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phoenix resource



"MEN IN LOVE"

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GUIDE

RESOURCE

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Editor-In-Chief Robrt L. Pela
Art Director Bolton
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Local News Reporting Bj Bud
Candice Mirada-Berkely
Ellen M. Young
Gale Young
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Columnists Lee Lynch
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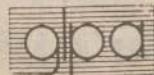
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Darkness, Silence, Fire Thoughts on the Hate Crimes Victory

On Monday, April 23rd, I attended the White House signing ceremony of the Hate Crimes Statistics Act. The Act is the first piece of federal legislation that includes the words "sexual orientation," and the ceremony was the first of its kind to include representatives of the lesbian and gay community. The Act, which requires the Attorney General and federal law enforcement agents to collect data on the incidents of crimes motivated by racial, religious, ethnic, or homophobic bigotry, passed the House and Senate earlier this year, and during the Senate debate, a homophobic, hateful, and irrelevant amendment, offered by Senator Jesse Helms (R-NC), was soundly defeated, 77 to 19.

As I sat waiting for the President's 3pm entrance in an ornate auditorium filled with representatives of religious, ethnic, and racial minorities and the Congressional sponsors of the statute, I reflected on the decades of accumulated pain, humiliation, physical beatings, church and synagogue desecrations and intimidations that have been sustained in America by people of color, immigrants, Jews, and many others. I thought about Roger Macomber, a twenty-seven-year-old man from Burlington, Vermont, who clings to life on a respirator, blinded and beaten severely this year, and of the words of Senator Orrin Hatch (R-UT) during the February 8th debate on the Senate floor:

"But I know one thing that they (gay and lesbian Americans) do think and they are right on it, that they should not be brutalized and beaten and murdered because of hatred or for any other reason, but certainly not because of their sexual orientation. They are human beings too, and they ought to be treated like human beings. There is a right every American ought to have and that is the right to be free and unmolested from vicious hate criminal activity."

I thought about the pain of a seventy year old friend of mine who still remembers, sixty years later, the harassments and beatings he took as a child because he was a "sissy." And I called back the words of Elie Wiesel, the Holocaust survivor and scholar, at the New York HRCF dinner last November:

"What I have learned, therefore, is that the worst sin is to inflict shame and humiliation on anyone else for whatever reason...I have seen in my lifetime the consequences of the opposing views when they have dominated the scene. I have seen Jews and so many others, including gays, in those places of darkness, silence, and fire."

Some will say that the Hate Crimes Statistics Act does very little for lesbians and gays, and if stripped of its symbolism the Act is simple—no protections against discrimination are included. The Act is simple but significant, because for the first time in history, the national government, and the American people through its Congress and President, have said in this Act that homophobia is wrong and that we need to fight it and eradicate it from America. It is indeed terribly important that henceforth, gay and lesbian Americans can quote to the world the President's words of April 23, 1990:

"We must work together to build an America of opportunity where every American is free, finally, from discrimination, and I will use this noble office, this "bully pulpit" if you will, to speak out against hate and discrimination everywhere it exists."

It is important for every lesbian and gay American to remember and treasure the insults and beatings, as these are the broken bones that mend stronger and make us wiser and more sensitive to the sufferings of others. But we also need to celebrate the small steps that take us closer to liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

History will judge whether April 23rd stands as a date of significance in the lesbian and gay movement, but it will always be a personal highlight for me. I'm sorry that you all were not there with us, but I wanted to let you know that the pain all of you have experienced was present in that Presidential office with each of us.

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DC Candidate Slams Black Gays

WASHINGTON, DC—John Ray, a black candidate for mayor of the nation's capital, made several anti-gay and lesbian remarks and advocated heterosexuality for the black community at a meeting sponsored by the DC Gay and Lesbian Activists Alliance. The National Lesbian and Gay Task Force (NGLTF), along with other national and local organizations, has sharply criticized the comments and have called for a meeting with the candidate.

In his remarks to about thirty gay and lesbian activists, Ray, an at-large member of the DC council, said heterosexuality "is the best way" for the black community. He said "faith in God" and the "traditional family as I grew up in" should be central values in the community. Ray, a democrat, is perceived as a respected leader in the black community in DC.

Ray also said he would not advocate for domestic partnership legislation now being proposed for DC residents. The legislation would extend the same employment benefits to the gay partners of DC government workers now granted married spouses.

"I have chosen a certain lifestyle

which I believe in and that's the lifestyle I advocate," said Ray. "If they (black gays and lesbians) make a decision to go in another direction, that's their decision. And frankly, I'm not going to move one inch from that, because that's what I believe."

Ray's statements were "untenable, outrageous and a vicious assault on lesbians and gay men—particularly black lesbians and gay men—who live in Washington DC," said Ivy Young, NGLTF Families Project director. Young likened Ray's comments to recent anti-gay statements made by Martin Luther King III, who subsequently apologized to the gay community after considerable pressure from local activists and widespread media attention.

"In his staunch and seemingly blind support of 'traditional values,' Mr. Ray has debased and invalidated the family life of thousands of DC residents. He suggests that if Black lesbians and gays live their lives openly they are somehow damaging the African-American community," said Young. "Our sexual orientation does not put us at odds with our community's quest for freedom."

Bush Signs Hate Crimes Law

WASHINGTON, DC—President George Bush, in the presence of several invited openly gay and lesbian activists, signed the Federal Hate Crimes Statistics Act at a public White House ceremony late last month. The historic event marked the first time legislation that includes sexual orientation has ever been signed into law by a president and the first time openly gay and lesbian leaders and activists have been invited to such a White House event.

The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF), which four years ago engineered a powerful hate crimes coalition and lobbied to include sexual orientation in the legislation, hailed the event as a major milestone in the butanol and grassroots lesbian and gay movement.

"The fact that President Bush invited gay and lesbian organizations and activists into his home to witness the signing of this important bill is a major advance for gay and lesbian political visibility and effectiveness," said Urvashi Vaid, NGLTF executive director.

About 150 extremely diverse people attended the signing, including liberal Democrats from Congress, conservative Republicans, gay rights activists and advocates for people of color, religious and other groups. The signing was held in the Old Executive Office Building, next to the White House.

The law mandates the U.S. Justice Department to collect statistics on crimes motivated by prejudice based on race, ethnicity, religion and sexual orientation. During conversations with White House staff prior to the signing, NGLTF representatives urged the Administration to adequately fund the data collection once the bill was signed.

Before signing the bill, Bush made a ten minute speech calling for a "society blind to prejudice, a society open to all." The President explained hate crimes covered by the bill, mentioning the crimes committed because of "sexual orientation," and added, "the faster we can find out about these hideous crimes, the faster we can track down the bigots who commit them."

Urvashi Vaid was originally on the

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Breakthrough Settlement in Landmark AIDS Discrimination Case

SAN FRANCISCO, CA—In the first case of its kind, a settlement has been reached which prohibits an insurance company from discriminating on the basis of sexual orientation. The Employment Law Center (ELC) and National Gay Rights Advocates (NGRA) announced in a joint press conference that the settlement was filed in San Francisco Superior Court on Wednesday, May 3.

The lawsuit charged Great Republic Insurance Company with attempting to avoid underwriting of policies for those presumed to be at risk for AIDS by denying coverage to unmarried men who work in "occupations that do not require physical exertion...such as florists, interior decorators and fashion designers." The suit was filed in May, 1986 by National Gay Rights Advocates and the ELC on behalf of David Hulbert and the members of NGRA.

Under the terms of the settlement, the company is prohibited from using a supplemental questionnaire targeted to single male applicants—and specifically prohibited from using sexual orientation in the determination of insurability. Additionally, the company cannot use marital status, "living arrangements," occupation, gender, medical history, beneficiary designation, zip code or identity of the insurance agent to establish or aid in establishing the sexual orientation of any applicant for insurance.

