sarah-Bernhardt and being shocked to see that Balanchine had treated the story symbolically and expressionistically whereas Prokofiev expected real wine and real cushions.

Those who think the creative must deliver on schedule might be surprised to learn the origin of a curious short mimed scene in the ballet in which revelers sit in a large wooden prop (used variously as fence, table, and pillar) and row as if in a boat. Balanchine had only two weeks to prepare the ballet, and one hour before the dress rehearsal found his horror that he had devised no movement for the dancers at that particular spot. The score couldn't



A vivid moment from Balanchine's *PRODIGAL SON*.

be cut, so he desperately suggested the boat scene. Though it seems out of place, he never changed it. Serge Lifar, one of the most gorgeous and dramatically vivid male dancers of this century, even called the *dieu de la danse*, was the hero. His tasks included partnering the rather taller Fella Doudrovskaya, who played a bewitching Siren; in a duet of seduction. To Balanchine, fiercely heterosexual, ballet was woman. But Diaghilev, said Dubrovskaya a few years ago, "think man is ballet. So Balanchine present Lifar on a gold plate." (A wonderful idea as a feast for the eyes!)

Lifar himself writes, rather melodramatically, about the night of the premiere, when he refused to leave his hotel room, racked with doubts because he couldn't "feel" the character he had to play. Thinking of the love and care lavished on him by Diaghilev as a kind of spiritual father, Lifar suddenly leaped out of bed, crying to an aide, "Let's be off to the theatre. I have created my Prodigal Son... It is myself." His per-

formance that night moved the audience to tears.

Other notable performers dancing the principal roles have included Maria Tallchief with Jerome Robbins, and Edward Villella, whom I recall as magnificent in the role. As is its admirable practice, the San Francisco Ballet fielded several casts for its production, which was mounted by John Taras, ballet master of the New York City Ballet.

The performers I saw vividly brought to life this early-Balanchine treasure — from the skinhead-carousers who march in linked like a centipede and proceed to debauch, rob and strip the son, through his faithless companions (Nigel Courtney and Jonathan Miller), to Tracy-Kai Maier as an icily sinuous Siren.

Kirk Peterson, known for his high-flying feats of pyrotechnics and thus seldom entrusted with a romantic lead, threw himself into the draining role of the besotted son with precisely textured abandon, making a dramatic triumph. The acting challenge is

immense. Edwin Denby wrote of the ballet, *Prodigal Son* is told, since it is about good and evil, in two kinds of pantomime: the dry, insect-like, insect-quick elegance and filth of atheism, and the fleshy Biblical vehemence — so Near Eastern and juicy — of sin and of forgiveness, the bitter sin and the sweet forgiveness.

The ballet's final moments fuse the two, and never cease to stab the heart. Cyril Beaumont rightly credits this scene with "a genuine Blake-like grandeur." Balanchine took the movement idea from a Pushkin story in which a way station for travelers was decorated with lithographs, one showing the prodigal son returning home on his knees. The scene as Balanchine created it is as deep as the son has fallen to that moment, calling for acting of a high order. Broken and contrite, morally crippled and reduced to rags, the prodigal crawls to the tent of his father. That solemn man gathers him into his arms, covers him with his cloak, envelops him in forgiveness and love, as the curtain falls.

Even in Babylon

John F. Karr



THIS WEEK'S MAXIM:

"Eagerness is a state of mind, not a talent." Brendan Gill, *New Yorker* magazine.

JOHNNY ONE NOTE ON A BITCH:

Lanford Wilson's plays have often been dubbed Chekhovian, much to Wilson's distaste. But in Chekhov the innovator, the resister of melodrama and sensation, there is a basis for comparison. In a famous letter written early in his career as a playwright, Chekhov announced his manifesto:

"In real life people don't spend every minute shooting each other, hanging themselves, making confessions of love, and saying clever things. They're more occupied with eating, drinking, flirting and talking stupidities — and these are the things which ought to be shown on the stage. A play should be written in which people arrive, go away, have dinner, talk about the weather and play cards. Life must be exactly as it is."

