

**sonoma county
lesbian & gay alliance**

NEWS FREE

VOL 1 # 8



Inside: Briggs in Healdsburg ● Photos Page 4

Alliance Conference Returns

Door-to-Door Campaign Report

River Queen, PO Box 173, Guerneville, CA 95446

Non-profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Guerneville, CA
95446
Permit No. 13

Palmistry

Sister Anne tells your
Past—Present—Future

also
Card—Psychic—Spiritual Readings
will help with all problems!
will help reunite the separated!

alongside Highway 101
Wilfred Ave. Exit, Rohnert Park
Call for directions
(707) 545-9910

Sister Anne

Counseling for all matters

If no answer, call 545-7397



(Readings half off with ad)

Why John Briggs came to Healdsburg

by Sandy Lowe

First: Briggs came to Healdsburg as a carpet-bagger of bigotry and deceit. He had read of the controversy surrounding Larry Berner in a Bay Area newspaper and, by his own admission, he invited himself to Healdsburg in order to grab a few headlines and scare up some semblance of grass-roots support.

The fact is that, Briggs' trip proves that in the whole State of California he had not been able to find any more scandalous a case to exploit than the existence of one excellent and popular openly Gay teacher in Healdsburg. A year ago even this one case did not exist since Larry "came out" politically only in response to Briggs' bigoted campaign against Gay school workers.

The second and more insidious reason that Briggs came to Healdsburg was his attempt to authenticate his published lies. The fact is that Briggs' office had already issued a statement concerning Larry and the people of Healdsburg which will appear as a rebuttal argument in the Voters Manual and Sample Ballot for the November election. This statement, which is a loose weave of lies, will be mailed—at taxpayers expense—to every voter in the State of California. All this was completed long before Briggs came to Healdsburg and without consulting the people of Healdsburg.

We are reprinting below a copy of the Briggs "Healdsburg Argument" together with a point by point refutation. The refutations appear as indented paragraphs in bold type.

The homosexuals and the their supporters tell us the present law is just fine.

Well, let them tell that to the citizens of Healdsburg, California. They know better.

This quiet little town in the Sonoma wine country has been fighting unsuccessfully to remove a second grade teacher who has openly admitted his homosexuality and has campaign publicly to keep homosexual teachers in our public schools.

FACT: The quiet of Healdsburg was disrupted by a few misguided bigots—not by a gay school teacher.

FACT: The "little town" of Healdsburg presented a wide base of support for a school teacher known to have an excellent record of achievement.

FACT: The teacher has lived a quiet and private life as a resident of Healdsburg for more than 5 years. He began to "campaign publicly" in defense of human rights only after Briggs announced his intent to attack the rights of all teachers.

School officials tell parents their hands are tied; the existing law leaves them powerless to deal with the problem.

FACT: State law already exists to empower school officials to deal with misconduct. In Healdsburg there has been no misconduct. There is no problem, which is why school officials have been "powerless" to act.

In desperation, twelve families have removed their children from the school rather than expose them to the example of an openly homosexual teacher.

Four of the five members of the Healdsburg school board have voted to support Proposition 6. They see it as the last hope of restoring to parents the freedom to control their schools.

Healdsburg teacher speaks September 18

Larry Berner, Healdsburg area teacher who has come out to fight John Briggs and Proposition 6, will speak before local Healdsburg parents and residents September 18 at 7 PM at the Villa Chanticleer, 1248 N. Fitch Mountain Road, Healdsburg.

The event, sponsored by SCRAP 6, is open to the public. Free childcare will be provided. For further information call SCRAP 6 headquarters at 526-1240.

FACT: The majority of the parents of Healdsburg were so outraged by an attempt on the part of a few fanatic people to railroad a dismissal, that they overwhelmingly threatened to withdraw all their children from the school if the school board dismissed the gay teacher.

A small but powerful group of militant homosexuals is determined to impose its life-style on the majority of decent citizens. Just who is really being harassed, the homosexual advocates or the public?

FACT: There is a large population of Lesbians and Gay men who work, live, raise their families, and help compose the majority of decent citizens, taxpayers, and home owners of Sonoma County. It is Briggs and his few supporters who have come into our county to impose their bigoted life-styles on a "quiet little town".

According to homosexual leaders many homosexual teachers have kept silent until now, but if Proposition 6 fails, they will "go public" and announce their life-style to the world, thus providing their students with a living example of the acceptability of the homosexual way of life.

FACT: Gay teachers remain silent about their intimate lives because they recognize, along with most good non-gay teachers, that the classroom is not the proper place for such discussion.

So the next time someone tells you "It can't happen here" tell him to talk to the parents of Healdsburg. Those parents know we need Proposition 6.