An interim ruling in August of 1986 held that California and San Francisco laws prohibit anti-gay insurance discrimination and set the

stage for a trial to determine if Great Republic had discriminated. NGRA and ELC maintained that a trial was unnecessary because the facts prove that Great Republic engaged in unlawful discrimination. In 1985, Great Republic sent a memo requiring agents to distribute a special questionnaire to unmarried male applicants who work in stereotypically gay occupations. The questions asked of these men were so broad that it was virtually impossible for them to obtain insurance.

The settlement which was filed in San Francisco Superior Court on May 2nd is particularly significant since it culminates the first legal action to test federal and state statutes prohibiting discrimination in three critical areas.

NGRA staff attorney Paul Di Donato underscored the importance of the settlement. "Through this settlement, we are expanding civil rights law. We've worked for years and have made solid progress in prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation in employment and housing. Insurance companies cannot be allowed to discriminate either."

JoAnne Frankfurt, ELC attorney who negotiated the settlement, stressed that "this settlement should send a loud and clear message to the insurance industry that discrimination against gay males will not be tolerated. All companies should be on notice that use of stereotypes is illegal and can result in significant financial liability to companies that engage in such practices.

Survey Finds Long-Lasting Couples

SEATTLE, WA—A national survey of 1,749 lesbian and gay couples found relationships averaging nearly six years in length, even though the average respondent was only 35 years old. More than 100 couples had passed their fifteenth anniversary. The statistics are the first to emerge from a final analysis of research begun in 1988 by Partners, a newsletter for gay and lesbian couples.

"We were overwhelmed by the enormous number of couples who were eager to have their relationships better understood," said Stevie Bryant, who edits and publishes the bimonthly newsletter with his partner of ten years, Demian.

"The longevity we found in these relationships will surprise even the gay community," Demian noted, "and it could help policy makers understand the significance of our often-ignored and trivialized families."

The survey noted longer relationships among men than women. Lesbian couples had been together an average of 4.9 years, while male couples averaged 6.9 years. Although male respondents averaged nearly two years older than lesbians, the difference does not fully account for the variation in relationship longevity.

A free summary of the survey results may be obtained by sending the publication a self-addressed, stamped envelope. A detailed analysis is being compiled for the May/June issue of Partners; copies of this issue may be ordered for \$3.95 by writing to Box 9685, Seattle, WA 98109.

High Tech Gays to Boycott AIDS Conference

SAN JOSE, CA—High Tech Gays (HTG), the nation's largest organization of gay and lesbian professionals in the high tech industries, voted last month to support the boycott of the Sixth International AIDS Conference being held in San Francisco in June.

The boycott will be effective unless the US government alters its immigration policies to allow gay men and lesbians and persons with AIDS or HIV infection to freely enter the US and attend the Conference. Current US law prohibits such persons' entry. HTG has asked its more than 700 members to write to their Congressional representatives to have the discriminatory policies changed.

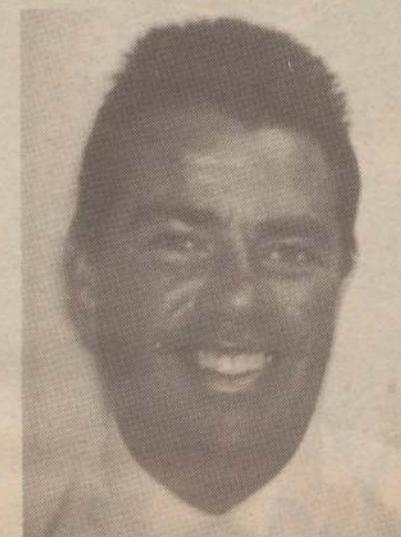
"The majority of HTG's members are scientists, engineers and other technical professionals who must have access to full and freely exchanged information. This Conference is violating this tenet of free information flow by denying entry to gay men and lesbians and people with AIDS and HIV and is, besides, morally reprehensible," according to Rick Rudy, President of HTG. "A Conference that excludes those who can bring the necessary information cannot accomplish its tasks and HTG members find that unacceptable."

HTG joins more than eighty-five national and international organizations who are boycotting the AIDS Conference.

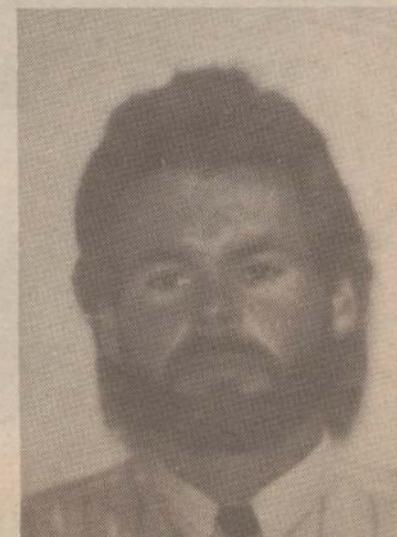
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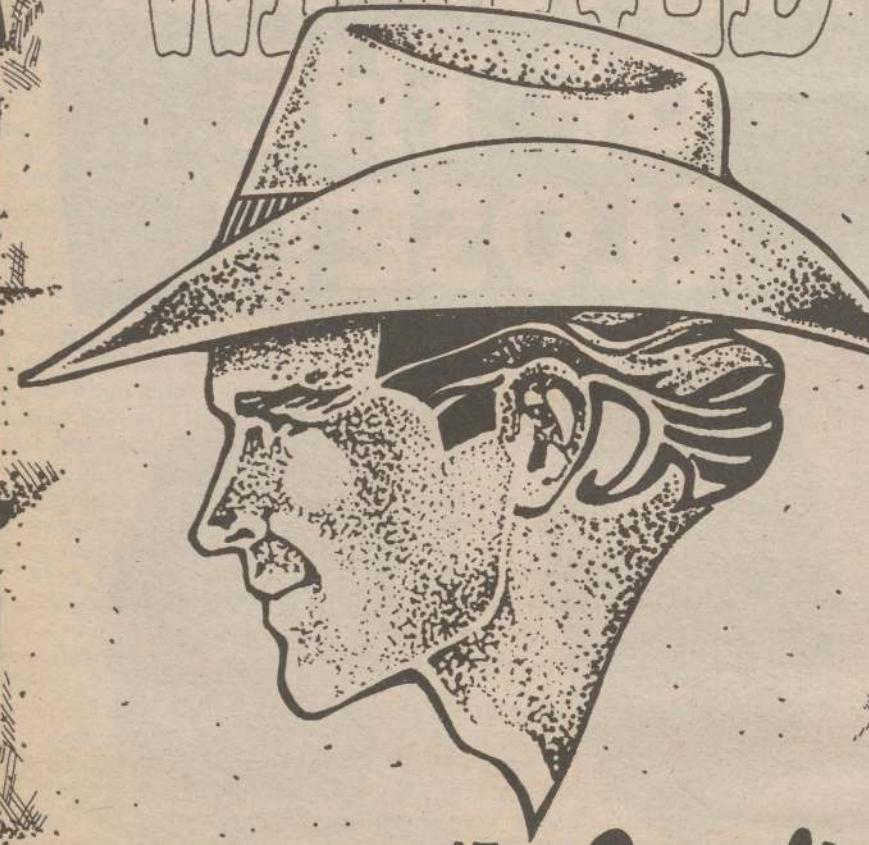
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THE SENATE'S AFFLICTION

The debate over the confidentiality of HIV test results continues to stymie the passage of Arizona's "Omnibus" AIDS bill. As with an earlier piece of AIDS-related legislation, the AIDS Education bill, the holdup is in the state senate. The education bill passed the state House of Representatives with the clear intent of mandating the dissemination of AIDS information in the public schools. When it reached the senate, however, that mandate was turned into an option. In fact, it was Sen. Jacque Steiner who offered the amendment. Steiner is a Republican who represents the central-Phoenix legislative district that many believe includes the highest percentage of the Valley's lesbian/gay citizens. She claimed her action was necessary—the bill didn't have a chance of passing the senate otherwise. She may have a point. But there was no point in capitulating so early. In fact, the amended bill added nothing to the state's educational picture—schools *already* have the option to include AIDS information in their curricula. When it comes time to vote this fall, Sen. Steiner's constituents might remember that she opted to knock the stuffing out of this bill, thus making it superfluous, rather than champion it in its original form. (Coincidentally, one of her potential challengers in the 1990 legislative election has a strong pro-gay-rights record.)