Let everything on the stage be just as complicated, and at the same time just as simple, as it is in life. People eat their dinner, just eat their dinner, and all the time their happiness is being established or their lives are being broken up.

At the same time as Ibsen, though in a different manner, Chekhov was preaching naturalism. Lanford Wilson's plays are undeniably Chekhov's descendants, in which plot is more frequently conveyed under the dialogue than through it. As such, they are favored by actors and directors for the chance to explore the nuance and emotional drift that must be understood instead of explained. The cast currently toiling on Wilson's behalf at Theatre Rhinoceros seems to think they're in *The Count of Monte Cristo*. Subtlety doesn't stand a chance, mind less life being played as it is, while this group chews the play to muflocking bits.

The Fifth of July is slender at best, but its characters are contemporary and their problems fascinate in the direct correlation to our lives. It's *The Big Chill* — a reunion of eight friends, most of whom were direct participants in late 1960's upheaval. For some, that was merely the fashionable thing to do. For others, it shaped a life-long set of ideals.

The friends gather on July 4th to inter the ashes of Sally's husband. Old grievances flare up when Ken, who owns the estate, announces his intention to sell it. His homosexuality is presented without comment by Wilson, and doesn't seem to motivate the action. His college-days *menage* with rock-and-rollers Gwen and John is glossed over, although the undercurrent of his possible attachment to John, a heterosexual, is major. Ken joined the army in retaliation against John, lost his legs in Viet Nam, and is now emotionally as well as physically crippled. Ken is a teacher; we'd expect his gayness to be his problem, but it's his legs that are his handicap. He can't face his students. So he's selling the estate to run off and hide. His lover won't go, and Sally and Shirley don't want him to sell. Each person in this web has needs, and our enjoyment of the play comes from picking up the strands of the web during the chit-chat of their reunion duets and trios and then getting off on the climax which inevitably confronts all of them at once.

Although willing — I like this play — I was caught up in the web only once, when Sally's simple belief in a story convinced me of her reality. The rest of the time I was stranded outside by the production's lack of subtlety and the unbelievable location the group is given in which to spin.



Marian Scott (second from left) creates a reality which eludes other cast members in *THE FIFTH OF JULY*.

While John Wullbrandt's set design is ingenious, it is uninvited. In there are no personal artifacts or signs of life to tell me anyone lives there. It seems a Holiday Inn the characters have just checked into — and this, we're told, after a drunken party the night before. Well, perhaps fads do have totally neat drunken parties.

The talents of the cast, with the exception of Marian Scott's Sally, cannot be discerned through the thick direction of Joe Cappa. As demonstrated on previous productions, Cappa picks a volume and a tempo and employs them without change. He prefers loud and slow. In this, he overrides the ebb and flow of life which constitutes most of the play, and makes it difficult for us to pick up the unspoken alliances, hostilities, hopes and defeats of the characters.

Symptomatic is a lamp on Ken's desk. Meant to illuminate, it's placed downstage, blocking his face. In Cappa's failure to notice is the obfuscation, rather than illumination, of his work — and certainly little of the "life as it is" which should mark a Wilson play.

I have other complaints — Was played as a cretin instead of a dope-smoker. June played as a bitch, the rock-and-roller's cocaine and frenzy dominating and therefore leading away from what ought to be central — but these all lead back to the director. Cappa's peers refer to his Italianate approach to direction. And I refer — them all, and mostly Cappa, to this week's maxim:

Still and all, and not to excuse what I find faulty work or be falsely supportive of Rhino, I believe the play and its characters to still be worth acquaintance. Pretend they're all Italians instead of WASPs. Of primary concern is Wilson's loving way with his characters, and the wonderful way homosexuality can be a character trait without subverting a play. *The Fifth of July* is a landmark among plays gay or otherwise in this respect, and an engrossing play at that. Just request seats in the last row.