FACT: In 1935, Sinclair Lewis used the phrase "It can't happen here" to warn against the threat of facism in America. Here Briggs perverts the phrase, failing to remember that one of Hitler's first acts of repression was the dismissal of all gay teachers from the Nazi school system. IT CAN HAPPEN HERE! Vote NO on 6.

Going Door-to-Door against Prop 6

by Karen Ryce

"Hello, are you familiar with Proposition 6? No? Well, neither are we, goodbye."

"Hello, I bet you're wondering why we're wearing brown paper bags over our heads?"

"Hello, we're your local lesbians . . ."

There were no two ways about it, going canvassing against the Briggs Initiative was scary. The first day we went we spent close to one half-hour being nervous, laughing hysterically, wondering why a month ago we had thought it was such a good idea to go door to door in Sonoma County to educate people about the Briggs Initiative. People I had told about it reacted ominously. "Good luck," they said, "you have lots of guts." I pictured eggs and tomatoes thrown, doors slammed as well as hostile sneers and bodily threats. I wondered if we could have the nerve to come out, ("There are 25,000 gays in Sonoma County, that's 24,998 besides us, . . . or the button from the Eugene, Oregon, campaign, "What do Gays want? Ask me.")

So there we were, the day of the trial canvassing, the time we'd planned to get some solid "experience" behind us, laughing like we were in grade school. I couldn't remember a single logical argument against the Initiative. All the preparation, talking and role-playing fell by the wayside in the face of my nervousness.

We walked the street, picking and choosing where we'd start.

"That house doesn't look very friendly," Joanna said.

"Well, how about the one where the VW with

The Door to Door Committee of Sonoma County Residents Against Proposition 6 (SCRAP 6) will be doing a workshop Saturday, September 16, from 10:45 a.m. until 3 p.m. at the SCRAP 6 office, California Teachers Association Bldg., 2490 Guerneville Road.

This workshop is designed to assist and support anyone who wishes to do door to door canvassing.

The first hour of the workshop is devoted to a detailed explanation of Proposition 6. Later on in the day small group discussions and role playing are used as preparation for various types of reactions likely to be encountered when canvassing against Proposition 6.

The workshop also provides very good guidelines for door to door canvassing and also teaches participants how to register voters.

Information packets will be furnished for canvassers. Canvassing has been going on for over two months and the public reaction has generally been a good one. There have been no major problems or hassles and the public is willing to listen. Participants should bring a lunch or plan on buying lunch nearby.

Childcare will be provided and the CTA building is wheelchair accessible.

For more information call SCRAP 6 office at 526-1240.

the No. on 13 bumper sticker is," I suggested.

We divided up the tasks; she would start by doing voter registration, then I would calmly ask if the voter was familiar with Proposition 6. We walked up and knocked. No answer.

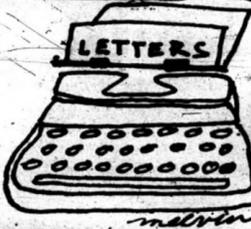
"Well, that was easy; I hope they're all like that," I said, more than half-serious.

We found out quickly that we had a knack for picking the houses where no one was home, so we finally found a house where the front door was wide open. We ventured down the path and up the stairs. Joanna knocked on the screen door, "This is it, folks," I said to myself. Joanna's opening line was perfect, "Are you registered to vote?" The woman who answered said yes, she was . . . Silence . . . Joanna was staring at me; the woman was staring at me. I had forgotten the possibility that the woman might say yes and had been anticipating a space of time to relax while Joanna registered her. Quick to recover, however, I blurted out something about an issue on the November ballot, and started laughing. In true comrade spirit, Joanna started laughing too.

The woman was looking at us curiously and I managed to get out, "I'm sorry but we're really nervous." The woman said she couldn't think about anything except her husband's illness. We left, still laughing, with Joanna tripping in the woman's garden.

("Truly a grass-roots organization," I thought).

In evaluating our first door, we realized we



FORUM

The SCLGA NEWS invites letters from the readers on all subjects regarding the lives of Lesbians and Gay men in Sonoma County; needs, hopes, ambitions. There is no limit to the length of

letters but consideration by the writer of the limited space of the paper is appreciated.

Letters may be sent to: SCLGA, P.O. Box 4801, Santa Rosa, CA 95402.

Shasta Coalition supports teacher

(The following letter was sent to the Lesbian and Gay Alliance. It is addressed to Larry Berner, a Healdsburg area teacher. Mr. Threewit is the principal of the school at which he teaches.)