Meanwhile, the House has rejected the useless Senate version of the AIDS education bill. At press time, a conference committee (that is, a committee made up of members of both the House and the Senate) was being appointed to try to iron out differences. However, due to the lateness of the session, there may be no resolution, and this bill may join the Legislature's long list of unfinished business.

Predictably, the rights-sensitive and compassionate Omnibus AIDS bill has hit a hairier snag in the conservative senate. Several of the more notorious reactionaries, such as Jerry Gillespie and Wayne Stump, have objected to the bill's strong protection of test confidentiality. Additionally, the bill would prohibit courts from ordering the release of test results and prohibit testing without the consent of the person to be tested, except in extreme emergencies. (However, it allows doctors to inform a patient's spouse, sex partner, or intravenous drug-using partner that the patient has tested positive for HIV.)

Sen. Stump, arguably the most reactionary member of the Senate, has objected to the privacy protections for a typically Stumpian reason: he simply doesn't believe the current dogma that says that AIDS is a difficult disease to transmit.

Sen. Tom Patterson, a physician who represents District 26's East Phoenix constituency, complains about the restrictions the bill puts on emergency medical personnel who may come into contact with the bodily fluids of infected individuals. "If you have some information (regarding a person's HIV status) and you, in good faith, pass that information on to someone you believe is putting himself at risk, you [would be] committing a Class 3 misdemeanor (under the provisions of the bill)," Patterson says.

By now, however, emergency medical personnel should be well-versed in the means of preventing blood-to-blood contact with patients. What Patterson's "good faith" means is that emergency-room doctors, for example, should get ample warning that a patient might be carrying HIV. Then, the emergency-room doctor will be making an informed decision: whether or not to treat the patient. The AIDS bill would give such doctors less warning. Patterson, the physician, doesn't like that idea.

ROB SPEIR

I got to know Rob Speir under possibly the worst conditions, which made me appreciate the experience all the more.

Rob, along with his longtime partner, Don Pintacura, founded and published *The Western Express* newspaper, the Valley's largest and arguably most widely read gay publication. Rob passed away on April 29.

I had exchanged greetings with Rob and Don on a few occasions prior to really getting to know them. One early extended conversation with Rob, carried on mostly via telephone answering machines, took place nearly two years ago, when my services as a political columnist were being offered both to *The Western Express* and *Phoenix Resource*—offered, that is, by a third party without much consent from me. Still, I exchanged phone calls with both newspapers' publishers, eventually hooking up with *Phoenix Resource*.

A year later, I used my column to criticize the other paper's treatment of the 1989 Phoenix Pride celebration, believing that Rob and Don had deliberately tried to underplay the associated events. They opted to reply in print, writing that I had not checked my facts. It was just the kind of intra-community pissing match that I have always deplored, even though I started this one (at least the public version).

Soon after the volleys were fired, I had the opportunity to meet Rob Speir. I was impressed with his geniality, especially since he was meeting the man who had slandered him in print. He went further—he was even friendly. He didn't seem to care that much. He was an adult. I developed a large amount of affection for him. Rob and Don have done so much in this community over the years that it's difficult to imagine the city without that team. My most profound sympathy goes out to Don Pintacura. He and the rest of the lesbian/gay community of Arizona have lost an exceptional human being.

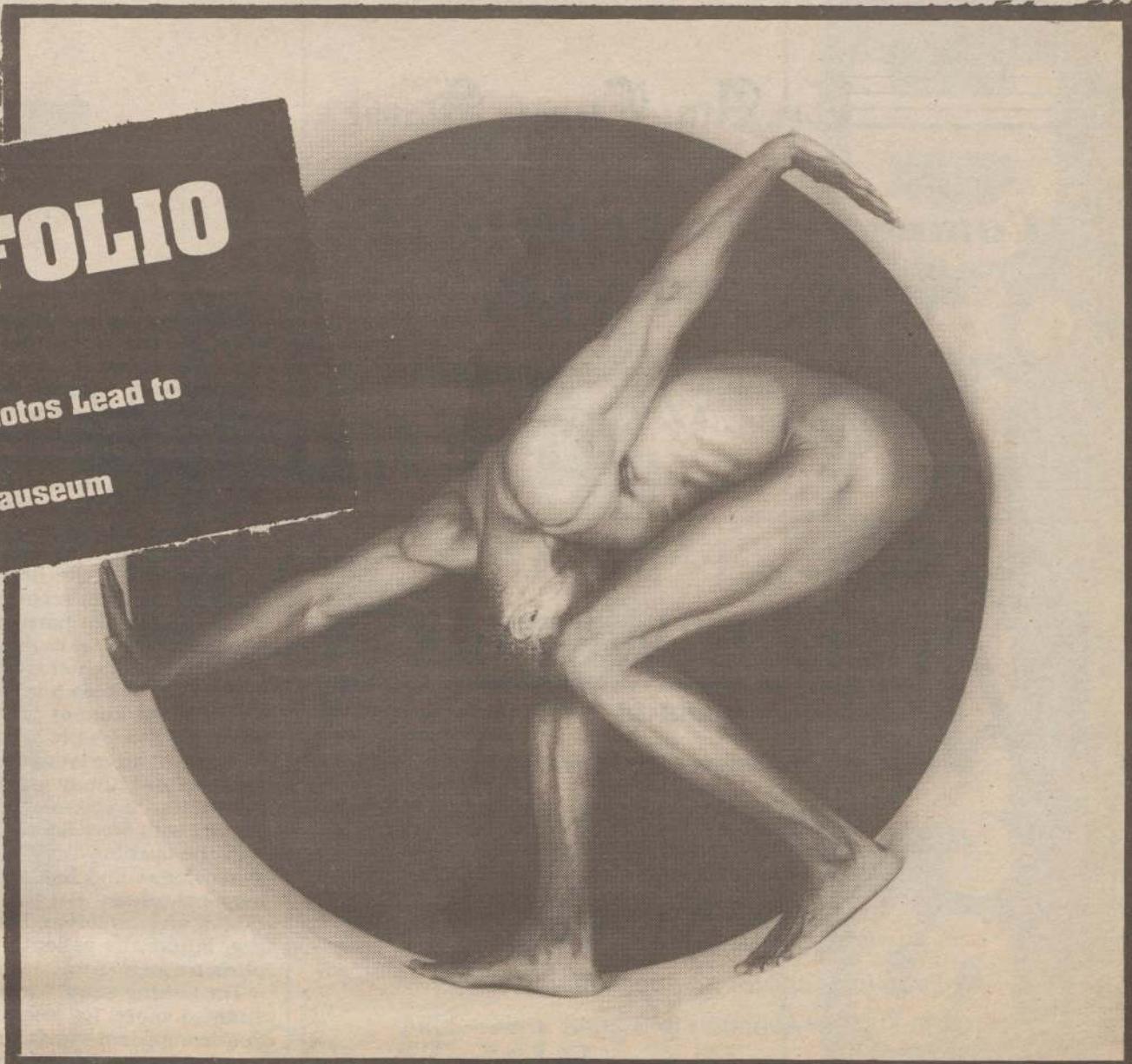
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X X X



The Contemporary Arts Center in Cincinnati and Director Dennis Barrie pleaded not guilty on April 16 to Hamilton County, Ohio, Grand Jury indictments of pandering obscenity and illegal use of a minor in nudity oriented material. The pre-trial hearing was held later that month; the charges stem from a photographic retrospective. In question are seven photographs from a nationally touring show, *The Perfect Moment*. The artist: Robert Mapplethorpe, America's best-known gay photographer.

