

Ten years of Modern Times

by the Modern Times Collective

Modern Times Bookstore celebrates its tenth birthday December 13th at Valencia Rose, a new cabaret in the Mission, with cake, champagne, and a special program.

The store, generally considered the country's leading left/feminist bookstore, recently moved to a large and beautiful space on Valencia Street, between 20th and 21st Streets. With the move, we've begun an exciting series of cultural events, including bookparties, films, readings and gallery shows. The events are intellectually charged, hopeful and exciting.

Our plans to celebrate a decade of operation bring to mind thoughts of what the decade's been like. We first opened our doors in the era of the anti-war movement, the New Left, and the burgeoning women's and gay movements. We end our first ten years in a very different, difficult and challenging time. Inflation, budget cuts, growing militarism and increasing political reaction are affecting us all.

At Modern Times, it's always been our commitment to present all the information that a diverse — and often divided — left might find useful, interesting or inspiring. As we enter the modern era we want to keep doing this — and we invite you to join us. We hope that we, and folks like us, keep open the channels of information to all who are interested, from gay socialists to disaffected Democrats.

But nobody lives by politics alone, and Modern Times' stock reflects this. Leftist and feminists, like everybody else, need sensitive, well-written, exciting books which fit no one category. They need books that tell you what to do with your backache, books to teach you to cook a good meal, and books just to curl up with. Even a clientele entranced by political economy should have access to matters of general interest and speculation, from the origin of matter to the theory of sexual desire.

You won't find *Winning Through Intimidation* at Modern Times, nor gothic novels with languishing heroines and aristocratic heroes, nor books on the art of war or the art of market funds. But our store is filled with carefully-chosen, interesting, engaging books that would be of interest to many more people than committed political activists.

What we are doing at Modern Times is innovative and unique. We are trying to expand the typical boundaries of a left bookstore. We deeply believe in the equality and importance of all people, straight and gay. In our society, and we are committed to making this culture available to leftists and non-leftists alike. At a time when the Right is on the attack, we think that many people have a lot more in common with Modern Times than they might suppose. Loving, real and to think, is a good start.

Making a profit in a community bookstore is always difficult. One of the ways we get financial support is through our Memberships. Friends of the store buy a \$15.00 or \$25.00 membership, and in return get a 10% discount on all stock we carry. It's nice to think that we can raise needed capital and be able to do it with a fair amount of fun.

The Birthday Party on Dec. 13th begins at 7:30. We'll have Swingshift, a hot new women's jazz band, Judy Grahn, Casselberry & Dupree and other special guests. Join us. In difficult times, it's nice to have something to celebrate.

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Photo by Mark Chester



Lon Rudolph with his work — Images captured live of new wave audiences, performers, and music at 544 Natomia Performance Gallery. Main calendar listing for Dec. 11th has details.

COMING UP!

'The Christmas Present' A gift for the city's disabled

The San Francisco Grocery Express, working with the Independent Living Project, Easter Seals, and Goodwill Industries, invites individuals and members of San Francisco's corporate community to co-sponsor a Christmas Present to lower-income persons with physical disabilities.

Participating in this week's supply of nutritious foods delivered to the door — is a capitol to the International Year of the Disabled.

"We've received strong support for the project, and not just because of the holiday season," says Charlotte Mallard, Honorary Chair of "The Christmas Present". "People also feel it's time to focus public awareness on many everyday activities — like grocery shopping — for which our existing facilities are inadequate to the needs of the disabled."

A nutritionist working with The Grocery Express has designed a package of food that meets a person's basic dietary requirements

for a week. For every \$40 raised, a package will be sent to a lower-income resident sponsored by the Independent Living Project, Easter Seals, or Goodwill Industries. The Grocery Express will assemble and deliver the food package, which will arrive with a holiday message.

"The Christmas Present" offers several opportunities to members of the community," says John Coghlan of The Grocery Express. "It offers the opportunity to further awareness of the special needs of people with disabilities; the opportunity to go on record in the community as being 'in support of those who most need it'; and the opportunity to participate in a project grounded in the spirit of the season."

If you want to help send a Christmas Present, you can contact Charlotte Mallard at 641-5460. Contributions should be mailed by December 15 to: The Christmas Present, c/o SFGE, 1650 Evans, San Francisco 94124.

DRINKING: a gay way of life

By Arthur Evans

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This is the second and final installment on the impact of Gay big business on the quality of Gay life.

Next to the popular industry, the second biggest money-maker in the Gay business world is the network of bars and baths. Among straights, bars are just one way among many for meeting social needs. Among Gays, however, bars have become a major social and socializing and meeting sexual partners.

The reasons for this dominance are clear. A long history of straight bigotry has driven us out of families, churches, labor unions, and other open avenues of making friends and lovers. For decades we have been forced to flee to the one place where we could meet and other things were safety — the local Gay bar. As a result, the bar has played a historical role in Gay life that is unparalleled by its straight counterpart.

Until recently many Gay bars were owned by straights. In large cities, especially on the East Coast, the most popular were run, directly or indirectly, by the Mafia. The gangsters who ran these bars had absolutely no concern whatsoever for the quality of Gay life. Their only goal was to make as much money as possible. By the 1950's, they had cultivated into a fine art a set of tricks to make their customers become heavy drinkers.

For example, they deliberately avoided having any ventilation system, so that the bar would fill up with hot air and cigarette smoke, making it impossible to hear. They'd turn the music so loud that it was uncomfortable to initiate a conversation. The patrons, having come to the bar to curse, and now having kicked each other in sight, were nevertheless inhibited by the loud noise from talking to each other. To relieve the tension and deal with the environment, the bar would buy more drinks.

As closing time approached (desperate hour), the volume would increase and the noise would soar, as the cash registers rang away. Most Mafia bars in the 50's were, in fact, rundown, dimly lit, filthy fire-traps, reflecting both the arrogant contempt of their owners and the lack of self-esteem of their patrons.

With the coming of Gay liberation, the influence of the Mafia declined. On the West Coast

in particular, a large number of Gay-owned legitimate run bars sprang up. But the new owners — whether unthinkingly or from the same profit motive — tended to continue the same contrived environment. As a result, this day — twelve years after the Stonewall Riots that began the modern Gay liberation movement — many independently run Gay bars in San Francisco are indistinguishable in atmosphere from the Mafia-run bars of New York City in the 1950's.

In view of this historical development, we shouldn't be surprised to find a high rate of Gay alcoholism. And, indeed, those who have read the existing medical literature as well as those who actually treat patients agree: Gay alcoholism is a real problem.

Gina White, in a recent article of social news, cites a 1980 overview of research by Zingraff that concludes "... three out of every ten homosexuals are likely to experience significant difficulties as a result of alcohol abuse." According to Roy Gray, the business manager of Acceptance House (a Gay alcoholism treatment program) "about 20% of all Gay people are alcoholics, and that's up to a national average of 10%." Carol Mignen, then executive director of Operation Concern (a gay mental health service), claims "Drinking problems are pervasive and almost taken for granted by our citizens," adding that "Gay alcoholism is 'a paramount problem that probably will increase.'

In the end, the bar can't be blamed for all of the problem, since Gay men are also under great personal stress from a hostile straight world, and San Francisco is traditionally a drinking city. Nonetheless, the special role of bars in our lives and the contrived environments of these bars are added factors.

On the bar counter I feel any sense of concern, because of the way they treat us. Not only by the behavior of the Tavern Guild, an association of more than 100 of San Francisco's 200 Gay bars. I asked Roy Gray how much money the Tavern Guild had contributed to Acceptance House's alcoholic recovery program. He couldn't remember ever receiving a contribution of any significance. I checked this with Jim Bonko, the Tavern Guild's administrator, and he said he could find no record of

the Guild ever having given them any money.

Operation Concern, on the other hand, has received some money from the Tavern Guild. Ed Scott, president of the Guild, told me they hold benefits from time to time and give all the proceeds to Operation Concern. Nonetheless, the Tavern Guild is not a charitable organization, according to Carol Mignen. She characterize the amount of support as "minimal" from the Guild, both when Operation Concern was a part of the Tavern Guild Foundation, and after it became an independently incorporated facility. She says certain individuals within the Tavern Guild (such as Bob Ross, publisher of B.A.R.) have been very helpful, but the Tavern Guild itself has not.

Carol Mignen also notes that most bar owners have no health plans for their employees. As a result, a financial strain falls on Operation Concern when they come there for professional services.

Ed Scott says that although "the good Gay bars" have health plans, many do not. When I asked him whether the Guild tries to persuade its members to have such plans, he responded, "We can't tell the owners how to run their businesses."

The bar owners are also complacent about fire and safety conditions in their businesses. In 1976 a committee of Bay Area Gay Liberation (BAGL) conducted a fire and health inspection of 51 bars, mostly in the Alford area. The members of the committee (Randy Alford, David Goldman, and Chris Price) had written form for each bar, noting such things as number and placement of fire extinguishers, location of fire exits, sanitation in bathrooms, level of sound, etc.

Here are some of the observations recorded for various bars: "One [fire] extinguisher located in locked storeroom; bartender does not have a key"; "no apparent rear exit — no

exit signs"; "no apparent ventilation to exterior"; "no apparent testimony before the Human Rights Commission, David Goldman stated that several of the bars inspected were "in flagrant violation of minimal standards of the fire and health codes." Unfortunately, BAGL soon disbanded, and the inspection report and the material was dropped. But in some bars, fire and safety problems remain to this day.

When I raised this concern with Ed Scott, he responded: "To my knowledge it's not a problem. The Fire and Health Departments do a good job." But when I pressed him whether the Guild had ever actually inspected its members for fire and safety requirements, he said "no." He added that "the level of fire and health standards is not part of our requirement for membership in the Tavern Guild."

The network of bars and baths has given rise to a distinct type of lifestyle that has affected the quality of life far beyond the questions of alcoholism, fire safety, and even discrimination. Though difficult to measure in quantitative terms, these other effects — psychopathology, mental health, spiritual — are far-reaching and devastating.

They are now more evident than on Castro Street, the heartland of the Gay-bar lifestyle. During the last five years, Castro Street has changed from being a genuine neighborhood for Gays of widely varying lifestyles, classless, personal appearances, and social classes. Increasingly, it has become a bar zone where seemingly healthy, over-developed bodies stand around, get drunk, snort poppers, and give each other attitude. And in the wake of this bar culture has come an increasing amount of loneliness and alienation, which the bar owners seem totally oblivious to.