Dear Mr. Berner,
It is the wish of the Coalition for Human Rights of Shasta County to convey our support in your period of emotional distress. We have been following the actions on both sides of this controversy and conclude that you personally are not the target.

It seems there is a negative mood, perhaps cynical, in the area of human rights. It appears from the various articles that you have general support from your co-workers and community at large. It may eventually fall on the shoulders of the Board of Trustees and Mr. Threewit to decide your: right to employment, freedom of social interaction, political and affectional persuasion and your obvious ability to responsible teaching.

Unfortunately, you will not share this 'ugly' limelight alone as the year heads towards the November ballot decision-making process. The Briggs Initiative, having touched off this witchhunt, will need exposing to all persons so that they realize the threat not just to thousands of teachers, aides, administrators and supporters in the school systems, but to the populace in general.

We, therefore, urge those persons and board members who may be in a position to make that important decision to make a positive and responsible one.
Yours in support,
Shasta County Coalition for Human Rights

Readers write

Hello!
I saw a copy of your newspaper last nite and was wondering how I could get a copy or subscription to the paper.
Thank You,
Susy Clearwater
Costa Mesa, CA

Subscribe to the NEWS

The NEWS is published monthly by the Sonoma County Lesbian and Gay Alliance, a personal support, information and community action group of Gay people.

Mailing Address: SCLGA NEWS/P.O. Box 4801/Santa Rosa, CA 95402.

This issue was assembled by Deborah Kelley, Sandy Lowe, Pat McCloakey, Robert (Melvin) Muller and Pat Urquhart.
Typesetting: Von W. Wall

Deadline for copy for the October issue is September 22.

Napa man warns of entrapment

I want to share an experience with anyone involved in casual Gay encounters.

Last May I came on to a friendly man in a park in Napa; he was a Vice Squad officer and I was arrested for soliciting. At best, this experience will cost me a great deal in legal costs, in time without work, and especially in struggles with guilt and social censure.

At worst, I will be fined, lose my professional credentials, and have to register with the police as a sex offender.

During the past months I've worked to become personally stronger and politically more aware. I am concerned that in an increasingly hostile political climate, more people may find themselves in situations similar to mine. Take care of yourselves; be aware.

(Please withhold my name as the legal process is continuing.)

...from everywhere

To People at SCLGA,

Recently a friend from San Francisco sent me a copy of your paper. I enjoyed reading it and found it informative, supportive and fun.

I support your efforts in any way I can.

Love you all,
Andy Slavin
Little Rock, Arkansas

To Whom it May Concern:

I am thoroughly alarmed by the dangers represented by the Briggs Initiative. Though not eligible to be a member of the Alliance, such a highly bigoted and unconstitutional attack on the civil rights of Gays infuriates me and I would like to help in some way to defeat Proposition 6.

Could you give me information about your campaign and about Citizens against Prop. 6? I have very little time available because of my job situation but perhaps there is something I could do.

Sincerely,
Dave Henderson
Sonoma

Self Defense class in Forestville

Dear News:

RE self-defense in your last issue, maybe you would like to print this. Self defense techniques of Arnis (Philippine stick fighting) are being taught in ongoing classes (start anytime) at the following

Forestville Methodist Church 7-9 p.m. Mondays; Institute for Better Health, 3936 Mayette Ave., Santa Rosa, 7-9 p.m. Thursdays, 6:30 p.m. Fridays and 10 a.m.-noon Saturdays.

The Institute is CETA funded to give these classes free to women of all ages. Men are also welcome but must pay. For exact amounts, ect., call the Institute at 528-3691, ask for Dr. Frank Scalerio.

Thank You,
MA
Guerneville

ALLIANCE NEWS DISTRIBUTION POINTS

Santa Rosa:
Books Inc.
Rising Woman Bookstore
Sawyer's News Service
Santa Rosa Community Market

Organic Grocery
Our Small Planet
B.J.'s
Santa Rosa Inn

Guerneville:
River Queen
Country Grounds
Fife's

Cotati:
Baker St. Books
Eeyore
Backdoor Records
Silver Sunbeam Supply

Monte Rio:
Monte Rio Community Market
Bartlett's

Forestville:
Rusty Nail
Forest Hills Market

Sebastopol:
Myst Books
People's Music
West of the Laguna

San Francisco:
Modern Times
Paper Traffic (Castro St.)

Inside the clubhouse with Briggs

by Judy Freespirit

I entered the Tayman Clubhouse at precisely 7 o'clock, having made a last minute decision to do so.