The allegedly obscene material comes from the "X Portfolio," a dozen homoerotic sexual pictures. The photographs depict fisting, inserting a finger into a penis, inserting a cylinder into a rectum, a self-portrait of the artist with a whip handle in his rectum, and one man urinating on another. The photographs showing alleged illegal use of a minor are candid portraits of a partially dressed young child.

These photographs are only a small part of the 175 black-and-white and color photographs that document all phases of Mapplethorpe's art—portraits, fashion, flowers, nudes, homoerotic and explicit homosexual/sadomasochistic sex.

The indictments were the latest hold in a four-way political wrestling match between the Arts Center, the Citizens for Community Values—an antipornography group—and the Cincinnati and Hamilton County prosecutors offices. After a letter-writing campaign by the Citizens for Community Values and rumors that the police would raid the show, the Arts Center filed suit with the city and county to determine by jury if the photographs were obscene. The suit was dismissed; but on April 7, City police closed the museum to the public and videotaped the show, presumably as evidence of obscenity. However, no photographs were confiscated. An injunction by US District Judge Carl Rubin prevents the city or county from seizing photographs or harassing museum patrons.

This controversy unfolds in a city that with pride claims to be free of adult book stores, peep shows, and X-rated video rentals. Says a local art patron, "If you knew Cincinnati like I know Cincinnati, this is a 'clean' city."

"This show has touched on every nerve that's conceivable," says Amy Banister, Director of Communications at the Arts Center. Those nerves include racism, pornography, the need to control society, fear of sexuality, censorship of the arts, and a "great deal of homophobia, that can't be disputed," says Banister.

This is not the first time Mapplethorpe's photographs have stirred controversy. Last summer, the show's "X Portfolio" sparked debate in Congress over federal funding of art exhibitions. Senator Jesse Helms and Congressman Richard Armey led the fight to demand a standard of "decency" for governmental-sponsored art programs, especially programs funded through the National Endowment for the Arts.

At that time, Washington's Corcoran Gallery of Art cancelled the show rather than be caught in the crossfire between Congress and the National Endowment for the Arts. Instead, a privately-funded gallery, the Washington Project for the Arts, courageously mounted the show and drew record attendance.

Controversy has also been good for business in Cincinnati. Each day between 2,000 and 3,000 visitors—twice the usual number—pay to see the show. In fact, every museum that has hosted the Mapplethorpe show, including Chicago's Museum of Contemporary Arts, has also attracted record crowds.

Many people do double takes when they see the sex pictures. "At first it was shocking," said a design student who saw the show in Chicago. "Then you see the beauty of the forms. These photographs made me shift back and forth between subject matter and composition."

To be legally obscene, the US Supreme Court has ruled a work must fail three tests: does the work lack artistic, literary, political or scientific merit; does it offend contemporary community standards, and does it appeal to prurient interests.

If not pornography, then what did the artist intend? Mapplethorpe, who died of complications of AIDS last March, seldom explained his art. But, a widely reported story, retold in the Whitney catalogue, goes like this: "I would see a young kid walking down 42nd Street and then go into a magazine storefront, which were places I didn't know anything about. I became obsessed with going into them and seeing what was inside these magazines. They were all sealed, which made them even sexier somehow, because you couldn't get at them. A kid gets a certain kind of reaction, which of course once you've been exposed to everything you don't get. I got that feeling in my stomach, it's not directly a sexual one, it's somehow more potent than that. I thought if I could somehow bring that element into art, if I could somehow retain that feeling, I would be doing something that was uniquely my own."

Undeniably the content of some of Mapplethorpe's photographs make people uncomfortable. According to Philip Brookman, curator and director at the Washington Project for the Arts, "Mapplethorpe's art confronts people in the mainstream with issues that they're afraid of—black men and homosexuality.

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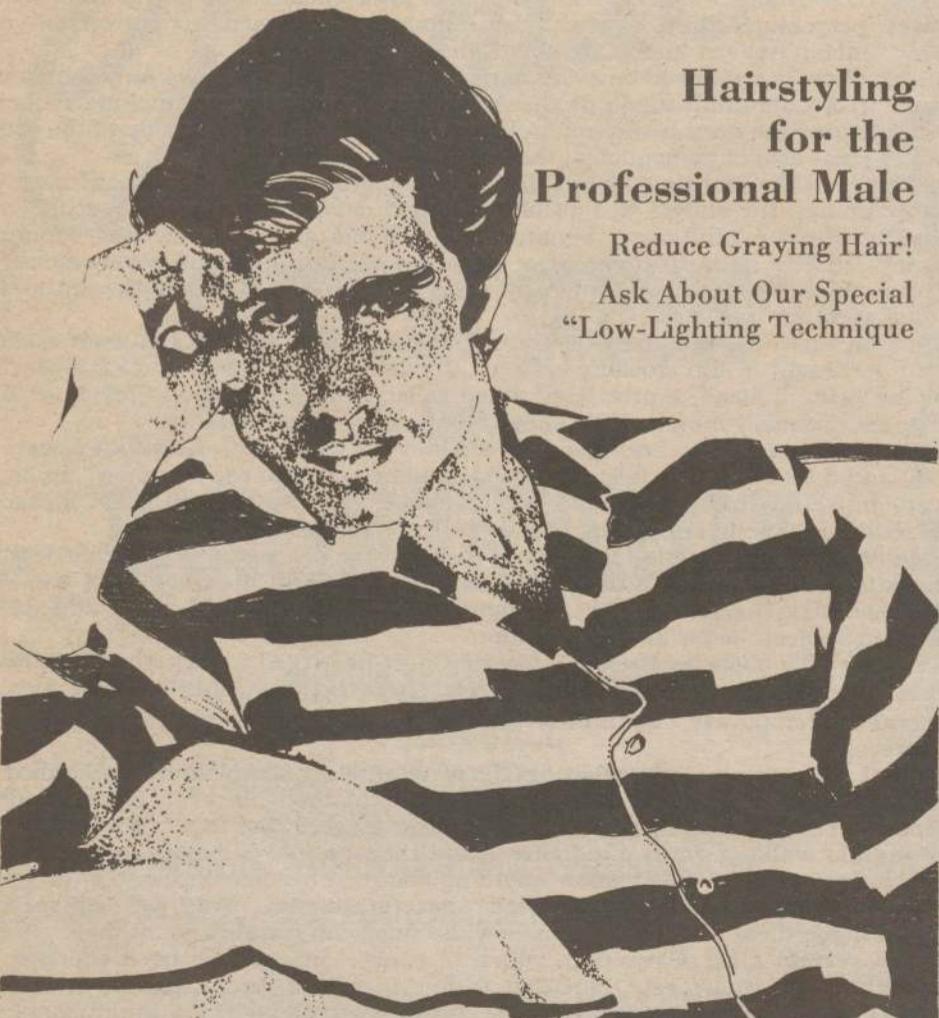
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BOOK REVIEW

Meg Umans

Pleasures

Robbi Sommers. Tallahassee, FL. Naiad Press, 1989. 182 pages paperbound. \$8.95.

There's still relatively little published erotica written for lesbians, so each new book is eagerly examined by prospective readers—who hope it will satisfy both their erotic taste and their philosophic preference. *Pleasures*, like other lesbian erotica titles, will suit some readers, bore some and offend some.

Twelve short stories, from six to thirty pages long, and named for the main character, describe lesbian sexual activity. The target here is to create stimulation, not literature, and style and grammar are frequently sacrificed to immediate effect: the writing isn't polished, but it gets the job done.