I mentioned to Ed Scott the growing number (continued on page 8)

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Coming Up! features news and photographs of many events that are not necessarily gay or lesbian. We feel we are of interest to the gay and lesbian community and we recognize the important community work that many straight-identified groups are doing that would be of interest to the widely diverse gay and lesbian community. *Coming Up!* also recognizes that many straight-identified groups attend or participate in gay or lesbian-identified events. Therefore, publication of the names, photographs, or addresses of any person, organization or business in *Coming Up!* cannot be taken as any indication of the sexual orientation of that person, organization, event or business.

Calendar Listings
Performers, clubs, individuals or groups who want to list events in the calendar should mail notices to us so that they reach us before the 20th of the month preceding publication. We can not take listings by phone. Listings are free.

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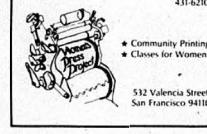
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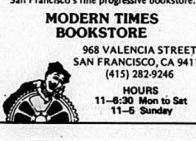
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But hear me when I call to you softly
through the flutes and chimes.
Listen when I ask gently but hopefully
That you remember—

Remember
That the child,
The baby with the halo
Who lies in the yellow hay in all
the rich heavy paintings.
Sleeping calmly in the presence of
jeweled and bewildered royalty.

Grew into a young man who lived
a strange and glorious life.
Who said once
(In that long forgotten,
That faded time between the cradle
and the cross).
"All men are brothers," and another time,
"Thou shall not kill."
And he knew that he would not.
Could not.
For any reason.
Kill his brother.

—Joan Baez

members and friends of golden gate metropolitan community church

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COMING UP!

Letters

Love in a Chemical Dump

Thank you, Arthur Evans, for once again speaking up against a too-common practice of damaging our health and well-being by replacing passion with poppers.

I have grown to trust your concern for and dedication to a community of healthy and vital lesbians and gay men. Known to many of us as gas-supply and strength from our own bodies.

I met one man who vends poppers from his store who claimed to have sent many popular brands to Stanford Medical Lab for analysis, only to discover substances as HCL and acetone, in addition to a basic ketone. I am sure many of those "deodorizers." Dear brothers and sisters, you'd might as well make love in a chemical dump, rather than shoving that stuff up your nostrils. Does our sexualized oppression know no end? Poppers and compulsive sex are hardly an alternative to alcoholism.

On to happier things... thank you, Coming Up! for so quickly expanding into a lesbian/gay monthly I can rely upon.

Jason Serinus

A Gay Change

When I arrived in San Francisco nine years ago, the focus of gay activity was shifting from the indoor scene of bars to the outdoor neighborhood around Castro and Geary, mixing evenly with the old-time residents and there were children, women and older people around. Many men still wore long hair and arrodyne, the essence of coolness. Female and male aspects, was a new territory being explored. Gay men especially bright electric clothes to express a feeling of individuality.

Political, cultural and social groups explored alternative ways of living, relating to each other and conforming. We reaffirmed ourselves within a system which oppressed not only gays but all of its people. This process involved gay men both in claiming our rightful place but also in creating a way for everyone to be treated with dignity and fulfillment.

Not ten years ago we were not only glad to be gay, but also quite content to be different from the men who had scared us with guilt and feelings of inadequacy. In our first gay bars and raising sessions, we learned to open up and express ourselves honestly and compassionately.

We faced our problems, broke them down, and found a better understanding of ourselves and other people. This was a world where we were excited for each individual to be free within the whole of society like the magic of snowflakes, each different and yet part of a greater pattern. But as time passed, some groups lost sight of the whole and became more concerned with after fulfilling a specific need. Just as the flower children of the 60's turned inward with frustration, so the gay rebels of the 70's felt the disillusionment of change which did not come overnight. In the Castro, the gay culture was a world of businesses closed and gay bars, boutiques and restaurants opened. If we couldn't change the world then we'd better grab what we could from the system. Real estate seminars replaced political ones, rent rates were raised and expectations were lowered.

Being gay shifted from a spirit of responsibility to change to a callous attitude of reaction. Societal values dominated political ones and seeking the truth took a back seat to seeking material gains.

By the time Anita Bryant and the Dade County Debauchery in 1977, we were a lot more gay businesses and very little else. A new world of gay activists sprang from the slopes of upwardly/mobile professionals. Predominantly affluent, white, gay men with a stake in the system, they sought to protect their piece of the pie, not change the world. Gay men became a one-focus issue as these respectable good gay citizens stole the spotlight from "less desirable media types" (read: dirty radicals espousing revolution). Advertising gay people as being the "new" as everyone else was doing, just as they did in bed, they pretty well silenced other voices.

We have been co-opted, bought and sold by our own people. Now the Castro is just a step away from being a yuppie hellhole. Gay men in the hood. Disdained gay activists from Stonewall days are told that they are Puritans and no fun because they insist on reminding us that the system in which we live is essentially rotten and is essentially rotten and is dying out like the dodo bird.

For the capital of the gay world to be without a viable community center is a shame compounded by the fact that most gay men would rather go someplace else than remain in a place where they could just be themselves. Just as the general populace has bought the short-term profits of the nuclear industry to ignore the long-term dangers, gay men crammed their senses full of slimy lies and gratification. Freedom is not license and when we do our own derivatives of light-tipped, stiff roles, we are worse than the fathers we fled because we know better.

Privilege is a onescreeners, the carrot on the stick. The gay hard fact is that there is no amount of game-playing will make us acceptable to non-gays. Even as a Jew living in the San Francisco of 1981, I cannot forget that in the Europe of 1940's we would have been shipped off to a concentration camp regardless of how unreligious I might be. In my gut I know that intolerance is happening.

What happened in Germany can happen here, is happening here. Our energies are well-organized and well-directed. They add their own money in their businesses, add them to their own and build the gas chambers of our future.

If we don't care to be different, to stop and say "no," then we are still die with this age of mass consumption and obsolescence. The gay flesh comes to shove even the most sympathetic nays will turn against us to save themselves. We have the potential to create an alternative for people who are not interested in the capitalist measure between anonymous sheets. It is still a moment of pleasure shared, a time away from death and pain. We are different because we love ourselves and the reflection of ourselves we find in each other.

Change starts today, it starts with you. Let's treat each other as family because that's what we are. Clear away the shit instead of throwing it onto someone else. It is enough to be rejected from the world. Let's not torture each other with the pain of rejection from our future.

—Joan Baez

In love, hope and pride,
David L. Cawley

Arthur Evans: Gay Leader?

Arthur Evans is another "gay leader" hand-picked by the gay business establishment. If Arthur Evans and I have any doubts, I believe he is more our enemy than our friend; or at least his type of politics are.

What other "gay leader" has gained so much power by silencing his fellow? Arthur was the first person to make public the "Red Queen," an act for which he became known to the gay community through the auspices of the gay press. This course is exactly the kind of leader the gay community needs. Arthur is committed to the kind of politics that are based on division and gay men have to put up with enough ridicule from our community but to have such ridicule imposed upon us by our peers is nothing short of outlandish.

In his latest political statement, Arthur has taken a stand that he is not a "leader" but a spokesman for the gay community. He has spoken out against the use of poppers as a cause of the KS cancer form as well as PCP pneumonia. It's about time that the gay press bawls the whistle on the sleazy industry that markets these products.

as to all women and the working class. Gays and lesbians have the greatest chance for success in ending our particular subjugation if we unite with all the people who are fighting our common enemies. The gay community is not the only group that are not being served by mostly white, mostly male property owners. We must find our "clout" in a larger movement to end all oppression, rather than in a business community whose ultimate loyalty is to its own profits.

Dana Bergen

Feedback from New York

Please convey my thanks to Arthur Evans for his hard-hitting piece "Poppers: an ugly side of gay politics." I intend to mail copies of it to friends throughout the country. Arthur has taken a stand that he is not a "leader" but a spokesman for the gay community. He has spoken out against the use of poppers as a cause of the KS cancer form as well as PCP pneumonia. It's about time that the gay press bawls the whistle on the sleazy industry that markets these products.

With best regards,
L. E. Shepard
New York, New York

Feedback from Arkansas

Feedback all the way from Fayetteville, Arkansas — a copy of your November issue turned up at our local women's Health Center and I grabbed it right away; I read everything I can about people's coming out.

I'm very impressed. I appreciated your article on poppers though I'm not quite sure what they are, because I think it's important to encourage good health and not just jump on the bandwagon of whatever is new. I have seen a lot of people with KS and I think it's important to let them know the most about the disease.

My theater coverage and community news is inspiring. The gay community is not nearly as active here — but we survive.

I hope that you will continue to publish the last thing I read — the kitchen group statement after the Yosemite Festival interview.

You know, in all the years I have been reading feminist, lesbian, leftist, political publications this is the first time I have seen an article that is so positive and well written. I hope that you will continue to publish the last thing I read — the kitchen group statement after the Yosemite Festival interview.

I feel China was very sincere in admitting her mistakes. The gay community is not nearly as active here — but we survive.

I hope that this honest admission is being acknowledged in the SF gay community. What was said to be "yester" was not said by one human being to another, it was said by one human being to another, no less than lesbian feminists in a woman's cultural festival.

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Which is not to say that I will defend anything China says because she is a sister in color but the obviousness in this statement that sticks out to me is that somebody copied to the last. And the first one to do it was a woman of color.

How many men admit, in print, individual, gender, sexual, violence and oppression towards women? How many men admit to being a homophobe in their attitudes towards gay people? I mean to say that it's not wrong that they label us and call us hostile and difficult.

Correct me if I'm wrong — this is the first time I've seen a woman in a yaoi comic.

How many men admit, in print, individual, gender, sexual, violence and oppression towards gay people? I mean to say that it's not wrong that they label us and call us hostile and difficult.

Please print my address with this letter. Rosa Maria is an old friend of mine and I'd like to hear from her.

Hiya, honey, heard you went on stage and started a little action in Yosemite; I published my book and it was been missing for you y-a-a-s.

Love,
Rosa Maria Paz
11 W. South St.
Fayetteville, Arkansas 72701

Fantastic Coverage

I just wanted to say that I think your coverage of the West Coast Women's Music and Cultural Festival was fantastic! I've newly arrived here and I am still learning and shall use your articles to let the folks back there know what happened, and what's still happening.