I looked around, trying to see how things were stacking up. People with armbands and crepe paper bows pinned to their shirts were everywhere. I recognized a few local Healdsburg teachers with whom I had spoken outside before they were interviewed by the KNBC-TV reporter. There were still a number of seats left in the audience, but a row of tight lipped, pinched faced Healdsburg residents were standing, propped up against the back wall of the Clubhouse, as if afraid to sit down amongst the seated gays for fear of contamination. Someone brought out more chairs and gave them to them, and they sat down together along the back of the room.

The TV cameras seemed to be the most important thing in the room. They blazed their hot lights on us as if we were there for their benefit, and would put up with anything because of their importance.

Then there was a stir in the room, and before I saw them I felt their presence. John Briggs and Tom Connolly walked up to the front and sat down at the table facing the audience. Connolly looked like an angry Burt Reynolds, and Briggs was smiling a sickly smile from behind the microphone, his pasty complexion seeming to glow with an eerie pink light. A burly 6 foot 5 inch bodyguard against the wall, just a few feet from Briggs, trying to appear casual and not doing a very good job of it.

The content of what happened inside is well documented in the local newspapers. Briggs ran true to form, showing his ignorance and homophobia, skirting issues, trying to act charming and responsive and never really pulling it off. Once or twice one of our people just couldn't take the abuse anymore and called out an insult, but mostly people were



trying to ask intelligent and reasonable questions, which were answered by and large with stupid and irrational answers. I seriously doubt that anyone in the audience changed their minds. The bigots who came to hear how they could rid their fair city of the Gay pestilence left angry and determined to keep up their fight. The Lesbians and Gay men and our supporters left determined to fight both this insidious initiative and whatever battles there are to come. Perhaps a few supporters came away more supportive than they had come in, but I doubt that anyone changed their basic stance.

As the meeting was abruptly ended after just about 45 minutes of questions and answers, we all filed out to see the demonstrators who had been rallying outside lighting candles and marching down the winding golf course road, lining the way for the retreating cars and marching through Healdsburg to St. Johns Church, letting the town and anyone else who was there know that we are indeed here, and that we intend to stay.

When you visit our advertisers tell them you saw their ad in the SCLGA NEWS



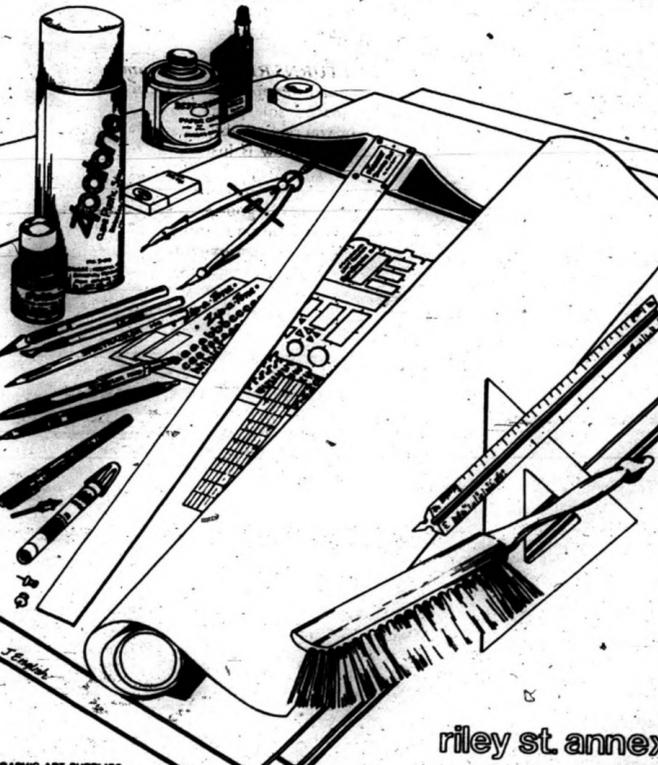
Omelettes All Day • Lunch
Fresh Catch Fish Dinners
JAZZ - Fri. Sat. & Mon. Nites
River Landing • Hwy. 116 Guerneville

M-Th 7:30-9:00
Fri 7:30-2AM
Sat 9:00-2AM
Sun 9:00-6PM



Community Food Store

MAIN STREET MONTE RIO
887-1711
MON.-Fri. 8:30-7:30 PM
Sat. - Sun. 10 A.M.-7 P.M.



riley st annex
630 5TH ST. SANTA ROSA, CA 95401 (707) 528-2888



Make it SOFT naturally...

Beautiful colors
cotton chenille, \$7.95 and \$8.50 lb., Lopi yarn from Iceland, \$3.25 skein, Mexican handspun, \$10.00 lb. Fat Cat yarn, \$10.00 lb. cotton, camel and reindeer fleece \$3.10 to \$4.00 lb. and more...