The stories excite first, for their explicit and implicit sexual content. With varying amounts of scene-setting, sooner or later the major character is dreaming of, or watching, or participating in, sex with her imagination, herself, her partner, another woman, external assistance or some combination. There's enough story to give the sex content, and enough emotion to give it meaning, and enough detail and variety to keep it interesting.

A different kind of excitement comes from another common element: not only do all the stories provide lots of sex, they also provide contexts in which sex is a violation of an existing standard. This may increase the sexual tension for some readers, and it may decrease it for others by introducing ethical objections. It's fiction, and if you're able to suspend any of your own principles that may be in conflict with story lines, it's fine.

In the opening story, "Lydia," Lydia is a receptionist who presents herself as a gynecologist and has sex with a new patient as a way of checking her sexual responsiveness. Her patient enjoys the sex, and we enjoy the description—Lydia is slow and careful and thorough and gentle. A natural climax to this story could evolve from the patient's climax, although Lydia's naughtiness may enhance the pleasure for some.

The closing story, "Jesse," describes Jesse's night on the job as desk clerk at a summer motel for lesbians. It's early in the season, and Jesse is bored. She decides, against regulations, to rent out the room whose two-way mirror displays into the back office and entertain herself as a participant/observer of the sexual activity of the motel guests. Hot sex, with surprising variations.

Each story has good sex, adequate plot, a "forbidden" element and abundant description. *Pleasures* can add to your collection of books that fall open at the good spots.

Pleasures is available from Naiad Press and at Humanspace Books in Phoenix.



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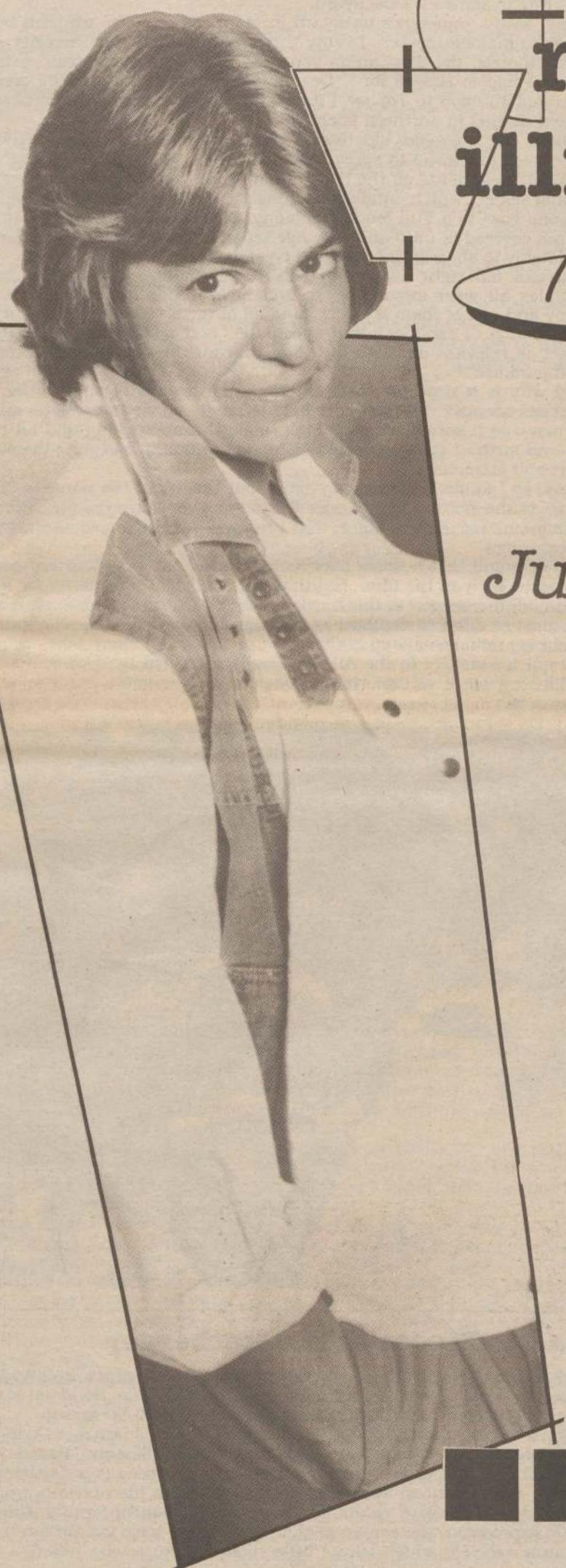
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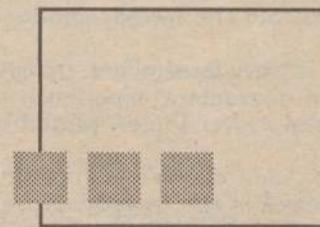
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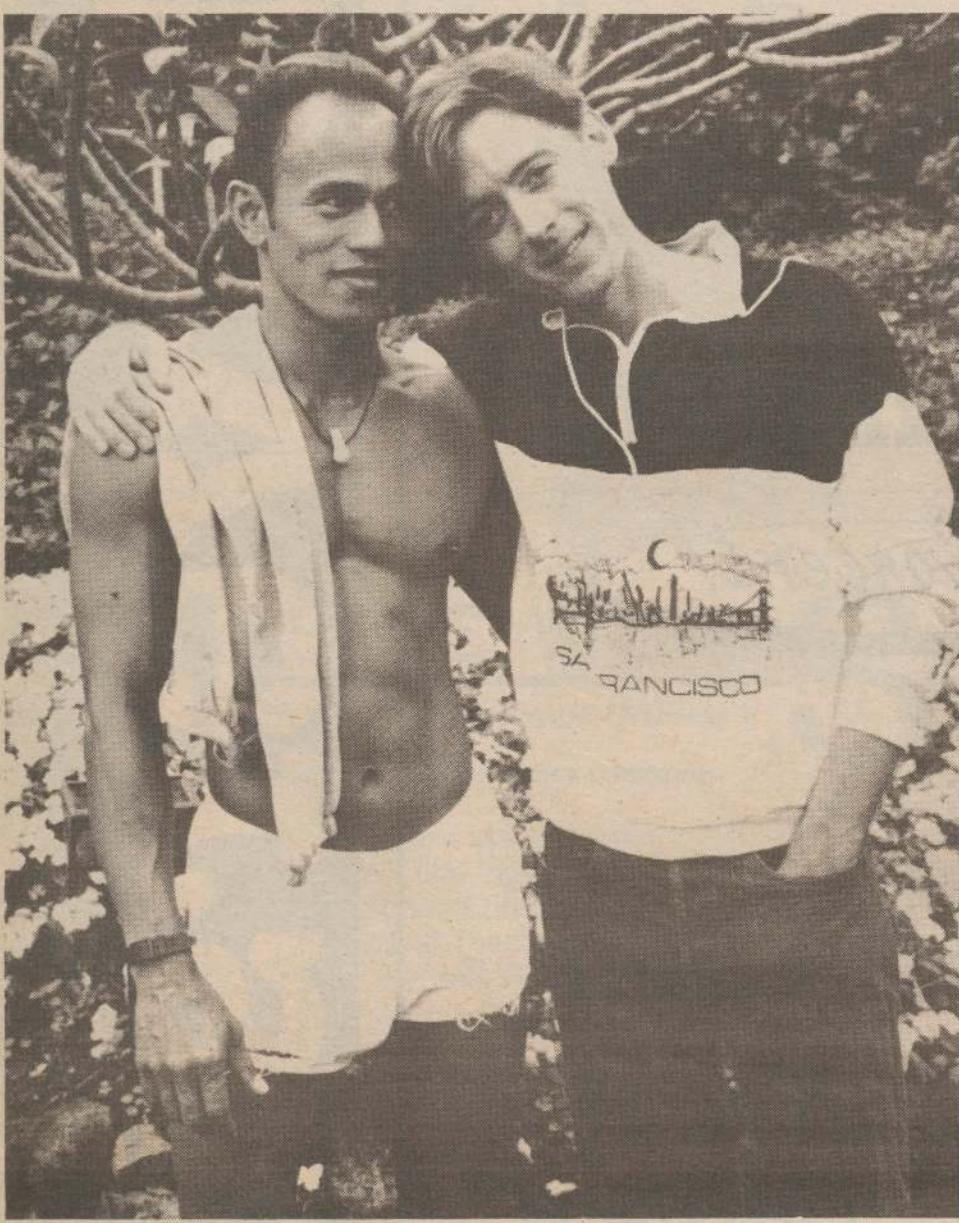
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CLUB SCENE
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Review...