Thanks!

Judy Waters

Torie Osborne: Thoughts on Yosemite

First, I want to congratulate Kim Corrano and Regina Gabriele for their hard and thorough work in researching and writing the two articles covering the political events and controversies during and after the West Coast Women's Music and Cultural Festival. Hard work often leads to much under-appreciated work, I want to express to both of them my own appreciation of their work.

Second, I'd like to clarify a few points in the whole controversy. I have lots more to say, but that will have to wait for another time.

Much of the controversy that has revolved around the Day of Solidarity with Latin America, I certainly have re-evaluated the whole day in light of the participants, but I was not the one responsible for the Day of Solidarity. It is important for people to know the political intent around that day. It was not meant to be the definitive program around all issues relating to racism, imperialism and internally in the movement, it was meant for the Latin American participants.

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Part of building a movement has to be reaching new women, so we placed the workshops & music down by the lake, in the spirit of outreach to those who are not usually involved. We wanted to reach might not make the effort to schlep over to the workshop stage.

To imply that the Festival was racist and tokenistic is to misrepresent the intent of the participants. I believe, misplaced compassion. It negates the political organizing and work that those workshop leaders & performers accomplished — I have heard from many women that they were moved strongly by what they heard and felt. As far as I concerned, as an organizer, if only 30 women's consciousness and commitment were changed by those workshops, that day was not a waste.

December, 1981

Letters

failure, and there were in fact many more.

I'm not saying that racism within the women's movement is not important, just that the Day itself had to focus on the racism and sexism. Because our focus was the latter, shouldn't lead to criticisms because we didn't address the former in the day's program. There were four major festival workshops & 4 informal workshops directly addressing racism.

Also, to set the record straight, 15 of 65 paid coordinators, 1/3 of workshop leaders, and 2 of 3 paid day stage acts were women of color, and 8 of 18 major stage acts involved women.

I also want to address a statement by China & Shaha, Food Coordinators, in *Now Coming Up!*, because it's important for the sake of real struggle over real issues that untrue's not perpetuated.

One important point keeps coming up as the basic issue of the Right's attack on the women's movement. China & Shaha state: "She's a 'upper bitch'". Immediately after the Monday confrontation between Robin & China, I had a brief, very intense interaction with China, witnessed by a co-coordinator, in which she said, "You know, two things very stick to me first, her tremendous regret at having reacted so anger at Robin to result in anti-Semitic remarks. She also told me very clearly that Robin had to be called a 'bitch' because she was the only one in this movement to believe accusations toward Robin & the Festival, based on my own silence on this issue, have now snow-balled to a dangerous degree. There are enough other valid issues to deal with."

I also believe in retrospect that the statement by China & Shaha, which I helped them formulate at a time when emotions were high and clarity impossible for me, tells only part of the whole story, a complex interaction in which both sides were at fault.

I personally care for China & Shaha and have enormous pain that everyone involved is so split and divided at least closure on this issue, a working relationship, mutual evaluation and struggle, and building toward any possible future working relationships seem difficult now.

Finally, I am extremely sad, at someone who has been a part of our movement for 25 years, a workaholic frenzied on festivals that this Festival's very public successes have gotten little public acknowledgment. There were many things that the hundreds of women who worked so hard, worked so hard to acknowledge loudly and strongly one, for now: the incredible effort and energy that the Childcare Committee put out to create Camp Tell-Me-A-Riddle — that camp was a model childcare center for the last 25 years. No one ever got credit for movement's movement. That's no man's fault, and the credit goes to the coordinators, their staff & community support group, and the mothers & 200 children who made it happen, along with the festival staff. If funding exists for all this, then for everyone there, and (3) foster a long-term, year-long commitment to, through communication with the festival planners, make the festival more accountable & reflective of women of color and women's needs.

Finally, a few thoughts on the Oct 25th community meeting. According to Andrea Canaan's proposed agenda, that meeting was to be part of a process the purpose of which was to (1) fact-find & document what happened; (2) validate what happened; and (3) determine what the next festival was for everyone there, and (4) foster a long-term, year-long commitment to, through communication with the festival planners, make the festival more accountable & reflective of women of color and women's needs.

What if fact happened had little, if anything, to do with those goals. The structure was fragmented, with everyone split up into groups on class and race lines, and the meeting focused on coming up with additional lists of allegations, without checking out facts, rather than clarifying existing criticisms. Robin, who was not allowed at the meeting, was incredibly harassed, and no forum was given for her or other organizers to criticize.

The general atmosphere was divisive, alienating and negative. Many women had a general mistrust toward women who had worked on the Festival, who were seen as being affiliated with the "other". These workers were treated as guilty by association with the Festival, rather than seen as resources for a potential "alternative".

— their skills were undermined, their work was unappreciated, and their contributions to the festival were largely unacknowledged and often idealistic. I personally came to the meeting open to the idea of working on an alternative festival and left feeling that the energy was so unconstructive and negative that I left with the alternative aspects of what had happened politically in Yosemite had disintegrated into a spiral of negativity and divisiveness.

There's no question that the festival or festivals that have been held in the last year have been the result of the criticisms of this year, and in particular inspired by the vision of a multi-racial, multi-cultural festival that was actualized briefly out of the struggles at Yosemite. I know, as a friend, my own vision of bringing together a more diverse and inclusive group. I hope to see future meetings focus back on a principled process of separating fact from fiction of building on the skills and resources of women who have done the actual work, and moving forward with a more positive change. Scrutinizing and guilty by association are unhealthy and have no part in a principled process of political & personal change. Let's move beyond the negative energy and really deal with all the issues...

Torie Osborn

clipboards, someone said you made it though. I haven't eaten since the festival began. We had to unload a truck of dry ice, my hand got stuck, I caught a cold. It's late Friday, I have to eat... but... two police came to the parking lot to tell us to leave. The homophobes bastards, did they think who would get a peek of a naked woman after the sun left and the cold came? Everyone's at the concert, I'll stick around though. They leave, I need a medical emergency. Did I see one thousand women on my way backstage with a stretcher and medics and doctors and security? STOP! She's in the parking lot! No she's at the medical cabin! Back across the camp, in the ambulance, with a city nurse to a city hospital with a police escort. "Good job, medical!" Can I rest now? Can I get something to eat? "Code three stage area. Shift 1" Security who? Security who? I heard her name was... Let's talk to her, "please don't drink". Finally to central, check-in, check-out. For the women on duty it's a cold all-nighter, no sleeping bags or bodies to keep them warm. The kitchen's closed. Where to go? I'm not important now than tracking down food. Across camp with a new friend to keep warm tonight (uh, each day is a week, I've known her for 8 weeks then.) We're not here to hear the tour, the tour's not important (I guess she got up o.k.) A little further I'm told of a meeting at the hot-spring, start tomorrow. (Vegetarian uprising?) Women talking and meeting. But, I had to make the regulations were o.k., and I'm not even understanding what they mean. I'm not important that didn't get on the right truck because I couldn't pick it up between phone calls and problems and tears.

Yes, we cried. We cried from the exhaustion of working so hard, sweating on something that was less than perfect. Could it be less than perfect?

We laughed, too. Did you hear the dream about the truck full of bears driving 50 mph through camp picking up butter? And we all had to go to the beach to keep the cows and coyotes away from the stage in the middle of the night? Oh, yes, and the emergency supply run last; work gloves, day-glow tape, nails and two pairs of pliers.

We cried some more. We cried because of the beauty of swimming life into an event that was nothing short of amazing. We cried because it seemed so normal but not us...

In Strugge,
Mari Plumb
Asst. Director
West Coast Women's Music Festival

Feedback from Oregon

I read with interest your article about the West Coast Women's Music Festival. Many of my friends have copies of it, and in fact it is on several bulletin boards here at work. (Starflower Co. is a wholesale natural foods company run by mostly lesbians.) In fact one of the things that brought the article to my attention was from one of the bulletin boards.

Special thanks to Regina Gabriele and Kim Corso for such an informative and accurate article. I was there for much of the progressive goings on, and really appreciated such a thorough follow-up. La lucha continua...

Sincerely,
Laurie

Thanks, Coming Up!

Here's \$10 for 12 raffle tickets. We're glad to support you in this small way. Your paper has consistently been well done, and I am looking forward to continuing to support it. I am also looking forward to seeing it grow.

Thanks also for continuing to print in the calendar the information about the talks I give at the library.

Keep up the good work, and best of luck.

Jan Zobel and
The People's Yellow Pages

IC! — A Woman's Place Responds to Advocate

An open letter to the Advocate...

We are women at IC! — A Woman's Place, a feminist bookstore and information center in Oakland. We are very pleased to see Lorraine's article in *Now Coming Up!* A Woman's Place evaluated in your Gay Visitors Guide to San Francisco as "less friendly than the women at Old Wives Tales, and the selection and presentation of their books appears to be dictated by a rigid notion of what is 'feminist'".

According to the writer of your Lesbian section, identified only as "lesbian", "We would like to question this characterization of A Woman's Place".

First of all, it seems strange to us to be called "less friendly than the women at Old Wives Tales", and the selection and presentation of their books appears to be dictated by a rigid notion of what is "feminist".

Secondly, we are the largest feminist bookstore in the world, with over 10,000 titles, most of them feminist and alternative books. This means we carry almost every title by, for, and of interest to women. We carry over 100 titles by women of color, plus a few thousand. If we don't have a book about women, it is usually because the book is on order, out of print, or we haven't heard of it yet.

Thirdly, we are a political bookstore. We are a political bookstore, and do not carry books which in our evaluation do much more harm than good to the efforts toward liberation of women and other oppressed people. It's not often that we actually return books to the publisher because we feel they are not good for women. We do, however, attach a book to which we have objections, and attach a book to the shelf giving a brief criticism, so that people who come to A Woman's Place can make their own informed decision.

Finally, we are a political bookstore. Our political raising is very important to us.

As for the implication that we're "unfriendly" — we'd like "a lesbian" to explain further. IC! — A Woman's Place is collectively operated on a for-profit basis by six women, all of whom are women. We are not a "lesbian" bookstore. We are a political bookstore, and respect towards all concerned. This is not easy, as anyone who does retail sales will tell you, but most people have given us their trust and confidence for work in selling books, maintaining a lending library, and information center for women.