BAR NONE

So here's the score. In the last 10 days I've seen every show in town. Making an exception for *Bluefish Cove*, which is our show, they all bored me. Except for *Women Behind Bars*, which is so warped, so impure, so twisted and so well played that (to borrow words of another gal of high opinion, Martha) I laughed my goddam head off.

Women Behind Bars is a satire of that genre of movies that seems to be beneath satire, the all women prison flicks. The characters are stock: the tough glamor girl, the old lady, the innocent lamb, the hip black, the crazed Latin, the fat buldyke matron, the physically twisted cell-keeper.

Continued on page 7

"Quite unlike anything that's gone before... Out camps LA CAGE AUX FOLLES."

—Bruce Williamson, *Playboy* Magazine

"SUCCEEDS BRILLIANTLY... SO GOOD THAT ONE WANTS THE MOVIE TO KEEP ON GOING."

—Vincent Canby, *N.Y. TIMES*

Malaysia, 1987
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—Judy Stone, *SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE*

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Continued from page 6

the lunatic, the Monroe type, etc. Hire excellent actresses for each role, write a funny and stage-worthy script, get a director who knows when to let up on frenzy for the quiet moment that has a silent kick, expose most of all of everybody's tits and throw in a nude man for fun, and you got a hit. I thought the show was expensive until I saw what I got my money's worth. I can't wait to go back.



The cast of *WOMEN BEHIND BARS* leaves no racial slur, sexual perversion or personal idiosyncrasy locked up.

As directed by Ron Link, the show is what Jon Waters promises in his truly tongue in cheek and funny to the point of exhaustion. It's not without serious moments, and squibs of reality fit by giving substance and context to the purposefully outlandish proceedings.

Other than urge you to live a little and see it, I can only compliment the cast, particularly Susan Barnes as the matron's sidekick. It's a field-day role which gives an actress leeway for tons of zany creativity, and Barnes goes for it. Lu Leonard is top-notch as the matron, Leslie Easterbrook glamorous as the gunnoll type, and Katie La Bourdette (late of *Beach Blanket Babylon*) sensational as Marilyn Monroe as played by Doris Fish. And on throughout the cast, all excellent.

An exception is Scott Utey, the lone male member. He's upstaged by his penis. The women are believable in the extreme stylization of the roles. Utey, in several roles, has not tagged their characteristics and they waffle into one another. His cock makes the boldest assertion with a stiff characterization springing assertively from gut — well, groin-level. To better catch this cameo, sit house right, and wear absorbent underwear. You'll want no tale-stains as you exit.

Absolutely wild animals, with wild on-stage shenanigans to match. *Behind Bars* warped all the way, a true non-stop laugh. Beneath the frenzy, though, is a carefully constructed script and a director who can differentiate between eagerness and talent. This show is sick and knows how to ride that for all it's worth. When did you last have good, clean fun at a sick show? I love this one unrelentingly.

PARTING SHOT:

I love writing for the gay press. I could quote Chekhov anywhere, but could I discuss, in all highbrow seriousness, the state of an actor's erection anywhere else? Kiss my gonads, nowhere... even in Babylon.

Flickerbits

by Patti Kimmel

Delayed-action release: The British Army-camp camp of *Cheese/Quilley & Co., PRIVATES ON PARADE*, finally gets its chance (opened Lumiere, 27th). SIFF spin-offs begin their runs with the Abraham Lincoln Brigade recalling the Spanish Civil War (2nd, Lumiere from 9th), to the awesome animation of *THE PLAGUE DOGS* (Cannery, 11th), and super storybook of the Martineau-made *SUGAR CAKE ALLEY* (11th).