Men In Love**MEN IN LOVE; OBJECT OF PASSION?**

Buffy St. Germaine

During the first few minutes of *Men in Love* I thought to myself, "Uh-oh, am I going to have a hard time getting into this?". After the next few minutes I comfortably sank into three-time Emmy winner Scott Catamas' film about dealing with it.

The film is shot on video tape, which gives it an almost documentary feel. Early scenes in the movie are quite grippingly real, and will erase any preconceived notions that this movie is soft core porn.

Quite the opposite. The love scenes are frequent enough to keep it interesting, but lovingly shot by director Marc Huestis (*Chuck Solomon: Coming of Age*). Huestis' directing is femmy at times and dips into the melodramatic, but hey, AIDS is tough subject matter.

The film is not flawless by any stretch; but at very least offers a positive story dealing with the strong emotions a series of characters experience revolving around the recent AIDS-related death of Steven's lover Victor, played briefly by Catamas.

Steven is wonderfully played by Doug Self. Self doesn't just carry the film because he has the most lines: He is the viewer of the tragedy as well as the object of it. Self carries the burden of emotion realistically; he is the only professional actor in the picture. The other performances are by non-professional actors; their collective on-camera appearances demonstrate the rest of the world's views on love, death, AIDS, and suffering.

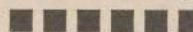
New Age metaphysics play all too great a part in the movie as a vehicle of dealing with these subjects. Crystals, deep caves in the earth, Vision Quests, and some goofy dialogue need to be tolerated in order to enjoy the otherwise healthy messages. Friendship, understanding, and love shine through the hazy clouds at a Dude Ranch for Space Cadets in Hawaii. Wealthy Robert (Emerald Starr) is too busy working his Way Station for the AIDS Weary to deal with his own fears. There's not much plot to give away, but Steven's more down-to-earth approach helps Robert. Robert's more mystic approach helps Steven. Are you getting the drift? We help each other in our own ways.

A few other characters demonstrate a few other themes. Jonathan and Rocco's relationship shows us the most ideal way one can be in love with someone who is HIV positive. A few other boys sit around and look good, which helps ease the strain of dealing with video tape, when you'd rather be watching film.

It would be all too easy to rip this production apart. It is painfully real. Joe Capetta, a supporting character who is suffering from AIDS in the picture, voices the familiar "Only someone afflicted with AIDS can really relate to another AIDS sufferer." The production notes point out that Capetta died of complications of AIDS prior to the project's completion.

I'd recommend seeing *Men in Love* with an open mind; look for the messages here and ignore the self-conscious cinematography.

FILM CLIPS

**In Love With Whom?**

Lou Clemente

There's a line from an old Joan Crawford film that I've been wanting to work into a film or book review for some time now. "Men die all the time," Joan spat at Peter Lorre in *Strange Cargo*, "but pigs live on and on. You'd think their smell would kill them..."

The folks at Crystal Clear Communications have produced a gay-male disaster epic that stinks to hog heaven. We're talking home movie time here. We're talking unknown, untalented, mostly unattractive actors cranking out uninspired, self-conscious, stilted performances in a trite little film made on a shoestring in someone's backyard.

Okay, so it's someone's backyard in Maui. Where else would a bunch of gay men go to make a movie? Twenty-three minutes into this travelogue for a new-age bathhouse, my companion ventured that "this movie was certainly worth making a trip to Hawaii for." Despite some interesting opening credits and an occasional allusion to *Topper*, I found no excuse for these film makers to visit a low-rent district in northern Michigan.

In brief, the story goes like this: Steven's lover dies from complications of AIDS. Steven goes to Hawaii to spread Victor's ashes. Steven falls in love with a man whose wig is slipping off the back of his head. Rocco and Jonathan perform an unusual sex act which entails smashing a live kitten beneath their naked bodies. Everyone goes to a Full Moon ceremony. Steven spends the night in a cave and emerges covered in mud and New Age sensibilities. He returns to San Francisco, presumably to shop for incense and crystals.

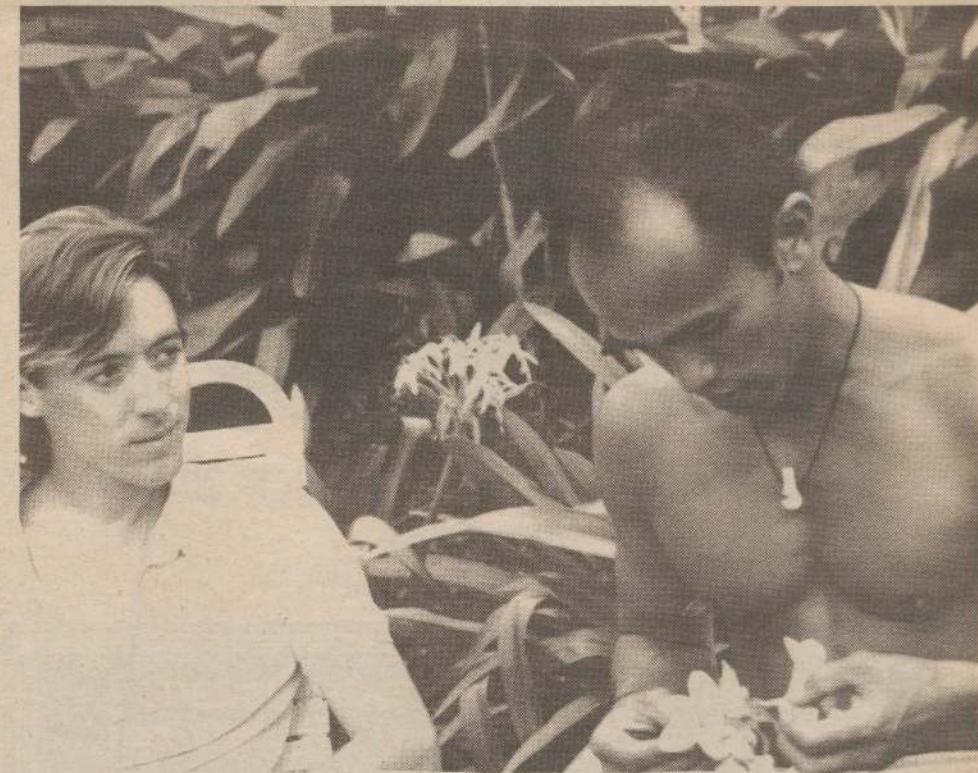
You can tell right away that this is gay-male movie fodder, because the principles all wear sweater-vests and have wedge haircuts. One of them is queeny and one of them is snooty and all of them want to be Miriam Hopkins in *Becky Sharp*. I can't help but speculate: is it politically correct to address a subject as relevant as AIDS in a film that includes lines like "Welcome to our island paradise"?

And why is it that gay male cinema must always be marred by gratuitous, turgid sex scenes? The soft core here left me confused as well as angry: Is this how new-age homos have sex? Male/male thumb-sucking and all that rocking back and forth...I guess good old-fashioned humping has gone the way of frozen yogurt and jazercise.

Okay, so I found something to like about this film: His name is Carlo Incerto, and he is the hottest man under thirty I've ever laid eyes on. (Keep in mind, before racing for the box office, that I rarely leave the house and never, ever rent pornography.)