We ask that "a lesbian" or anyone who feels

COMING UP!

critical of the selection and service at IC! — A Woman's Place contact us and discuss their criticisms with us. We ask that you not use the *Guide* to replace the honest description with a false one, or a description of our services as complete as the other descriptions in the *Guide*. In the meantime, we hope no one will be discouraged from going to IC! — A Woman's Place by the *Advocate's Guide*.

The women of IC! — A Woman's Place

Pacific Center Thanks

For as long as I can remember *Coming Up!* has published fallacies in their calendar, our list of groups here at Pacific Center for Human Growth as well as periodically featuring us in your articles. During the past months, we have been very grateful to you during our struggle to retain our funding from Alameda County. Our excellent lobbying has paid off, and I am happy to report, as the Alameda County Supervisors have voted to continue our funding at full level for fiscal year ending June 30. This victory is due in no small measure to the help of *you* our newspaper in publishing our press releases and to your readers for acting when action was crucial.

We at Pacific Center are now working diligently to become more independent of the capitalist world of politics and power brokers. To do this endeavor, we will continue to need the help of the lesbian and gay community. The Pacific Center is a vital contributor to the lives of lesbians and gays throughout the Bay Area. Not only are we a resource for the community, but also a community center for hundreds of lesbians and gays. We invite people from the entire Bay Area to participate in our weekly rap groups. Give us a try — I think you'll see that we offer a special, supportive atmosphere where everyone is welcome.

Again, let me express my thanks to you and the hope that we will continue to support each other in the future.

Best wishes,
Charles Evans
Staff Members
Pacific Ctr for Human Growth

P.S. Pacific Center is having a "Victory Party" on December 4 at 7:30pm as a get together and fundraiser. Good food, drinks, and spirits provided. Sliding scale \$2-\$5.

A Public Forum For Unbound Feet

We are writing to challenge the letter in your November issue titled "Unbound Feet: A Response". It is a dangerous letter because the accusations presented are both misleading and distorted.

It is dangerous in these times to attack a multi-issue group which is taking a stand for principled feminism. In the face of right-wing repression, we must work to together to defend the "enemy", but when do we start to "create" a "solution" of a new just, bony social order? We must plan for the future, initial, critical/feminist/criticism in our groups and communities? In our published analysis, we openly criticized Genny Lim, Nancy Hom, and Canyon Sam because of political differences. The letter writers are not addressing the issues that the split.

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COMING UP!

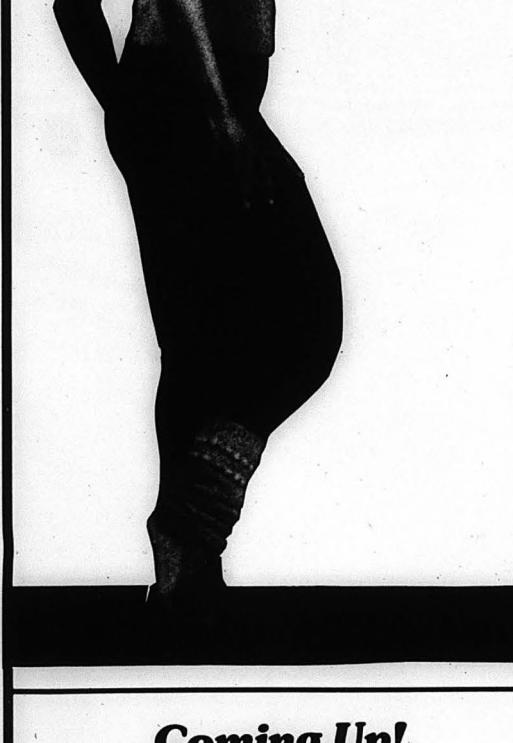
DECEMBER



Every Woman Who Has Ever Loved a Woman: Stand Up and Call Her Name

a celebration of black womanhood

See Dec. 13 • benefits Pacific Center



Coming Up! Benefit Party

See Dec. 4 listing

for all the glorious details.

Golden Gate Performing Arts presents:

Now Sing Again With Hearts Aglow

a holiday celebration with

- THE SAN FRANCISCO GAY MEN'S CHORUS — DICK KRAMER, Conductor
- THE SAN FRANCISCO LESBIAN & GAY MEN'S COMMUNITY CHORUS — ROBIN KAY, Conductor

Sunday, December 20 & Thursday, December 24
7:30 p.m.

Nourse Auditorium

Hayes at Franklin (next to Davies Symphony Hall)

\$8 Reserved Seats (Center Orchestra: *Sold Out*, Loge)

\$6 Unreserved General Admission

Tickets available:

GGPA, PO Box 14665, San Francisco, CA 94114-0665

Charge by Phone: 864-0326

Headlines (Polk & Castro) / Continental Savings & Loan Association

Interpreter for the hearing impaired

Wheelchair accessible

tuesday

Mothering From a Feminist Perspective — a panel on "Ways to Mother" moderated by lesbian mother Cheryl Jones. 7:30pm, \$4.75. RGC, Berkeley Women's Center.

Theater Class for Lesbians & Gay Men taught by G. L. L. 7:30pm, \$10. RGC, 15th & Castro, Mon. & Tues nites forming now. Info: 262-9348.

Seize Power Over Your Life — a group for women to confront the usual issues of self esteem, work & love with a feminist/analytic programming, research & logos from a feminist perspective. Info: 237-7255 (Nancy Freedman).

"Venetian Coathangers" — acrylic paintings/pens & ink drawings by Manuela Jemma at Vida Gallery, 801 Polk. Reception: 7-9pm, \$12.00. Vida: 262-9348. Alberto Jackson & Touch — high energy, hot women's music to dance, plus Casaberry & Dupree, 9-11pm, \$2. Amelia's, 17th & Valencia, SF.

8 SF Commission on the Status of Women monthly mtg, 4:30pm, SF Public Library, Larkin/McAllister, SF.

WOMANBLOOD: Portraits of Women in Poetry & Pictures by local authors from this new anthology. For women only, 7pm, free. RGC by 126, A Woman's Place, Oakland.

Xmas Tree & Chanukah Decorating Party & Potluck at Great Outdoors Adventures, 1618 Castro, SF. Bring a dish & dessert to share. Info: 262-9348 or on the board.

Open Forum for the Latina Community of the Bay Area — talk about the future of 3rd World women's programming, and forming an outreach committee at SF Women's Bldg. Bilingual, 8-10pm, \$5. Info: 262-9348.

Mothering From a Feminist Perspective — Donna Hitchens speaks on Lesbians & the Law. 12/1 more details.

Singin' the Blues with the SF Conservatory of Music at L.M. Davies Symphony Hall. 8pm. Tix: 431-5400.

El Salvador: The People Will Win — a film on the history of El Salvador in this country. 8pm, \$3. La Pena, 801 Polk.

Damien: Berkeley Stage Co's "Festival of Extraordinary People", opens tonite, 8pm, 111 Addison St. Details: 548-4728.

The Decline of Western Civilization — a searing look at the world of punk music. Electric Theatre, 990 Market, SF 990 Market, SF Today & tme. Info: 673-7373.

14 SF for Freedom Benefit — San Francisco's annual "Festival of the Arts" dedicated to *EVERYONE* (kids) with an Oral Majority Est. 9pm-4am, \$8 at Tropicadero Trans, 520 Fourth, SF. Funds to help defeat all 281 Moral Majority types in the US House who voted to repeal Wash. D.C. Consenting Adult Bill. Info: 621-7111.

15 Couples Together Christmas Party at Golden Gate, MCC, California Hall, 625 Polk, SF 7:30pm.

Mothering From a Feminist Perspective — tonite, 8pm, \$5. "Resources for Mothers in the Bay Area." See 12/1 for complete info.

"Serenade on the Hill" — quality music to benefit Potrero Hill Community, 7pm, \$5. 655 De Haro, SF. Res: 863-8350.

Women's Writing Workshop forming — share work, criticism & support. 7-9pm, 718 Arguello, SF. More Info: Ann (562-0507) or Cheryl (221-7918).

Quintardayo & Gaston Guzman direct from Chile sing songs of the countryside. 8pm, \$4. La Pena, Berkeley.

Chevera — hot Latin & Brazilian jazz at Amelias, 647 Valencia, SF 9:30pm, \$2.

Decades of Music — a show with Carol Roberts, guest Jane Dornacker. 9:30pm, \$3. Fanny's Cabaret, 4230-18th St, SF 9:30pm, \$3.

22 Winter Solstice, 2:52pm.

The Dispossessed — a film with a speaker about the Pit River tribe struggle for their land vs.

PG&E. Plus music & arts & crafts for sale. 7-10pm, 15th & Castro, SF.

Mothering From a Feminist Perspective — Andrea Canaan speaks on Mother-Guilt. 12/1 listing has details.

Paul Robeson — a play in Berkeley Stage Co's "Festival of Extraordinary People". 8pm, \$11. Addison, Details: 548-4728.

Comic Madness with dynamic duo Carol Roberts, footsexual, and Ruby Rodriguez at Fanny's Cabaret, 4230-18th St, SF 9:30pm, \$3.

29 Harvey Milk Gay Demo Club meets tonite, SF Women's Bldg, 7:30pm. Burgers & Beer at 8pm before the mtg!

Mothering From a Feminist Perspective — Sue Sorenson speaks on "Supermom Syndrome". See 12/1 listing has details.

Eraserhead, Alphabet & The Grandmother — a triple bill of bizarre action & horrors. Roxie Cinema, 801 Valencia, SF. Info: 863-8348.

Summer of Love Reunion — with food, sexual comedian Carol Roberts and friend Jane Dornacker. 9:30pm, \$3. Fanny's Cabaret, 4230-18th St, SF 9:30pm, \$3.

21

Phone the
Gay Events Tape
861-1100

for weekly updates
on community happenings

21

A Solstice Celebration — join Reclaiming & friends for sunrise at Red Rock. Gather as a tribe to welcome the new sun arising from her dark winter womb. 5:30am, 15th & Castro, Museum Way (above 15th & Castro, SF). Celebrate our variety & renew ourselves & our earth.

Winter Solstice Ritual — last public ritual with Coven of the Laughing Goddesses until mid-winter. 7pm, 15th & Castro, Laughing Goddess Grotto, 4418 Telegraph, Oakland, 6pm. Call 653-4169 for important info.