Rainbows Mon.-Sat. 10-5
Thurs. 10-9
New shipment of chenille yarn!
Old Railroad Store
Across from the Omelette Express
528-0410



NO COMPRE COORS

WE ARE EVERYWHERE!



350 Sonoma County residents
and friends peacefully
demonstrate against Briggs



Photos by Pat Urquhart



Women's photo show

WOMEN PHOTOGRAPH WOMEN is the title of a show of photographs currently underway at the Phordable Fotos Gallery, 8299 Old Redwood Hwy., Cotati.

The show, which includes the photographs of Patti Jolley, Bambi Peterson, Dorothy Reich, Sarah Anne Shoaf, Greer Upton and Naomi Weissman runs through September 20 at the gallery, located above Silver Sunbeam Supply in downtown Cotati.

For more information call Bambi at 795-2323.

No rights for effeminate men

NEW ORLEANS The federal Civil Rights Act of 1964 does not include protection against discrimination against effeminate males.

This was a ruling in the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals here. The decision was based on a case in which an effeminate male sought federal protection under the act's classification "sex". Civil libertarians have been attempting to expand the act for some years so that it will include homosexuals.

—Bay Area Reporter

Court asked for doner anonymity

The California Court of Appeal has been asked to allow contributors to No On 6 (the Briggs initiative) to remain anonymous. Current law requires that anyone who donates more than \$50 to a political campaign must be identified.

The brief, filed by the ACLU of Northern California, claims that potential contributors to the campaign against Prop. 6 fear "substantial harassment and reprisal" if their names are disclosed in accordance with state law. Opposition to the anti-teacher initiative might be used by local school boards as evidence that contributors "advocate" homosexuality, ACLU attorneys say.

The brief was filed on behalf of an employed school teacher using the name Jane Doe and two organizations, the Bay Area Committee Against the Briggs Initiative/No On 6 (BACABI), and the Easy Bay Area Coalition Against the Briggs Initiative/No on 6.

"Jane Doe," according to the brief, "reasonably believes that public disclosure of any contribution she may make of \$50 or more as presently required by law, will substantially impair her employment opportunities in the event that Prop. 6 is enacted this fall."

—Advocate

S. F. Workers Conference

A Workers Conference Against Briggs/Proposition 6 is scheduled for September 9 and 10 at Mission High School, 18th and Dolores Streets, San Francisco.

The conference is sponsored by a coalition of 13 labor and Gay activist organizations who are concerned about the implications of Proposition 6 for workers, women and minorities in particular.

Proposition 6 is expected to open the door for a witchhunt, not just against Gays, but any union activists or minority teachers who are considered troublemakers.

The conference will emphasize practical skills for organizing and information on the "New Right."

"Gay teachers are only one issue being raised," according to conference spokesperson, "but victory against Gays would provide a model for attacks against other groups."

Workshops include Class-Race-Sex Scapegoating on the Job, Legal Rights of Gay People, Role of

Judge challenged on sexism

Connecticut Governor Ellas Gyasso has called for an inquiry into Judge Walter Pickett's fitness to remain on the bench after he dismissed charges against a man accused of attempted rape by saying "You can't blame him for trying."

State Rep. Paul A. LaRosa initiated the call for investigation by the state judicial review board after a Hartford-based group called Neighborhood Women Against Rape called the incident and similar incidents by Pickett to LaRosa's attention.

The accused man was one of four men arrested in the rape case; the three others were bound over for trial but the fourth was released by Pickett who said "The only thing he did was he tried and failed."

—Longest Revolution

Childcare at S.R.J.C.

CHILDCARE FOR STUDENTS is an innovative program for SRJC re-entry students who do not qualify for present daycare facilities. This program is cooperative as it is based in time for time exchanged between student parents.

We have received a favorable response from the community and we are gathering names of students requesting this service. We will organize individuals by neighborhoods or communities and help set up a schedule of childcare exchange that is convenient.

For further information, call SRJC Women's Center and Re-Entry Program at 527-4375.

Straight People, Community Organizing, Information of New Right, Effects of Prop. 6 Before and After.

The conference will run from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday, September 9 and 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Sunday, September 10.

A dance is scheduled September 9 at the South of Market Cultural Center, 934 Brannan Street (between 8th and 9th Streets).

*The conference is wheelchair accessible and participants are asked to bring a bag lunch.

For further information and child care call (415) 552-5245 or 285-1803.

Campaign against ABC-TV rapist

Women Against Violence Against Women has launched a campaign against the American Broadcasting Company for offering a convicted rapist \$100,000 for the screen rights to his life story in order to turn it into a TV movie.

The rapist was convicted recently for impersonating fashion photographer Richard Avedon and luring women to pose for him and then raping them.