S.F. premieres set off the golden silver-screen goodies on your May movie calendar — after April standances out with *Charlie Ahearn's WILD STYLE* (York, thru 1st), *MYRA BRECKENRIDGE* hides out in the *VALLEY OF THE DOLLS* (Strand, 26th), the uncult *TOKYO OLYMPIAD* lays ground-work for *L.A. IFA* (28th), and young guys double up with *YOU ARE NOT ALONE* & *THE BEST WAY* (Strand, 30). May Day premieres *GRENADE: THE FUTURE COMING TOWARD US*, plus *HALLS BITTER CANE* (York, 1st), and the German *ULYSSES* (Homer takes on James Joyce) — barred from

last year's Aussie film fest, go see why (PFA, 1st). *SL-1 & SECRET AGENT* expose horrors — nuclear and the orange (York, 2-8), earlier trenchant comedy from *Elmore (L.A. B&B) SPOKE A SPECIAL DAY* that *Mastrolanni* makes somewhat gay (Roxie, 4-5); further showings of Denmark's *YOU ARE NOT ALONE* (Red Vic, 6-7); Hitchcock's *STRANGERS ON A TRAIN* still thrills despite its nasty pings (Lumiere, 27th); *NORTH BY NORTHWEST* is always worth a second check of your cinema compass (Roxie, 6-7); *Bette Gordon's VARIETY* on its first S.F. visit (Roxie, 9-12).

It may come as a disappointment to some, but the casting of *Torch Song Trilogy's Harvey Fierstein* is not for the title of United Artist's *GARBO TALKS* — Anne Bancroft stole the coveted part — but his voice-of-the-Bronx-turle will be heard in counterpoint to *Hermione Gingold's* in the upcoming *Lynette Starline* bit. The Wizard may not recognize his OZ when Disney Studios get finished with it — the visual combo of *ELEPHANT MAN's* photographer and *STAR WARS* art director should blow everyone's fuses.

Oh, go get your tickets too, already!

by Bill Hux

Now that Edo de Waart is leaving, the question arises: should we have treated him better? Never has the Dutch conductor seemed more appealing. There is a vigor in his work; he is showing confidence and enhanced concentration. The orchestra has been playing beautifully for him and they have applauded him generously, as though they meant it.

Some of de Waart's recent achievements — the Mahler *Ninth*, the Elliott Carter *Symphony for Three Orchestras*, the Stravinsky *Symphony in C* — certainly make one sentimental about the conductor's strengths. I, for one, will miss his sympathy with modern music. Contemporary scores appeal to de Waart's sense of tension and give scope to his sense of adventure. In performing Carter's music, for example, de Waart does not feel the shadow of Wilhelm Furtwängler falling over his shoulder. This freedom from implied comparison with the great conductors of the past releases his imaginative powers.

The most encouraging thing about de Waart is that his self-awareness is deep. The keenest analysis I have heard of de Waart's tenure in San Francisco comes from the maestro himself. At the press conference when the Symphony announced their 1984-85 season, the conductor was asked what input he gave the commission selecting his successor. De Waart said that he told them the orchestra did not need a conductor who was still learning the bulk of the symphonic repertoire. Such has been de Waart's own situation here. He has learned an enormous amount during his years in San Francisco, but quite honestly what we have been listening to is a talented man laying the foundation of his career. If de Waart is looking better to us these days, it is because now he is better qualified for the job he has been doing. He is both more knowledgeable about many specific scores and more in command of himself.

The second clue to de Waart's perceptive self-analysis came at that press conference when he admitted that in his early years here when things went wrong, he tended to become very upset. In those bygone days, the San Francisco orchestra was a fairly unreliable ensemble, and that in itself must have been unsettling. But also, I think de Waart doubted himself. In those days he simply was not able to learn the music as thoroughly or as rapidly as his schedule required. Sometimes he panicked and that only made things worse.

Let me go at his problem from a different angle for a moment.



Edo de Waart

During his tenure with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Zubin Mehta was denounced almost weekly by Martin Bernheimer, the *Times* critic. Bernheimer saw that Mehta did not have the talents necessary for a great conductor. Almost every concert seemed to the critic further evidence of the conductor's inadequacy, and Bernheimer sounded the point home. Often the daily newspapers in San Francisco seem to have held the same opinion of de Waart. Yet the situation was, I think, fundamentally different. De Waart's difficulties stemmed mainly from inexperience, while Mehta's derived from a basic lack of subtlety. When de Waart knows a piece thoroughly, as with the Rachmaninoff *Second Symphony*, he can obtain incandescent results; when Mehta knows a piece thoroughly, for example the Mahler *Fifth* he presented with the New York Philharmonic on their last visit here, the results still sound superficial.