Solidarity — Gay/Lesbian Liberation mtg, 7:30-10pm, 766 Valencia, SF Open to all.

GOA Coffeeshouse — find out more about this gay social alternative. 7:30pm, 1233 with details.

28 Mildred Pierce and Harriet Craig — Joan Crawford is a mommie dearest & a zealous housewife. Roxie Cinema, SF. Box Office: 863-1067.

28

28

wednesday

2

December 2, 1978 — The Bakery Cafe on Castro Street closes when its workers go on strike for benefits and an established wage policy providing for raises. It is sold five days later.

ave the Cable Cast! A benefit concert on *Journal*, plus special guest 8pm at the Cow Palace. *Available thru Rave.*

Women Against Violence in Pornography & Media — a slide show & talk with Women Against Violence in Pornography & Media. 7:30pm, \$13 SS. La Pena, Berkeley.

3rd On The Avenue — a benefit for the People's Emergency Fund. 8pm, 1000 Franklin, 4147-19th St., & continues Thurs-Sun thru 1/3, \$4-\$7. *On Stage*, page 00 has complete details about 3 other theater groups.

Hotline — a benefit for this effort in an informal lecture/discussion. 8pm, free. The Network Coffeeshop, 1329-7th Ave; SF. Our story page 00 has complete details on the *Freelance*.

total Sculpture by Michale Carey at Pro Arts thru 12/11, 214 Webster, Oakland, *Tuesday*, 6-8pm.

6th's new network forming — develop a community of men to combine politics & spirituality & learn to use magic in our daily lives. Rituals, magic, healing services, & more. Info: Richard (648-5237) or Shawn (648-1897).

9

1 **Celebration of their Third Anniversary** the Atlantic Hotel presents *John Eisen, Karen Haynes, Jennifer Jameson & Lorrene King, Elizabeth Baynes & Dan Scannell*, 685 Ellis St, SF. Thurs 12/13. Info: 474-5720.

Women in Transition — a 2-wk workshop with Gay Sulter & Beverly Jordan. Tonite & 12/16, 7:30 pm, \$35. *25% pre-reg by 12/7*. RICC, Berkeley.

7th **Women's Art & Crafts Fair** — for the Chorus, the Grand Ballroom of the St Francis Hotel, SF, will glow with holiday cheer & reverberate with the voices of the SF Gay Men's Chorus. 6:30pm, \$150 (tax deductible) to defray the deficit. *Great* for a fantastic national tour. Host is Mayor Feinstein.

8th **Sextrous** — reinterpreted interplanetary transvestidist enterainment/personality, plus many favorites from past shows. 9:30 & 11pm, \$2. West End, 10th & Franklin. *Free coffee*.

Fortune & Men's Eyes — a film on being gay in prison, plus *The Killing of Sister George* — an early lesbian drama. The Strand, SF. Phone: 552-5990.

16

9 **17** **Nevis Mountain** — Steve Carter at the Lorimar Hotel, 10th & Franklin. Thurs, 8pm. *Over price*, \$15. *Postponed*.

10 **Christmas Party at Stern Grove** (Victorian Clubhouse) — Great Outdoor Adventures. A fire in the fireplace, lots of eggnog, coffee & wine entertainment. Bring food & drink to share. *Res required*: 641-2040.

11 **7 Days that Shock the World and Read: Insurgents** — two films at the Roxie to Benefit Modern Times Bookstore. \$2.50. *Time*: 833-1087.

12 **land's Messiah** Christmas Concert with the SF Symphony, 8pm, Davies Symphony Hall. *Tic*: 431-4049. *Postponed*.

13 **Joe MacDonnell** sings some new songs & takes requests for old favorites. Plus Donna Davis sings about mothers, children & growing up. 7:30pm, \$4 benefits *Bananas Childcare & La Pena*, Berkeley.

23

14 **Even with Samuel Beckett & the Real/Molloy** continues at the Intersection, 756 Union, SF. *Wed-Sat*. Details: 988-2356.

15 **The Worst Movie Ever Made** — *Plan 9 From Outer Space* — the last flick, most failed production (possibly of shame). 7 & 8pm at the Roxie, 16th/Van Ness. *Postponed*.

16 **Pen International** — lots of North & Latin America groups share an informal concert with the mikes open for all to sing along. 8:30pm, \$2.50 (includes a glass of wine) *La Pena*, Berkeley.

30

17 **Portraits of the Hand** — the works of Imogen Cunningham, Paul Strand, Edward Weston & more showing the many human moods expressed by the hand. *3rd Museum of Modern Art Van Ness*, *Alamo*. Thurs 11/22.

31

18 **New Year's Eve** — *24* — to Conton Garibaldi, — hot new Caribbean music; Salvadorean food & much, much more. 8:30pm? — \$7. *La Pena*, Berkeley.

19 **Gay & Lesbian Touch/Cassellberry & Dunree** for a New Year's Eve Dance at the Women's Bldg, SF. 10pm-2am, \$10.

20 **Rest of Duck's Breath and High Wire** followed by New Year's Eve Party at On Act Theater Co., 4040 Webster, 8pm. *Postponed*. *Food & live music by Hot Links*. Res: 431-6162.

21 **Carnival** in the Brazilian tradition with Chevere and disco at Ollie's of Oakland. *Postponed*. *Food & drink*. *Midnite charges included*. 10pm-\$10.

22 **Shit-kickin' foot-stompin'** music with the John Gallagher Band to bring in the New Year at Exotic's. *New Year's Eve* 4th Floor Bands at this masquerade party — clothing optional! \$15 adov. \$20. *dr. California Hall*, 625 Polk, SF. Tix: 833-4342 & BASS.

23 **Ring in the New Year at the White Swallow**, 1750 Polk, Gala party — come early, stay late. *No Cover*.

24 **Special New Year's Party at the Pines**, 1093 Pine St, SF. By reservation only. Show, dancing, buffet. \$10. *Single tickets* \$5. *Postponed*.

25 **Gay & Lesbian New Year's Eve** — Cash drawing to follow midnight kissing. *Amelia's*, 647 Valencia, *Call 552-7788*.

26 **Have a warm & friendly New Year's Eve** — old friends meet & greet new friends. *Maude's*, 937 Cole, SF. *No Cover*.

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Prison Poems

These poems come from prisoners at Pleasanton. Stuart wrote his poem just before his release from prison this fall. Mary is still in Pleasanton — her poem was written at the death of Martin Luther King.

Where Are They?

by Mary E. Brunson

Where is my sister?
Where is my brother?
Ores who said we didn't care.
Ores who said we didn't share.
At one time their voices were clear.
At one time their footsteps were near.
Oh! they couldn't be very far.
For divided they are.
We've lost track of them as we pushed ahead.
Somewhere in the dark they're lost I'm afraid.
Within the presence of my very soul,
I tried to convince them of our goal,
Brainwashed they've gone astray.
It's so sad they won't view the new day.
Wait my sisters!
Wait my brother!
Those of us who are strong.
Oh! No! We've got to keep moving along.
Can't let a few daunt our leader's dream.
We're emerging as we see the sun's gleam.
But where is my sister?
Where is my brother?
I pray our progress they could only see:
Rising o'er our own who doubt our cause.
Unleashing hope to the children
And dislodging the leader's omen
Of on the mountain together.
Where is my sister?
Where is my brother?

Penology Used To Be A Science... And Now It's A Crime

by Stuart Schwartz

An environment where
Don't and can't are the guidelines
Places that teach you
Not to commit your crimes.
That is where they put us
Those are the bars they build
And this is where we sit 'til time
Inexorably permits us to go.
No one makes us
Do our crime
No one makes our
Poetry rhyme.
The buildings are pretty
The landscape outstanding
The food just fine
And
The entertainment is passable.
With any gift of intelligence
We realized we erred at sentencing
And that is just the beginning
Of the path.
For this is jail.
And why do we even care how they run this
prison?
Staff doesn't affect me.
They only work here.
I live here.
They are locked in for life.
I get out Labor Day.
They only work here.
They don't care how they run this prison.
Staff can't work on the outside.
Their opportunities are limited.
Mine abound.
For
They are institutionalized,
While
I am incarcerated.



Prison Pen Pals

Coming Up! is looking for ways to support lesbian and gay prisoners, and one thing we'd like to do is run pen pals. Ron Endersby has started us off with a list of some people in prison he knows that would like to write to people. If you know of anyone else from other prisoners who would like penpals, when you write to a prisoner, it's helpful to include a stamp on your letter.

Coming Up! also sends free subscriptions to prisoners so if you're a prisoner and would like to receive the paper, let us know. And we'd appreciate donations from the community outside to help pay the expense of these subscriptions (see the subscription form on page 3).

Margaret Fields
1034 Bragg St.
Raleigh, NC 27620

Beverly Snoddy
W13773 PTU 81
Frontana, CA 97120

Michael Finn
#15918, Box 607
Carson City, NV 89702

Harry Kramer
#067260, Camp H
Angola, LA 70712

Mark Alan Hoge
#27439 6-T, Route 3
Box 59
Rosharon, TX 77583

There's a place for the Gay business establishment in our community. We have the bar, restaurant, stores that provide us with necessities and diversions. But that place should be a responsible one. Gay business owners should not sell products that may be a grave threat to our health. They should observe applicable laws concerning discrimination, fire hazards, and public safety. And above all, they should be sensitive as to how the products they are pushing affects the quality of our lives.

Sad to say, many Gay businesses are not acting responsibly, and in fact are behaving just like the straight business establishment, which they now consciously ape. But just as we deserve to be treated with respect by the straight world, so we deserve to be treated with respect by our own community. It's a matter of Gay pride.

Barney Harvey was assassinated, his store was forced off the premises by scandalous rent increases. It was eventually replaced by a sleek new store, *Statements*, which is still there, and specializes in selling designer lamps to a monied clientele.

I went to *Statements* recently to ask the owner his views on how Gay business has affected the quality of Gay life. I recognized him from the time he was an activist, a part of our group protesting discrimination at the Club Baths. He said he was too busy to talk to me (even though I was the only customer in the store). He also said that I must print his name.