WAVAW charges that ABC is seeking to sensationalize and make profits off the rape of women.

Lawyers reject Gay rights

NEW YORK CITY Members of the American Bar Association's House of Delegates voted 274-136 on Aug. 7 to reject a resolution putting the ABA on record in favor of legislation prohibiting discrimination against homosexuals in employment, housing, and public accommodations.

It was the third time in as many years that the House of Delegates has voted against such a resolution, although the ABA has gone on record in favor of the repeal of laws regulating private sexual conduct between consenting adults.

The House of Delegates also has before it a resolution opposing discrimination against Gays in public employment.

—Gay Community News

We are everywhere



A Refreshing Experience!

Revelation is cool, delicious smoothies, fresh fruit salads and the most expertly prepared vegetarian sandwiches and salads in town! Enjoy your meal in the air conditioned restaurant or outdoors in our picnic area.

1446 Mendocino Ave. 842-9768

Mon. - Fri 11 - 9 p.m.
Sat. 11 - 4 p.m.

Located across from S.R.J.C.
Rabbit Melvin's location

The Adventures of Dick Disco

Politics is so boring

...and time consuming

...and besides

you can't dance to it.

©1979-melvin

MEMORIES THAT LINGER

Nostalgic items from 1920's to the 1950's
COLLECTABLES
BUY TRADE SELL
13882 Hwy 116
Across the Bridge
Guerneville

SCRAP 6 rallies against Briggs

by Another Gay Healdsburg Native

After 36 hours of incredible high energy and intense work, all we had planned for was now going to go into action. I arrived at the St. John's Parish Hall to open it for child care and to receive the people who had come to demonstrate. I almost said "with us" but they were us.

As I arrived a ballet class was breaking up and I say on the edge of the stage sipping Calistoga water and wondering what would happen that evening. A car pulled up; it was the first wave of our security people who would make sure that things didn't get out of hand.

People with children began to arrive. The childcare workers. More security. More people from SCRAP 6. Cars and vans and pick-ups started to shuttle people up to the golf course. Where were the buttons? The placards? The information packets that were written in one day? It was all right. They would be distributed at the golf course.

The police arrived. "Who's in charge here?" said the officer. "I am, I guess," I said, surprising myself. At SCRAP 6 decisions are made collectively except where responsibilities are taken or assigned.

The officer asked how many people we expected. I said we didn't know. I said the media, both newspapers and television, had been notified. KNBC in Los Angeles was sending a crew. Well, he said, "make sure you keep your people off the grass. I wondered if he remembered me from high school."

Lesbians Unite Now!

I went back inside and handed out Xeroxed instructions. They explained child care, the roles of the monitors and the security people and stressed that this was to be a peaceful demonstration. Suddenly, the word came. Briggs was there. He had arrived early. I spun on my heels and all I could see were adults and children and jugs of apple juice and No on 6 buttons. The childcare people were there but should I go now? Stay longer? People were finding the shuttles to the golf course and as word spread that Briggs was there, the shuttles seemed to arrive and leave faster and faster.

Karey Ryce, a woman who works on the door-to-door committee came up to me and said, "Let's go!" That was all I needed and I was in a black van with a Gay man and his four children and 10 to 12 other people, some with children. I layed my picket sign down flat and looked at it again, as I kept doing all evening, as I had been since I wrote it at 4:30 that afternoon; "Another Gay Healdsburg Native" it said. My heart pounded.

A straight woman teacher, supportive of Gay people and Gay Rights, would later question whether a sign reading "Lesbians Unite Now" should be used. It was pointed out that when the general population thinks of "Gay" people they think of homosexual men, thus Lesbians, because they are women, are excluded and made invisible [hence the name of this publication]. It was pointed out the importance of stressing the fact that we are everywhere.

We stopped inside the gate to the golf course at South Fitch Mountain Road and held our picket signs and smiled at the people arriving in their cars. A lot of people had little silver and black fish stickers on their cars. They didn't look like they were having a good time. Some drove up to the clubhouse and then left. Many looked dead, like they had died from some horrible affliction; like fear maybe.

By actual count, our number was 350 people. The line of picket sign holders reached



well up the drive to the golf course clubhouse where Briggs would speak.

One of the monitors warned us when we would leave for the parking lot at the top of the hill. Then, it was time and we walked slowly up the asphalt path to the parking lot.

There was Briggs! A short man with brown hair teased forward over his balding head, wearing a business suit and black patent leather shoes. His bodyguard was an enormous man. Another man, seemingly shorter than Briggs himself, and in his 20's who had asked Briggs to come to Healdsburg to meet with all of his maybe 50 supporters (or maybe just the curious) out of a population of 6500.