The last act of Wagner's *Parsifal*, which de Waart conducted on the Symphony's Easter concerts, can serve as a case in point. De Waart loves and thrives on the music of the late Romanticism, a style that

Parsifal inaugurated. Furthermore, this symphonically rich opera seems a natural bridge that blends de Waart's experience in the concert hall with his enthusiasm for the opera house.

Parsifal has been in de Waart's working repertoire for over two years. Many moments in the score showed the knowing hand of a master. When the wandering hero emerged from the forest, for example, the orchestral counterpoint was particularly evocative. When Gurnemanz asked Parsifal if he knew what day it was, the orchestra's imitation of the hero's uncertainty sounded bleak indeed. When Gurnemanz recognized the spear, the orchestra echoed his enthusiasm. The wood winds just before the Good Friday music were stunning. And the opera floated ethereally to its conclusion.

But still de Waart seems to me only just beginning his investigation of *Parsifal*. Lovingly though many of the moments were, the whole failed to cohere on the Friday night I heard it. Yes, I admit I am unconsciously doing de Waart what he hates most. I am comparing him to the recorded performances of Hans Knappertsbusch and Karl Muck, both of whom conducted this score every

year for 30 years before they recorded it. However, *Parsifal* music that cries out for depth of knowledge. Just as Haydn and Mozart sound best under the illusion of spontaneity, *Parsifal* shines under a considered baton. In this music Wagner became an architect; every part of it contributes structurally to the whole. The conductor's job with this score is to balance all the pieces so that the whole emerges as a single great arc of music.

I think what kind of achievement is within de Waart's reach, if not yet within his grasp. And the accomplishment of it may be closer even than we heard last week. Certain aspects of these performances hindered de Waart's instead of helping him. The first mistake, unfortunately, was to present the third act all by itself. When the Symphony announced this idea, I was in favor of it. When listening to recordings, I often isolate the last act. But Act III of *Parsifal* when placed on a regular symphony subscription is faced with the opposite of the festival-vacation atmosphere Wagner wanted to surround it. A three movement Haydn symphony simply cannot adequately prepare one for the visionary expansion of time this music embodies.

The second mistake occurred about ten minutes into the score, when the performance omitted Kundry's only appearance in the act. Although she sings only two words, the omission of them made hash of about four minutes of music. The confusion this caused was particularly acute for those who did not know her score, since all of a sudden the music seemed incredibly difficult to follow. I believe the problem derailed many people's concentration.

Then came a Parsifal who did not what the words of his part meant, even though he has been singing them for years, and an Amfortas who gave no indication that he was suffering from an incurable disease. The final insult came with the pseudo-bells of the transformation music. What does the Symphony think they are doing programming this score without the proper instruments? Does nobody rent bells especially designed for *Parsifal* performances?

Although these problems kept the experience from jelling as Wagner intended it, Robert Lloyd's warm and youthful Gurnemanz was reason enough to mount the show. And the orchestra, particularly the strings and the wood winds, played like angels.

UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

In re:

PACIFIC REFINES, INC.

PACIFIC REFINES HOLDING, INC.

Debtors.

CHAPTER 11 PROCEEDINGS

Case No. 84-00394-S-1

Debtors.

Meeting of Creditors: 5-1-84 @ 9:00 a.m.

Attorney for Debtors: James L. Long

4151 434-1600

NOTICE OF MEETING OF CREDITORS AND OF AUTOMATIC STAY

TO THE DEBTOR, ITS CREDITORS AND OTHER PARTIES IN INTEREST:

An order for relief under 11 USC Chapter 11, having been entered on a petition filed by (or against) the above-named debtor on the above date.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT:

1. A meeting of creditors pursuant to 11 USC Sec. 341 (a) shall be held in Room 8311, U.S. Courthouse, 650 Capitol Mall, Sacramento, California on the above date and time.