I milled around *Statements* thinking of the day and many others accompanied Harvey Milk on his struggle to win from that address in City Hall. And I realized that he was sold a small white chrome lamp (the "Business 200"), consisting of a rod about 3' long, balanced on a pedestal about 1/2' high. Price: \$875.00. And a floor lamp about 5 1/2' high, of 1/2" thick tubing, stickered \$1,250.00. In this chrome commercialism, then, the dream that Harvey Milk died for?

If you would like to help create an organization as outlined above, please send a note with your name and address to Arthur Evans, c/o Coming Up!, Room 104, 2120 Market Street, San Francisco, CA 94114.

A STATEMENT ON PHOTOGRAPHY

There has been some controversy over the photograph that I took that ran with the Women's Museum article in the October *Coming Up!* At the October meeting, many people talked about the festival and the November 13 women of color meeting to continue that discussion, some issues were raised around the photograph, the role of photography in the women's community in general and especially how it relates to women of color.

The issues that came up are —

(1) That one of the women in the picture to her own publication and said she did not want her picture used.

(2) That the women in the festival picture were not asked for permission to use their picture for publication and in general, that it is not OK to get permission from anyone in a picture before the picture is published, especially in a gay publication or about a gay event, because people in the picture may not be out.

(3) That pictures of women-only events should not appear in publications that are read by men, unless the picture is representative of color, and it is a white women's festival, attended primarily by white women, so the picture was not representative of the festival, and therefore racist. And, in general, pictures of women of color were not used to represent events where white women were the majority and the majority of people there are white women.

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I thought about these issues and these are some of the things I've come up with —

(1) My understanding with the woman I spoke to is that she wanted the photo taken because she didn't want the picture used if it could be used without her clothes on. I'm sorry for the misunderstanding between us — I did not understand she didn't want the picture run under circumstances.

We screened out the part of her body that showed without clothes on, so that it would be OK. I'm sorry that there was that misconception between us.

(2) The issue is permission for publishing photographs of different ones.

In patriarchal law, photographs fall into different categories. First are photos of private events. These photos can't be used for publication without permission. Second are photos of public events. These photos are anything that could be considered "news" and is of interest to the community. Legally, I can publish a photo from any public "news" event without permission from anybody. There's a third category, and that's private events that become of interest to the public. If an event starts out private, but something happens that

would help insure that even more than what I've done in the past, I would very much like to hear from other women if they have other ways to insure that the music festival would probably fall into the second category of a "news" event to start with, just because of what festival means to our community; and considering all that happened at Yosemita, there's no question that the festival became a news event.

That's what the law says, and what's "legal"; but I know that because I care about the people I photographed, and what their lives mean, I have to go further from the law.

When I take pictures, I'm very open about it.

I usually walk right up to someone and take their picture, or I'm very obviously in the middle of taking pictures. Because I'm real open I get lots of reactions from people. I don't mind that.

Women don't have to say anything, but it's obvious they don't want their picture taken, so I don't take it. Other times, people will come up to me and ask me not to take their picture. I've just taken a picture of a woman, and for some other reason, and those pictures never see the light of day.

But that's what I always depended on — I put myself out there openly, and trust that people (who are at a pub) don't want to have their picture taken.

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COMING UP!

Weekly

DECEMBER

sunday

Gay Men's Open Rap at Pacific Ctr, Berkeley, 7:30pm. Champagne brunch at Artemis Cafe, 11am-2pm. Run for the Frogs — noncompetitive running for beginners, gay & straight. 10am. Call 821-0202 for details on weekly runs. Dignity — Catholic Gay men, lesbians & friends meet at 6pm for positive worship in the Liturgy of the Hours at St. John of God, Fifth Ave & Irving St, SF. \$10.

Metropolitan Community Church of the East Bay worships Sundays, 6pm, Oakland.

Country & Western in the afternoon at Rainbow Cabaret, 1pm-4pm.

Don't sit alone! Have Sunday Brunch with OPTIONS for Women Over Forty, \$2, 11am-1pm. SF Women's Bldg. Open to women of all ages!

Golden Gate Metropolitan Community Church with Rev. Dr. William, room 404, California Hall, 625 Polk, SF.

Women's Dance Jam — dance & free play from 6-9pm. \$3 drop-in. Eight Street Studio, 255-26th St, Berkeley. Info: 558-0386 (Sylvia).

Consciousness raiser & support group for women at the Berkeley Women's Center, 10am. **Affirmation** — Gay & Lesbian Mormons — a support /social group for current or ex-Mormons & friends. Open, info: 641-0791.

David Kelsey & Pure Trash at the New Bell Saloon, 8-10:30am. No cover.

Rap Group for Gay Men at Pacific Center, Berkeley.

New Year's Eve at the Stud, 1535 Folsom, SF. Info: 983-6623.

Rhythm & Motion/Aerobic Dance Exercise — a great workout for all ages, levels of fitness. First class free. \$3/class. \$20/50series card.

3rd Wednesdays, 10-11am. Info & RCC: 821-0643. SF Women's Bldg.

Amazon Kung Fu — serious training for women in the art of Kajukenbo Kung Fu. Develop strength, confidence, good health & fitness. 1-3pm, \$30. SF Women's Bldg. Info: 429-2006.

Job Counseling for Women Over Forty — 10am-2pm by appointment only in OPTIONS Center, 3rd Wednesdays, 10-11am. Info & RCC: 431-0202.

Job Listings for Women Over Forty — updated regularly, available at the OPTIONS Center, SF Women's Bldg, 10am-5pm, Monday-Friday.

African Movement taught by Marion Oliko — everyone & all levels welcome! \$30/class.

6-7pm, SF Women's Bldg. Info: 388-0929.

Practicing Defenders — a group of women on Jujuju — classes at The Dojo for all ages & physical abilities. 6-8pm, \$30/month. Sign arrangements can be made, call for details & other info: 503-222-0000.

Lesbian Rap Group — meet new friends and share old ones. Facilitated by Tisha, 7:30-9:30pm. SF Women's Bldg. RCC: 864-0876.

Golden Gate Dancers — International Peace, 8-10pm, \$15. SF Women's Bldg.

Job Listings for Women Over Forty — every Mon thru Fri, 10am-5pm in the OPTIONS office, SF Women's Bldg.

SF Gay Rap Drop-In, 8pm, basement of First Congregational Church, Post & Mason, SF.

Photo by John Hall

monday

tuesday

Lesbian Clinic — gynecological & general medical clinic for lesbians at the Women's Health Collective, Every Tues eve. Call 843-1914 for apt.

Tuesday Evening Fun Run, 7pm with the Front-Runners — gay & lesbian running group. Info: 388-0929.

Woodworking & Jewelry making class for beginning & experienced woodworkers. 6:30-9:30pm, free. WA. Complete info: 824-9716.

Psychic Circle, searching psychic technique. 7:30-10pm. Complete details: 848-4123 (Tasha).

Lesbian Drop-In Rap, 7:30pm at Pacific Ctr, Berkeley.

Men's Gay Men's Rap, drop-in, 7:30pm, Pacific Ctr, Berkeley.

Women's Drug & Alcohol Group — advance notice required: 841-2224 — Pacific Ctr, Berkeley.

Men — Buddhist gay men, lesbians & friends meet at 6pm, \$15. SF Women's Bldg.

Slides, discussions, poetry, prose & more — weekly events for women at ICH Women's Place in Oakland — check centerfold calendar for details.

Rhythm & Motion/Aerobic Dance Exercise, 10-11am, 6:30pm. See Monday.

Therapy referral at the Berkeley Women's Ctr, 10am.

Centenarian Planning for all women over 40, 10am, noon. Call OPTIONS for Women Over Forty for complete info: 431-0944.

Support Group for Women & Alcohol for women of all ages at the OPTIONS Center, SF Women's Bldg, 8-9pm.

Bisexual mixed rap group for both men & women interested in bisexuality, or partners of bisexual mates. 7:30pm, \$3. Bisexual Center, 1780 Hayes, SF. Info: 843-0929.

The Anytime Chorus — a group singing class — lots of fun & support, popular music singing in 2, 3 & 4 part harmony for all voices. 6:30-8pm, SF. Info: 654-8415. Closet singers come out!

Foodsexual Comedian Carol Roberts (surprise guests) at Fanny's Cabaret, 4230-18th St, SF. 9:30pm. \$3. Break up your week breaking up with laughter! See centerfold calendar for more info.

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From West Berlin to the West Coast

'Taxi' takes a long trip

by Penni Kimmel

Frank Rippoch's *Taxi Zum Klo* has travelled a long way from West Berlin via Frameline (San Francisco's lesbian and gay film collective) to its West Coast premiere at the Castro Theatre to its present run at the Lumiere. *Taxi to the Toilet* — a literal, and therefore inherently inadequate, translation — somehow got past the West German censors, but then notices in the *New York Times* and *Entertainment Weekly* magazines always seem to help gag Uncle Sam with his own chastity belt for a while. The liberal straight intelligentsia to the rescue! Come rally round the fag boys! (you can put a comma in there, if you feel you must!) There's a doubt about its popularity, although it's to receive repeat performances and full houses. Filling in the 1,200-seat Castro is no mean feat; gay films rarely do, "pink flicks never do, and "limited engagements" no matter how good the press aren't usually stretched out into regular runs. Subtitles and all, this movie has to be something else.

Now, San Francisco's gay audiences are peculiar, if not downright queer, about sex on the silver screen. They're not so much in the fact that this is supposed to be a trend-setting city, a citadel of power and pride, the end of the all-lavender rainbow and the home of instant expertise in same-sex sex. It is, without, the world's biggest closet at times. *Taxi* puts a big, fat tire between the closet door and the audience, the audience and the out-of-a-pocket of about three thousand people. About time, too.

Mary Poppins and her parrot-headed umbrella — now that's kinky! Frank Rippoch acting his version of his own lifestyle? That's state-of-the-art. In a long piece one could fault, somewhat, the acting, script, production, direction, cinematography, editing, length, width or tastefulness of the credits — one could create artificial controversy around a technical point or two, by what detract from the fun of the film.

Man (city mouse) meets man (country mouse), man and man settle down, lifestyles change as each other's sense of security, the outside world becomes professional and social, implying naturally that they do. And Frank will get up out of his hospital bed, tucking in a long, long bedsheet to run round the Teutonic wintrystide in a hired cab looking for fast relief while Bernd slaves over a hot stove. It's a conflict of taste, and as moral as apple pie. Frank just happens to like his pie frequently and with different kinds of toppings, too, so, naturally, cheezy, whiny and whiny the mood hits. Bernd, on the other hand is a conventional vanilla-on-moderate-wedge, strictly for dessert at the dinner table, to be consumed with the aid of the proper fork. They are very much in love.