Briggs stood talking to reporters and a middle aged blonde woman held up her purse to block the view of a woman photographer, but then gave up.

The Healdsburg police get educated about Gays.

A police officer asked, at one point, who all the kids belonged to? "Us," was the reply.

"I don't know why that didn't occur to me? What is the childcare shuttle for?" he ventured again. It was explained that it was for children who got tired at the demonstration and could be taken back to the childcare center in town.

"There's more?" he asked. The officer had asked for a copy of Proposition 6, and when one was finally gotten to him he was heard to exclaim, "This is ridiculous! This will never pass!"

The sun was setting and Briggs went inside. Most of us, because of the size of the hall, stayed outside and listened to members of SCRAP 6 tell what Proposition 6 would do and how it was duplicating much of already

existing law; with the exception of the provision outlawing Gay school workers or any school worker who supported Gays. Songs were sung and candles and pieces of foil were distributed for the candlelight vigil.

"Ain't gonna let nobody turn me around"

We were going to stand on either side of the drive up to the golf course and silently hold candles as Briggs left. But suddenly Briggs was leaving. It was decided to march down the hill to the gate and wait for shuttles. But then people wanted to walk more and most of us walked all the way back into town, to St. John's Parish Hall.

As we walked, we passed people standing out in their yards, people stopping work on their pick-up engines, people sitting out on their front porches, people standing out on street corners, people waving, as this long line of flickering candles passed them silently in the night. Sometimes people sang: "Ain't gonna let nobody/turn me around/turn me around/turn me around/Ain't gonna let nobody/turn me around/Gonna build me a brand new world."

Half way into town, a young blonde kid on a bicycle came up to us and asked, "What are you doing?"

"We're having a candlelight march," I said. A direct answer is always the best. A half block later he asked another question.

"What are you marching for?" "We're marching against Proposition 6." Again this seemed to satisfy his curiosity.

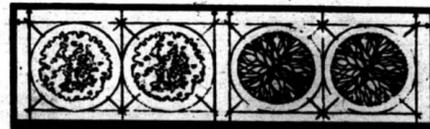
We were now three blocks from the parish and a man's voice came out of the darkness; "Faggots! Queers!" Again women are ignored, I thought.

Karen said, "Don't react." The voice faded quickly, like it was a voice from a long time ago, but not because we were walking fast, and I wondered if the voice belonged to anyone I had gone to school with.

I had had a problem since Tuesday, when we found out that Briggs was coming and that we would demonstrate in Healdsburg. I would find myself hooting involuntarily and very loud. Sometimes driving by myself in the car. Sometimes outside the SCRAP 6 headquarters. And I had as the march started into town.

But back at BJ's in Santa Rosa after the march, the music on the juke box was turned up loud and there were hundreds of people there (yes, men too) and they were all hooting at the top of their lungs, dancing hard, hugging one another and smiling a whole lot.

"...gonna build me a brand new world."



mandala

430 fifth st. Santa Rosa 527-7777

NATURAL FOODS CAFE

Live Music Nightly 7:00 - 9:30

Santa Rosa Community Market

1215 Morgan Street Santa Rosa 95404 707-546-1806

large selection, lowest prices

herbs, organic, dried produce, juices, legumes, dried fruit, dairy products, fresh fish, nuts

WORKER OWNED & OPERATED MEMBER FED. CLOVER WORKERS EMPLOYEES

Canvassers say, "WE CAN WIN!"

hadn't even mentioned Proposition 6. At the next door, we were joined by Andre, who'd done a few doors with Jane. An experienced canvasser, we thought. Armed with new courage, we knocked on the door and started speaking immediately about the Initiative. We were invited into the house, where we were given dope. As we registered the two young men and one young woman who were there, one of the men said he'd been at the parade (SF Gay Freedom Day Parade, June, 1978) last week. Support—in its purest form. A nice unexpected reminder that one out of 10 people we canvass will be gay, even though we may not always know it.

At our next door, a woman in her 60's spoke to us through her screen door. I started laughing again, and Joanna, as if on signal, joined in.

When I apologized to the woman and explained that we were nervous, she said, "Oh, don't be nervous. You can practice on me." So we did. We thought up all the arguments and tried them on her. She was essentially supportive and kept giving us encouragement to continue our work. "You know we talked about this in our church group, about homosexuality," she explained, "and at first everyone was embarrassed, but then we got used to it."

At the next door, the woman needed to be registered and was really appreciative that we had come to do just that. She was in her 80's with poor eyesight and was having trouble getting herself down to register. We sat in her living room and talked while registering her. When it was done, I started telling her about the Initiative. As I said the word

Gay, my stomach turned. I was afraid she wouldn't know the word or that it would provoke her. When I finished, there was unnerving silence. We waited. Was she freaked?