2. The debtor shall appear in person (or, if the debtor is a partnership, by a general partner, or if the debtor is a corporation, by its president or other executive officer) at the time and place specified above for the purpose of being examined.

The meeting may be continued or adjourned from time to time by notice at the meeting, without further written notice to creditors.

At the meeting, the creditors may file their claims, examine the debtor, and transact such other business as may properly come before the meeting. Attendance by creditors at the meeting is welcomed, but not required.

As a result of the filing of the petition, certain acts and proceedings against the debtor and his property are stayed as provided in 11 USC Sec. 362(a).

Unless the Court extends the time, any complaint to determine the dischargeability of any debt pursuant to 522(c) of the Code shall be filed not later than 60 days following the first date set for the meeting of creditors.

The debtor has filed or will file a list of creditors and equity security holders pursuant to Bankruptcy Rule 1007. Any creditor holding a listed claim which is not listed as disputed, contingent, or unliquidated as to amount must have noted its claim in this case.


Any creditor who desires to rely on the list has the responsibility of determining that he is accurately listed. Creditors whose claims are not listed or whose claims are listed as disputed, contingent, or unliquidated as to amount and who desire to participate in the case or share in any distribution must file a proof of claim.

A proof of claim may be filed on or before June 29, 1984. A claim may be filed in the office of the Clerk of the Bankruptcy Court, Room 8020, 650 Capitol Mall, Sacramento, California, 95814, on an official form prescribed for a proof of claim. Envelopes containing claims must be clearly marked "CLAIM" and not contain other correspondence.

FOR THE COURT:
RICHARD G. HELTIEL
CLERK, U.S. BANKRUPTCY COURT

*To insure prompt processing, all correspondence other than claims must be directed to Room 8038 at 650 Capitol Mall, Sacramento, California, 95814.

cinema	
SUN MON	WED THU FRI SAT
<p>APRIL 26 - 28 "NICK AND NORA RETURN" THE THIN MAN D. W. Griffith. 1934. William Powell, Myrna Loy. Maureen O'Sullivan. WED-FRI 8:30-10:30 SONG OF THE THIN MAN D. Edward Buzzell. 1945. William Powell, Myrna Loy. Robert Montgomery. WED-FRI 7:30-9:30 ANOTHER THIN MAN D. W. S. Van Dyke. 1935. William Powell, Myrna Loy. Virginia Grey. Marjorie Main. WED-FRI 9:30-11:30</p>	<p>MAY 2 - 5 THE WOMEN D. George Cukor. 1939. Joan Crawford, Norma Shearer, Paulette Goddard, Wendell Willkie. Joan Fontaine, Hedda Hopper. Cecil De Mille. WED-FRI 8:30-10:30 SOME LIKE IT HOT D. Billy Wilder. 1959. Marilyn Monroe, Tony Curtis, Jack Lemmon, Joe E. Brown. Curtis and Lemmon in drag wearing long capes in an all-out plot bend. Tons of comedy. Marjorie Main. WED-FRI 7:30-9:30</p>
<p>APRIL 29 - 30 "PRESTON STURGES DUO" SULLIVAN'S TRAVELS [94] Jack McVane, Virginia Lee Corbin. Satirical comedy about movie making. WED-FRI 8:30-10:30 CHRISTMAS IN JULY D. Paul Powell. 1940. John Garfield, William Deming. Excellent Sturges film of a hospital combat surgeon going on a shakedown, going with their "hospital wingmen". SUN 2:30, 5:30, 8:30 MON 4:30, 8:30</p>	<p>MAY 9 - 12 NORTH BY NORTHWEST 1959. Cary Grant, Eva Marie Saint, James Mason. Fast paced thriller about mistaken spy identity. The Mount Rushmore climax and ending during scene are in the same "true classic". WED-FRI 8:30-10:30 THE PARADINE CASE 1946. Gregory Peck, Anne Todd, Charles Laughton. Thriller based on Courtenay Innes' novel. In the Alford Hitchcock style. WED-FRI 7:30-9:30 THE 39 STEPS 1935. Robert Donat, Peggy Ashcroft. Classic mystery, comedy and romance. WED-FRI 7:30-9:30</p>
<p>MAY 6 - 7 "KING OF HEARTS" D. Philippe De Broca. 1954. Alan Bates, Catherine Ross. Offbeat film of a soldier during WWI drifting into French towns left deserted except for the inmates. Anamorphic screens. SUN 4:30, 7:30 MON 7:30 HAROLD & MAUDE D. Hal Ashby. 1971. Bud Cort, Ruth Gordon, Vivian Pickley. Wonderful black comedy of a friendship between a 20-year-old Cort, who's obsessed with death, and 70-year-old neanderthal Gordon, who's innocent position is standing out. SUN 2:30, 5:30, 8:30 MON 4:30, 8:30</p>	