And I'll admit that it was a hoot seeing my old pal Steve Warren playing himself in a cameo early in the film. But that doesn't begin to make up for the shameful casting (all the women in this movie are fat or retarded; why must females in gay male films so often be depicted as fag hags?) or all the Louise Hay commercials in this cheesy remake of *Orgy at Crooked Creek*.

I'm not insensitive to the AIDS issue; I'm terrified by it. Here's another scary thought: What if all the rich, ugly people in America made movies starring themselves?

**Road to Mecca at the Herberger**

The Arizona Theatre Company will present Atol Fugard's uplifting celebration of the triumph of spirit and personal freedom, *The Road to Mecca*, at the Herberger Theater Center as the final show of its 1989-90 season.

Fugard works, such as ATC's productions of *Sizwe Banzi is Dead* and *Master Harold and the Boys*, have been highly received in Phoenix. Based on an actual South African folk artist, Fugard's *The Road to Mecca* is a departure from the focus on South African apartheid policies found in his previous works. In *The Road to Mecca*, Fugard examines the issues of nonconformity, the freedom of artistic expression, the contempt that the English have for Afrikanners and rigid Afrikanner society which leaves little room for those who function outside the norm.

The Road to Mecca will play May 18th through June 2nd at the Herberger Theater Center, 222 East Monroe in Phoenix. The production is being produced with special assistance from the Stonewall Foundation of Tucson.

Please Throw That Child in the Fountain

Buffy St. Germaine

The Scottsdale Culinary Festival of clumsy people, partially ambulatory geriatric mouth-breathers, the blind, the near-blind, and the might-as-well-be blind, the whiners, and a few slivers of wedding cake for a dollar was held again early this month at the Scottsdale Mall. You'd think somebody was giving something away - rather than charging Scottsdale prices - given the number of people that showed up.

The mall was crowded beyond circulating capacity. The number and variety of people were much more interesting than the food; it's just too bad there were so damn many of them.

Besides the uncoordinated and the obese, the indeterminate also stopped by for a stroll around the plaza. Never sure which direction should compass their very next step, they are only sure that the most previous step was incorrect, adding to the dilemma and natural excitement which is walking in public.

The Reed Family's jazz performance on the main stage was actually a calm voice in a sea of whining, squealing, and shouting. Even as the tempo charged up and bounced to that pleasant, head-shaking euphoria that good jazz can be, it still was lost to the sound of all people, from all walks of life, giving orders in loud voices to underlings, children, animals, and anybody else in the way.

We saw quite a bit of this, as we had a wonderful table, near the restaurants, in the shade right where that stupid semicircle thing is raised in the sidewalk for no reason. I think of this place as the Gay Pointe, because most of the family stopped by to chat with someone or another at our table. The volume was just right for listening; the view was just right for cruising.

Which leads me to a final question: Why do hairy, ethnic types become moved to whistle when they hear music? Why do the songs they whistle never match the songs being played? It's almost as if they are not paying attention to the artists performing; as if they just happened to be out whistling on a Sunday afternoon and this Festival thing got in the way.

THE AMAZON TRAIL

■ ■ ■
Lee Lynch

Butch Buddies

When I was a little kid, I thought friends were forever. I mean, I thought to call someone your friend you had to be best friends. And best friends for me provided intense, close relationships that were just short of sexual. I was confused for years by the best friend/lover/forever syndrome.

In grammar school, Dotty was my best friend. She was a couple of years younger than I, an enormous difference then, but we were completely attuned to each other. I think it was our common tomboyishness. No, that's not true. I think it was because we were both gay children.

We loved to run and dig in the mud and leap into leaf piles. She wasn't into dresses or little boys or keeping clean. She admired my toy trains and I admired her strong active roly-poly little body. We talked. I told her my deep feelings as I teetered on the brink of adolescence. Probably what I said was beyond her, but she'd strain to share back, and I felt really bonded to her, to the point of getting all warm and misty-eyed when I thought of her.

She moved away. Out to Long Island. I could reach her home by bus, but I could no longer reach Dotty. She lived in a house now, not an apartment. The house was in an upper middle class area. And Dotty was different. I was a guest suddenly; the one time I visited she showed off her hostess skills. I couldn't understand what had changed her so quickly. She didn't even look much like the roly-poly little girl I'd horsed around with for so many years. She'd begun to take on young lady mannerism.

Was her gayness being squelched before she could even become sexual? Were her new friends rubbing off on her now that she was away from my infant-butch influence? What I suspect is that she was simply growing into femmehood. Learning the skills which would one day seduce rather than appall other women.

I was in my mid-teens when another best friend became my first lover. Was this inevitable, a typical dyke pattern? The friendship certainly made no sense otherwise.

She frightened me at first. Suzy was bigger than life to my shy self. I was strongly attracted to her rebellious, devil-may-care attitudes, but I was scared to play. I wanted to be as self-assured and exciting as I found her to be, but I didn't know how.

Suzy charmed grown-ups. She'd stop in to pick me up on the way to school and stay for breakfast while I struggled through my morning routines, nauseous with anxiety, quaking with fear of the uncharted life I had to navigate. I'd hear her laughter out in the kitchen, her easiness with adults, and I'd get even sicker. I was convinced I'd never be as adequate in the world as she was. My family, I thought, laughed at and worried over the awkward boyish person that I was. Suzy, at eleven years of age, long before we became lovers, seduced the adults with her social skills.

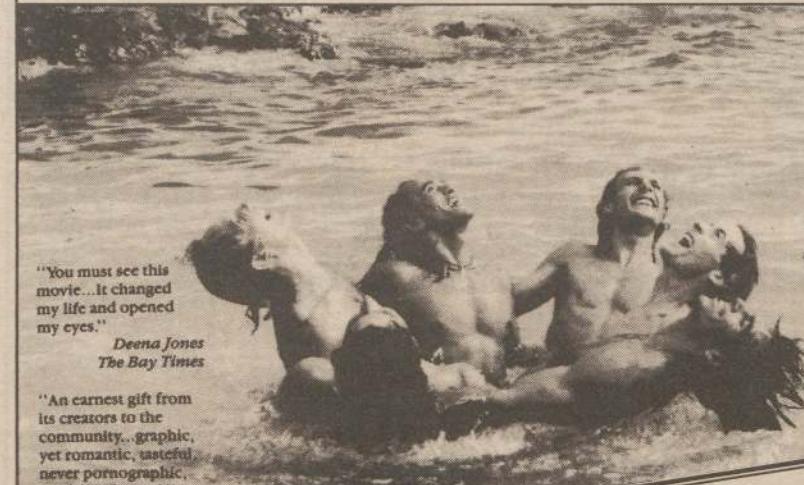
It was femmehood again. Scared me as badly as Dotty had, all those charming womanly ways that get a girl through life. I was devoid of them, totally at a loss about how to live life in a world that wouldn't teach butch girls how to cope. My best friends were always these femmes who know how to do it.

Of course, getting into the habit of seducing/being seduced by my best friend became confusing when I was already lovers with the person who had once been my best friend.

Is this a lesbian custom? We know very, very little about gay social systems. They seem indefinable, but that's only because we haven't talked much about them, recorded them. I think that friendship, non-sexual bonding, is a key. How about it, do you femmes choose butch best friends? And when you do - what happens? I've had to revamp my whole friendship system to get out of this maddening, self-defeating cycle. I'm learning the butch-buddy system.

-cont. next page

MEN in LOVE



"You must see this movie... It changed my life and opened my eyes." Deena Jones, *The Bay Times*

"An earnest gift from its creators to the community... graphic, yet romantic, tasteful, never pornographic, yet fully physical." John S. Karp, *Bay Area Reporter*

"Steven is played by Doug Self... and he's really wonderful in the role. Fair-skinned, thin and frail looking... such a good actor that every emotion he feels sizzles on his freckled face and in his sad eyes." Peter Stack, *San Francisco Chronicle*

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Amazon Trail
—cont. from prev. page

I know, I know. Half of you don't believe in femme/butch and some of you think it's all about who's on top. I've just discovered it's about friendship as much as sex.