Finally, she said, "Well, isn't that ridiculous! You know in my day, they used to say that fairies, that's what we used to call them, molested young children, but everyone nowadays knows that's not true. What are they going to think of next?"

Our final door on that trial day was with another woman also in her 80's who maintained that homosexuality was against nature but that people

"We talked about homosexuality in our church group"

shouldn't be fired if they were doing a good job. When we tried to support her thought that good teachers shouldn't be fired, she would swing back and contradict herself with the against nature argument. We realized, after spending too much time with her, that she was an example of a voter we shouldn't try to convince. No matter what we said, she had an argument in response and wasn't willing to hear us.

We went back to Andre's house and evaluated. Since then over 30 people have been trained to canvass and are presently canvassing in Santa Rosa. Our experiences on that first day and subsequent canvassing, as well as the experience of other workers, has brought up a few points:

- 1) Very few people are outright hostile. The most I've gotten is a man slamming the door after we'd said thank you and walked off.
- 2) The majority of people listen and nod and ask for literature.
- 3) Many people appreciate the fact that we are helping them register to vote. (We are not actually voter registrars, we simply help people fill out the voter registration cards).
- 4) It appears that people who are not registered or people who have moved or not voted recently and need to re-register tend to support us, although they are not our only supporters. Those people for whom the system has worked somewhat (conservatives and property-owners) are registered already and have been voting on issues for years.
- 5) A common feeling expressed was that it is okay to do whatever you want in the bedroom, but please don't flaunt it. Some people seem to think that if gays would just not parade their sexuality, people would leave them alone.
- 7) Another common response came from parents who did not want their children exposed to positive Gay role models. This feeling was expressed despite the fact that these people tended to be informed and aware of the possible witchhunt effect of Proposition 6.
- 8) Women who canvass are not automatically assumed to be Lesbians; many people associate homosexuality with men only. This misconception enables women who are Lesbians to choose whether to come out or not, but detracts from the point that women are Gay, as well, and that we also are everywhere.
- 9) Those people who do support us tend to see the Initiative as ridiculous, so ridiculous that it doesn't have a chance of passing and therefore they won't vote. The fact is that the polls are running close to 40 1/2 pro, 40 1/2 con, 20 1/2 undecided.

It has become clear to me that canvassing is one of the most important and effective political tools we have available to us. Not only are we able to do one-to-one educating of people who aren't directly exposed to these ideas, we are also learning very concretely from the people we talk with. From our experiences going door to door, and learning which issues concern people most, we have had to come back and refigure some of our approach. We have also learned just how strong an effect the media has on the average person's view of Gays.

Most people have heard of the Briggs Initiative, but don't know or understand its implications. At the very least we are informing those who would support us about the Initiative and the urgency to get out and vote; we are confronting those who are against us with the very clear and direct reality that we are out here fighting and will not be quiet; and we are offering information about Gays and a demystification of our lifestyle to those who are neutral.

Our canvassing experience has made us optimistic about our chances of winning the election. Support has come surprisingly and with strength from unexpected places, and the number of people openly against us is smaller than we had anticipated. We can win. WE CAN WIN. But we need more help, more people willing to walk against Briggs.

Sonoma County Lesbian & Gay Alliance

presents

The Lesbian and Gay Experience

A Conference for the Gay Community and its Friends

with workshops concerning:

Substance Abuse Third World Experience

Coming Out at School and Work Talking to Family and Neighbors

Spirituality Youth Relationships Becoming Politically Active

Thursday, ^{Oct. 5 & 6} September 28, 7 PM

California Teachers Association Building

2490 Guerneville Road Santa Rosa

Free Childcare Provided

Donations Requested

FRAME YOUR SUMMER!

BRING IN THIS AD TO OUR AIR-CONDITIONED DO-IT-YOURSELF & CUSTOM FRAME STUDIO & TAKE \$3.00 OFF ON ANY FRAMED PICTURE

Because... **YOUR DAUGHTER LIKES SUMMERTIME, TOO!**

157 TERRACE WAY SANTA ROSA 95401 542-3888



ON THE BEAUTIFUL RUSSIAN RIVER

9117 RIVER ROAD, FORESTVILLE, CA

707-887-8855

Open 7 Days Year Round
Mon-Fri Noon til Two
Sat-Sun Eleven til Two



Continental restaurant with vegetarian cuisine extraordinary

fresh seafood, beef, steaks, fine desserts

Dinner nightly 6-10 p.m. Sunday Brunch 10-2