Their Heels Were High But Their Morals Were Low!

WOMEN BEHIND BARS

BY TOM EYEN
DIRECTED BY RON LINK

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Films

Don't Talk Dirty to Ginger

by William Neville

Overheard in the line at the Castro for the **Ginger Rogers** retrospective on April 21: "She's 73 now." "Is that all?" "You thought she was older?" "Well, Fred's 85."

Yes, according to my Halliwell, **Ginger Rogers** will be 74 this year, and one has to admire the independence and stubborn self-expression—if not the fashion sense—of a woman of her years who wears her hair as long and as blond as she likes it, who maintains the body of someone three decades younger, and drapes herself in maribou feathers with such regularity that they sometimes seem to be sprouting from her shoulder blades.

Last Monday at the Castro, though, **Ginger** was smartly clad in a black suit with red vest and white orchid corsage; looking radiant, she blew kisses from the balcony railing as the lights went down and the program of film clips highlighting her career began.

The opening segment was her infectiously daffy **Pan Latin** rendition of "We're in the Money" from *Goddiggers of 1933* (Rogers later revealed that Zanuck overheard her playing games with the words in a rehearsal room and demanded that she sing it exactly that way in the film), followed by some familiar but ever-fresh numbers from the Astaire-Rogers musicals, some of which required "up to 89" takes, and amusing segments from late-thirties and early-forties comedies with Cary Grant and Jimmy Stewart. In this latter, and the scene from *Kitty Foyle*, the role for which she won the 1940 Best Actress Oscar (over Bette Davis, Katharine Hepburn, and *Rebecca's* Joan Fontaine), she exhibited her special persona, that of the feisty proletarian who gave as good as she got and was not about to take any guff from members of the "upper crust." (In an example of life echoing art/commerce, Rogers stated that she'd expected **Brynn** to win that year, because "she had all that Bryn Mawr background that Americans so admire" and **Ginger** herself was just a humble working-class girl from Missouri.)

The most unexpected and most unfamiliar (to me) clip was a jailhouse scene from 1942's rarely-heard *Rotie Hart*, in which brassy convict Rogers brazenly puts the make on a delectable young **George Montgomery**, then does an inspired impromptu tap dance up and down the waiting-room's metal stairs before clicking her way triumphantly back to her cell. Delightful!

This was followed by a visually luscious yet leaden segment from the 1944 color musical *Lady in the Dark* director Mitchell Leisen had all the frosting but left out the cake, "leaving the film 'with no heart,'" opined Rogers). Then after a stodgy bit from 1945's *Weekend at the Waldorf* and a lovely dance scene from her final film with Astaire, *The Barkleys of Broadway* (1949), which drew prolonged cheering from the audience, the clips abruptly and rather startlingly came to a close. This freezing of Rogers' image at the age of thirty-seven resulted in the curious and incorrect impression that her movie career spanned a mere sixteen years, when she in fact continued to make films throughout the fifties, thirties of them, with a single final stint in the 1965 *Harlow*. While it is true that these later films were generally less successful all-around and that the star herself suffered a lessening appeal as she was forced to subdue her sass and assume the more dignified demeanor of the "mature" woman, this drastically abbreviated representation of her movie-star years seems a highly questionable decision. One wonders who was responsible, and whether Rogers had a hand in the selection. (In one respect, perhaps, given the accent on youth that characterizes both the actress herself and many of her roles—with their numerous scenes of babytalk and regression to childhood behavior, etc., the choice does bear a certain eyebrow-raising appositeness.)