What, then, is the shockness of it all? Well, there are scenes in *Taxi* never before seen in the last 100 years of cinematic screen. There's an actual avowed homosexual teacher teaching real live impressionable intelligent youngsters in an honest-to-goodness classroom. Frank and students don't love each other as much as Frank and Bernd do, but they rather respect each other more. Mein Gott, it's extraordinaire! Then there's a grand, royal, high drag ball. And then there's a bedraggled queen in the school-



room, and the lesson for today, kiddies, is: stop sucking your hand and do it.

Also illimed — and well-illimed without being 10-Watt backlit and mirrored and scrimmed to death — are the following scenes: sucking, fucking, watersport, whipping, gentleness, romance, sarcasm, tiredness, illness, bowing, boredom, friendship, stubbornness, confusion and growth. If NASA showed its astronauts taking a shit once in a while, maybe the titillating mystery would go

out of it and we could get on with letting them show us one personal way to solve some of our problems.

Taxi Zum Klo is an uncompromisingly gay film that does what no gay or straight film has done to date — explored the full range of one person's sensibilities at a certain point in their life. It's show and tell time, for a change. Find it and get in line, with or without an umbrella; you'll probably wet yourself laughing, anyway.

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'Nisei Bar & Grill' at Asian American Theatre

by M.J. Lello

The Asian American Theater presents *Nisei Bar & Grill*, a play concerned with the generation gap between the *Nisei*, first generation Japanese in America, and the *sansai* children of the *Nisei*, and second generation Japanese. *Nisei* were born through World War II, and there's the conflict between the generations — the younger generation were born after the war and know nothing about the camps or the racial hatred that the *Nisei* endured.

This deep conflict makes for a real sizzler in any play, but the evening I saw it, the play was very moving. *Nisei Bar & Grill* certainly runs his philosophy into every drink and every olive. Ron Muriera skillfully plays the "Kid," a singer-songwriter, who composes his material by the bar telephone and then sings it to potential publishers for only a dime's investment.

Emilia Cachapero turns in another excellent performance as *Koko*, the hooker who runs the bar. She's a toughie, and she's the one who runs the bar.

Her character is pitted against Shirley, played by Mitzi Abe, who continually explores her past and her present political problems. Her speeches are again too much like "an activist handbook."

So the play is uneven — some of the actors are excellent; some of them are not.

In the first act there are two anti-gay comments, both of which are unnecessary. Shirley, to make a point for an anti-war protest, Keiko and puts her hand on Keiko's shoulder, only to be pushed abruptly aside and scolded.

"I ain't no dyke!" Her response is completely inappropriate in terms of what they're fighting about. And again, Judith Nihel, who plays Kimi a hairdresser, talks about Jimi Hendrix's hairdo, and how it makes men look like "queers."

Shirley's a woman of 40, a older generation

person of anti-decent that thinks Ats

are homosexual, is too far out for me to comprehend.

It could be poor writing by Garrett Hongo that makes these lines awkward, or it could be his stretch in irony to somehow encompass present day politics and crowd up in a minority group that is also oppressed.

The most important part of the play was the references made to the "camps" that the Japanese were relocated to during the War. And the most poignant line came from Sci-Fi (Ken Narasaki). Ken is a young writer trying to

make it big in his field, just like the Kid. He writes about the future and tries to link the past with the present. But he also has to be good in a commercial which he says, "I'll write 'Son of the Camps,' it will be sci-fi, but it will also talk about the camps, this way it will reach more people."

So in the end will Harry sell out his people and his Bar and Grill? Will the older people he employs stand in the welfare line, or end up in sweat shops? There's some good political commentary here, definitely some good acting, and a terrific set.

'Fugue in a Nursery' with Theatre Rhinoceros

by Penni Kimmel

The season opener at Theatre Rhinoceros, Harry Fierstein's *Fugue in a Nursery*, is an ambitious construction in dialogue among its four assortedly paired grown-ups: the devilishly queenish Arnold, his ex-lover Ed, the debonair come tripping on a bisexual trampolite with his nautical fiancee, Laurel, and Arnold's baby-boy boyfriend, the sweet and streetwise Alan.

The characters play clever counterpoint against the inherently disastrous situation — a weekend together in the country. Old unresolved relationships surface to add to the unstable new ones and a jolly bad time is had by all. Once again, in gay theater, emotional exploration is a game, and games dictate the rules: the alphabet block furniture, the toy telephones (Tom Williams goes fishy and cunning set design) to underscore the musical "fugue" theme of the title. The psychopathological fugue state is presented, too, buffering the zip-zap conversations with its convenient amnesia: four people on a road trip, behaving in a very rational manner while having no memory of what was really said or meant, or who was really done.

Martin Xero wraps himself comfortably around "Arnold" — a continuous, but never stock character in the Fierstein trilogy — and the strengths of the play are the vulnerabilities of the characters. The drag show, like the old days, is finally acquired. The building in *Fugue* is a combination of a playhouse and a game, a place where people feel welcome, a neighborhood cultural and community center."

Ron doesn't believe Valencia Rose will add to gentrification of the Mission. "We took a run-down, empty commercial property, renovated it, and now it's a valuable asset," he says. "It combined good food with good music, a place where people feel welcome, a neighborhood cultural and community center."

Aseling Valencia Rose in it's hunt for new talent will be Allen Sawyer, manager of the Castro Theatre. Allen will be auditioning and booking acts, as well as creating and directing the Rose's first musical revue, *A Fine Romance*.

"I got the idea from a Frank Lesser revue that will be open to the public," Sawyer says. "It was a musical soap opera and just awful," says Allen, "so I thought I'd try to do a better one and decided to use the music of Jerome Kern for the show."

The revue went through two incarnations, both bad, one was titled *Ed of Kern*, but Allen fell in love with the music and the idea of the production. *A Fine Romance* is the end product with a cast of three men and two women, a three-piece orchestra and the promise of a "wonderful show, full of surprises." If you're not familiar with Kern's music, Allen Sawyer thinks you'll be surprised at the songs you'll recognize and go away humming.

A Fine Romance will open the night of December 13th as part of the Official Grand Opening Celebration of Valencia Street, at the 13th Street, Modem Times Bookstore celebrates their 10th anniversary with a dynamic party.

Performances of *A Fine Romance* continue Thursday through Saturday at 8pm, and Sundays at 2pm; tickets are \$5 or \$15 with dinner.

Monday nights will be "Gay Comedy Night" with Holly City Zoo or Other Cat type format, that will bring us gay and lesbian comics of promise.

Jan and Daniel, acoustic guitar players and balladeers, will entertain you on Tuesday nights.

Wednesday will see an open mic for would-be vocalists, and following *A Fine Romance* at 8pm on Thursday nights will be cabaret.

After the revue on Fridays at 10pm, the vocal magic of Patty Wolf; but alas, the post revue entertainment for Saturday is to be announced.

There you have it! The first month's schedule at the new Valencia Street Cafe-Restaurant: 788 Valencia Street, in San Francisco. There's valet parking available directly across the street, and the whole shebang is completely wheelchair accessible. Call 552-1445 for complete information and reservations.

The new Valencia Rose Has gala opening this month

A rose will bloom on Valencia Street this month when the Valencia Rose Cafe-Restaurant opens its doors. A former used furniture/antique store, the new Rose is the brainchild of gay activists Ron Lanza, Hank Wilson and Ward Smith, former chef at J. Kevin Martin's.

"We got the idea last November," says Ron, "and finally acquired the building in Fall of this year. Our vision is a place that combined good food with good music, a place where people feel welcome, a neighborhood cultural and community center."

Ron doesn't believe Valencia Rose will add to gentrification of the Mission. "We took a run-down, empty commercial property, renovated it, and now it's a valuable asset," he says. "It combined good food with good music, a place where people feel welcome, a neighborhood cultural and community center."

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Memories of holidays past and present



Wheel of the Year

by Gwenneth Rose

For the Pagan people who follow the Wheel of the Year, the turning of the seasons, Winter Solstice is the first sabbat, or holiday of the year. The period between Samhain, or Halloween, and the Winter Solstice is the darkest time of the year. It is a time of death, of the dead, of rebirth. According to my tradition, derived from the Faerie Wiccan tradition, the horned god, son and lover of the Goddess, has died at the Summer Solstice, has gone into the grain, and has been harvested. He is dead, and yet we know he is to be born again. For in the darkness, he grows within the womb of the Goddess, and we await his birth, the coming of the light, the turning again of the earth, the rebirth of the Winter Solstice.

The story and the celebration of Winter Solstice varies among the different traditions. Many Dianic witches do not call the Divine Sun Child the sun king; instead the Child is the God-dess Lucia. But whether this child is male or female, she is the light and the hope which comes again to guide us through the year.

All Pagan festivals begin with feasting, music and dance. Winter Solstice is usually a vigil on the longest night of the year. Celebrities gather to assist the Goddess in bringing the Light to birth. Since this vigil is symbolic of the intimate connection between death and birth, dark and light, celebrants can use this vigil to undergo symbolic death and birth themselves.

Several years ago I held a vigil for Solstice in which the adult people bring the celebration objects representing qualities or problems which they wished to be done with, and likewise to bring objects representing that which they wished to be born with the light.

We gathered together and cast a magical circle around us, invoking the spirits of earth, air, fire and water. We called upon the Mother Goddess and the Divine Child to join our circle and to be present in each one of us. One by one we

shared our feelings about what we wished to banish: "This padlock represents my fear, I want fear to die in me," one person would say, and the rest chanted, "Fear is dying, fear is lost to the night!"

We went round and round the circle, moving from the personal outward: "I want nuclear poison to be banished." "Nuclear poison is dying, is lost to the night!"

Once the circle was broken we began to dance counter-clockwise, and we raised a great cone of power with our sound and movement, and then we dropped to the floor, and went together into a deep trance where we underwent a symbolic death.

The work being done, the rest of the night was filled with feasting and joyous celebration, a birthday party for the light.

This year I again look forward to the long vigil with my circle on the night of December 20, when again I will explore the connection between death and life, life and death, and the meaning and watching with the Goddess until the first light, reviewing my year and planning the year to come. Then, while it is still dark, my circle will join other circles high on a hilltop above the city, and we will hands and sing together, chanting the sun up over the horizon, greeting the promise that comes with the birth of the Light.

Then a priestess, our midwife, began to guide us in the journey of birth, and we were each born again and brought back into the light. Together we shared our hopes for the coming year, showing each other the objects we had brought for this purpose. We chanted together about what was being born: "Hope is born, power is born, love is born, joy is born," and again raised power with singing and dancing, this time dancing clockwise.

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TAXI ZUM KLO IS WITTY, CHARMING, RIGOROUSLY UNSENTIMENTAL and fair to all its characters. TAXI IS A BIG STEP TOWARD LIBERATING THE SCREEN.

—RICHARD CORLISS, TIME Magazine

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—Janet Maslin, New York Times

"AN EXTENDED, ROLICKING CRUISE!"

TAXI ZUM KLO is an important movie because it tries to juggle the contradictions of love and freedom."

—Carrie Rickey, Village Voice

"A BREEZY, FUNNY, AGGRESSIVELY CANDID AUTOBIOGRAPHY. A self-awareness of an unusually high order as well as a real talent for making movies."

—Vincent Canby, New York Times

"YES, TAXI IS A SHOCKER, BUT—

seeing it a second time, I was surprised by my own reaction. It seemed less shocking—and its qualities of humanity and humor became more engaging."

—Archer Winsten, New York Post

Selected for presentation at the 1981 New York Film Festival.

TAXI ZUM KLO
A film by FRANK RIPPLER

Lumiere
SAN FRANCISCO

Northside
BERKELEY

A Child's Christmas in Puerto Rico

by Aurora Levins Morales

Christmas day was the least of it then, when I grew wild on the mountainsides of Indiera, ranging the coffee farms and filling my skirt with stolen tangerines. Gifts must wait for the Three Kings on their plodding camels to pass wearily through the country of the land on their way to Bethlehem. I was inebriated by the taste and aftertastes of green grass and pine needles. Meanwhile it was the dry season and we sat outdoors. In the yellow light that spilled from the kitchen while Tito Cruz runs across the road slipped down to the store where the old men drank their shots of Don Q from paper cups and fetched back Cheo's cousin from Sabana Grande. And he appeared, a small man with a long face and a long of light, "Get him a chair," yelled my mother and pours him a little red glass of the best while he tunes his guitar. I remember verse after verse like dark birds rising from his quiet face with an echo of the moorish troubadours in the high song, of the Andalucian peasant and the black cane cutter from Angola all mixing, somewhere far away in his libarо blood nearby, just across the valley, dogs barked at the frosty tree while the pigeons on the porch hummed softly to themselves in the moon.

But Noche Buena the noise rose from every corner and hollow of the mountains, from the green and red jeans roaring up and down the roads and Lencho Perez arguing with his wife about the breaking of the pig's leg and I had fed orange peels to walk on the uphill side to keep our shoes clean. All afternoon the pig turned in the pit, and the little boys fought for a chance at the crack, poking it to see if it was done, until Chinita la de Aida pulled on his ear and it came off in her hand. But now it was night and the pig was cooking, and the house was filled with smoke and no smell, everyone diving for the bits of skin on them and the smell of arroz con pollo in the oven and huge pots of rice and candies. Best of all Spanish turron and dulces de everything, quivering slabs of candied orange, mango, guava, coconut being sliced with cheese, until outside the bright house there was only soft light brushing the dark hills and the chickens' feather shuffling under the orange tree while the pigeons on the porch hummed softly to themselves in the moon.

Late, in the night sleepless children were bundled into blankets. The horses roamed in the headlights and an owl sauntering like a brown pendulum across our path. Dogs eyes lit red at the roadside and we thought they were unheard of beasts from the middle of the night.

Down in the cities the fat jocoy grins in the red sun was pushing out the old men on their wise steeds. Blonde dolls and GI-joes poured into the bars and the bars were filled with checkers, ushers like ours. He spoke better english, and he had contacts in N.Y. They say he had a brother-in-law in the government. Nowadays my younger cousins wait for Santa with tinsel trees in their living rooms and unwrap barbie dolls and machine guns and Three Chipmunks Christmas Records and never hear the song rise into the dark air filled with the velvet flight of bats to see the bright light pour down the red hill while all the world sleeps it off and the church bells ring in the muffled dawn.



Black Community Christmas

by David Williams

For most Afro-Americans, Christmas is a time for children, and it occurs to me that the adult partying that starts before Christmas and stretches beyond the New Year's Day is a way of expressing the hope that we have had to invest in each generation. Until I was thirty years old, Christmas remained primarily (though less so each year) a family affair. Since then, it has been for me a time of separation. I grew up in the shadow of the Empire State Building, and here I am on the edge of the Park Panhandle. So while my Christmas's remains primarily a family affair, it is of what I have given up that I wish to speak.

Somehow, the tensions between Santa Claus and the real world from which my relatives had to wrest our presents was always real, if imperfectly, understood by us. Once we began to speak, my sister and I ceased to believe in Santa Claus. Old Folks who asked us "what did Santa bring you?" were really asking "what did we bring you?" What else but our parents had gotten us all that year?

A friend of mine who grew up here likes to say, that in his neighborhood, everybody knew that no white man dressed all in red carrying a huge bag of custom-made goodies would be flying down chimneys in the middle of the night.



We didn't have a fireplace until I was fifteen. When it came time for me to buy presents, I paid the cost in search and payment, but it was still a fun time, me and my mom trying to buy presents. I had a teaching job in the day and had to face it by morning without fail, even when I was in London.

My father believes that the Church is the real center of the Black community, although as children we felt finished if the twenty-fifth fell on a Sunday, which meant not merely a 11 o'clock service, but the added duty of Sunday School which began at 9:30. Most of the time, Hezekiah spent this in addition of gazing, admiring, "Christmas Sunday" to "precede the great day. Children had to perform Christmas Pageants, the church was full — although not as full as at Easter — and all the Carols and Spirituals were sung.

Sometimes on that day, my sister and I avoided the kiddie center after Sunday School, and went early to the sweater store. Santa Claus was a dead end, but out of the cold, old fashioned family who had been brought out in plenty of time were singing the old Christmas Spirituals a capella in the ancient style. Then the church would fill, the Organ sound, the choir proceed down the aisle and the minister appear. Thank Heaven "Joy to the World" was always sung, and all four verses which still know by heart in African American and the African Zion Church of Newark, New Jersey. My Aunt Mildred sang in the choir of the Calvary Baptist Church, which always sang Mr. Handel's Messiah on Sunday evening, and I always reveled in it.

The big event was still Aunt Martha's Christmas dinner. As I grew the dining room became less and less crowded due to the natural course of things, but it was always festive. For me the dish that I always wanted to eat was the ham. I firmly believe that every black family has at least one person who can do the things to near perfection — in our family was Grandma Maggie.

The truth of Christmas Day for Black people is that it is, of, for and by us — although there are exceptions. I once asked to bring a Dutch friend of mine, who had been my host in Amsterdam, home to Christmas dinner. I was afraid that she would be uncomfortable. My father was plainer: "David, we have one day of the year when we can relax, and put aside the burdens of the white world we have to deal with, to be with our own." So off I went with my friend to Connecticut to spend Christmas with old friends. Alas, one can't have everything, and while I respected my father's feelings at the time, I now know how he left.



Light in the Darkness

By Guy Mannheimer

Hannukkah is an eight day Jewish festival of light, a holiday of light. The name comes from the Hebrew word for light, and its roots originate with the Greeks who invaded Israel about 2400 years ago. Confronted with superior numbers and power, the Jews, nevertheless, won. Their victory was an affirmation of their right to exist as Jews in the face of imperial edicts prohibiting them to follow the ways of Judaism.

A legend surrounding lights was added to this historical event: when the triumphant Jews entered their Temple in Jerusalem after liberating it, they found it had been desecrated by the Syrian Greeks. So, first, they cleaned and prepared the Temple for Jewish worship. Then they searched for oil, for only one of the necessary rituals was to maintain a constant light (the menorah). They found only enough oil for one day and only one small flask of pure olive oil enough to light the Temple menorah (candelabrum) for only one day. The legend tells that this amount of oil burned, miraculously, for eight days, enough time for new oil to be prepared. Hannukkah, which in Hebrew means "dedication," is therefore partly a celebration of the Jewish victory over oppression and the rededication of the temple and Jewishhood.

The seasonal roots of Hannukkah predate the historical. The practice of a festival of lights comes from the old agricultural calendar, a winter solstice celebration, in which light is the central motif. At the time of year when the nights are longest and coldest, Jewish men and women and their friends gather to share in the lighting of candles in a menorah (symbol of a tree bearing light) over a period of eight days, increasing by one the number of candles on each successive day of the festival. As the sun is rekindled, the miracle and wonder of light created out of darkness is celebrated, inspiring hope, joy, and an affirmation of life.

Because the Jewish calendar is based primarily on the moon, the dates of holidays vary each year. This year, the first day of Hannukkah begins on Monday, December 21st and the first of the eight candles is lit on Sunday night, the 21st, right at the time of solstice.

As a queer Jew, I see Hannukkah addressing being queer and being a Jew.

Jewish men and women at the time of the Maccabees, throughout history and still today, have been pressured to just like everyone else or to give up or downplay their separate identity or to disappear altogether. Jews have survived those pressures and attempts at destroying them for being different.

So, too, throughout history and up to this very day, have dykes and queers been pressured to go straight or hide in closets and disappear entirely. Lesbians and gay men have survived those attempts to destroy us for being different.

The Jews who asserted themselves 2400 years ago at this time of year in a victory of the weak over the strong, who stood up to cover the many people to claim their right to exist, themselves as a people spiritually, culturally, and politically. Lesbians and Gay men have also fought back (most notably, in our time, at Stonewall in 1969 and at San Francisco City Hall in 1979) to claim their right to express themselves spiritually, culturally (including sexuality here), and politically.

Hannukkah, for us, is a rededication to the memory of the Gay and Jewish past, to the memory of the Gay and Jewish future, to the memory of the Gay and Jewish present. The Mildred and George of the Calvary Baptist Church, which always sang Mr. Handel's Messiah on Sunday evening, and I always reveled in it.

SHALOM (PEACE)