During the hour that followed Rogers gamely and enthusiastically answered questions from the audience, with author Niven (*Duel in the Sun*) Busch as moderator. She confirmed that Fred did occas-

ionally step on her feet and that Rita Hayworth is in fact her cousin; shared credit with her mother for discovering *Ethel Merman* when she still had the "Zim" in her name, then led the audience in an ovation in the singer's memory; expressed a belief that "women's movies are a thing of the past, today's films being 'men's' movies all the way" ("A woman's wonderful thing — remember, fellas, a woman was your mother!"); touched glancingly on the Hollywood anti-Communist movement of the fifties, in which her mother *Leila* Rogers was reputedly a prime mover, challenged a man who was filming her from the first row ("It's part of my agreement with the theatre: no movies, pictures or recording."); refused a written question that displeased her ("You should be ashamed of yourself. You shouldn't ask me things like that. Mother wouldn't like it!"); made no reference whatsoever to her private life (she is childless but has had four husbands); gave a swipe or two, *ala* Richard Nixon, at Americans' reverence for all things British (particularly the "ahk-sent"); related an entertaining anecdote about her own literal flag-raising from a London stage on the occasion of our astronaut's ascent to the moon; and returned, repeatedly, to the subject of "dirty talk" in the movies and theatre of today.



GINGER ROGERS

So often, and with such insistence, in fact, that it began to take on the aspect of a fixation. "I don't say those things. They call it street talk; I've never heard words like that even in the street, have you? Why do they use those dirty words — out of greed? What is our country coming to, Sodom and Gomorrah?" (This in the very heart of *Sin City*!) Finally, she confronted the audience: "Why do you foster this kind of degradation of the human mind?" she demanded to know. The response was understandably skittish — did she expect us to answer en masse? (Gosh **Ginger**, I never thought of it that way. *Wanna go see Scarface* tonight? *American Buffalo* just closed. Reagan blames the Russians; his support and onetime co-star *Storm Warner* (1950) thinks that "shit" and "fuck" are the source of all the evil in the world.

Mind-set aside — and I realize it may seem a big aside — one could not help but be impressed by Rogers' enormous vitality, the glowing and, yes ageless strength of a voice and personality that zinged through the theatre, qualities that remained undiminished from my memory of a performance of *Dolly* I saw her give almost two decades ago. There is no question that now the movies, with all their dirty words, have passed her by, she has carved an eminently suitable niche for herself in the world of live performance (like *Bette Davis*, she could take this tribute-show on the road — it was that entertaining.)

The afternoon concluded with the 1942 *The Major and the Minor*, an engagingly peculiar Billy Wilder farce in which Rogers, displaying peak comedic form, is forced through comic circumstance to masquerade as a twelve-year-old, and, ultimately, as her own mother. The innocence of a bygone era is poignantly demonstrated by the plot's hanging on the likelihood that a man caught in a "compromising" situation with a twelve-year-old female would not be suspected of anything beyond an avuncular concern. Having been shaped by such a simpler time, it is to be expected perhaps that **Ginger Rogers** would wince at the ugliness that are revealed to us daily — of which, surely, bad words are but a symptom?

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Volume II, Issue 9

April 26, 1984 9

S.F. AIDS RESEARCH STUDY at Children's Hospital needs volunteers to work in the clinic. For information, call 751-5459

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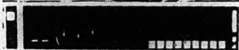
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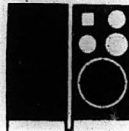
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