Mean Norma Jean was my first butch buddy. She came out in a time when nobody questioned femme/butch. Then, as now, there need to be lines drawn in this life. It ain't natural for us all to be thrown together hodge-podge without a clue about how to behave. I can cry on Norma's shoulder, I can go walking in the park with her, I can make her soup when she's sick and nobody gets funny about it.

Another friend, Becky the Butch, is exactly my age. We compare relationship notes, work on healing our bruised gay psyches, reminisce about our exploits in the pre-gay lib dark ages, and feel some kind of misty-eyed bonding that is not at all confusing.

Recently Another Lee announced that she and the Texas Femme are getting married. I was totally thrilled when Another Lee asked me to be her Best Person. The Texas Femme will have a retinue of femme women and men to accompany her down the aisle. Choosing one's wedding party may be one of the best who's-who tests ever devised. Who would you ask to be your Best Person(s). Does that tell you anything about yourself?

Okay, okay, so both of you want bridesmaids. I don't know what that one means. I'm exploring, not making iron-clad rules. I'm still learning how to survive in this straight-centered world. I don't want any more relationships broken because my partner or I end up in bed with a best friend. I question whether it ever actually is friendship when I pal around with a femme. Where do the misty-eyed feelings end and the romantic ones begin?

It feels so good to confine my amorous impulses to Lover and not have them run all over the universe. I'm literally tired of that foolishness. I wouldn't expect an electrical wire to power a lamp unless it were firmly connected. Why did I try all those years to keep relationships lit when my current arced all over the place, like a power line in a hurricane?

I was a little kid for a long time, as far as friendships were concerned. Now I don't kid myself about what I'm really after, and I don't demand of a friend the same intensity I would of a lover. I get a lot more in terms of support, understanding and longevity this way. We stay friends even when they move to Long Island. ▽

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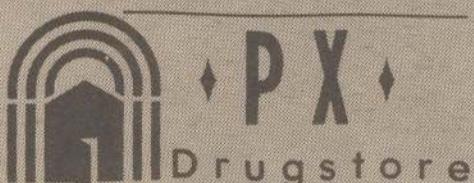
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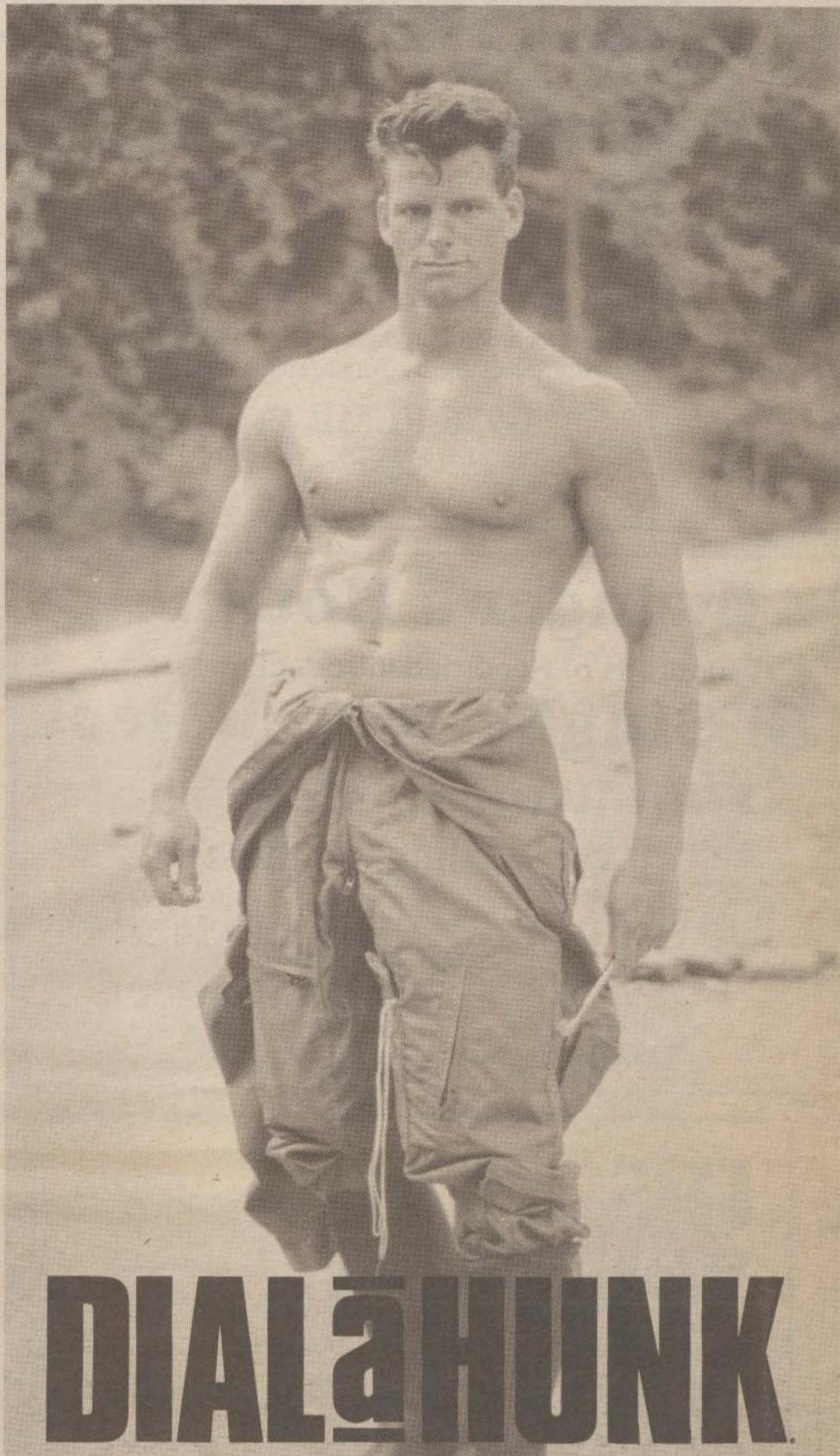
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Arizona Committee
for Progress

Community Alert!

Arizona is in danger of losing all of its federal AIDS case-management funding. Arizona AIDS organizations desperately need this money to continue providing case management for AIDS patients. Arizona PWAs urgently need you to clip these messages and send them immediately to our U.S. Senators, urging them to (1) help Arizona retain these funds and (2) support the Kennedy AIDS bill in the U.S. Senate. You may also call the Senators' local offices at: (602) 379-6756 (DeConcini) and (602) 835-8994 (McCain).

MEMO TO:

Sen. Dennis DeConcini, 323 W. Roosevelt, Suite C100, Phoenix, AZ 85003

If Arizona loses its federal Human Resource Services Administration (HRSA) funding, Arizona AIDS organizations will not be able to continue providing vital case management for hundreds of Arizonans. I urge you to work to ensure that these funds are not cut off or decreased, as is currently planned.

I also strongly urge you to support and become a co-sponsor of the Care Act of 1990 (S.2240), Sen. Kennedy's emergency AIDS funding bill.

Please inform me of your actions in these matters and the outcome. Thank you.

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MEMO TO:

Sen. John McCain, 151 N. Centennial Way, Suite 1000, Mesa, AZ 85201

If Arizona loses federal Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) funding, the Arizona AIDS Project will not be able to continue its vital case-management services for nearly 500 Arizonans. I urge you to work to ensure that these funds are not cut off, as is currently planned.

I also strongly urge you to support and become a co-sponsor of the Care Act of 1990 (S.2240), Sen. Kennedy's emergency AIDS funding bill.

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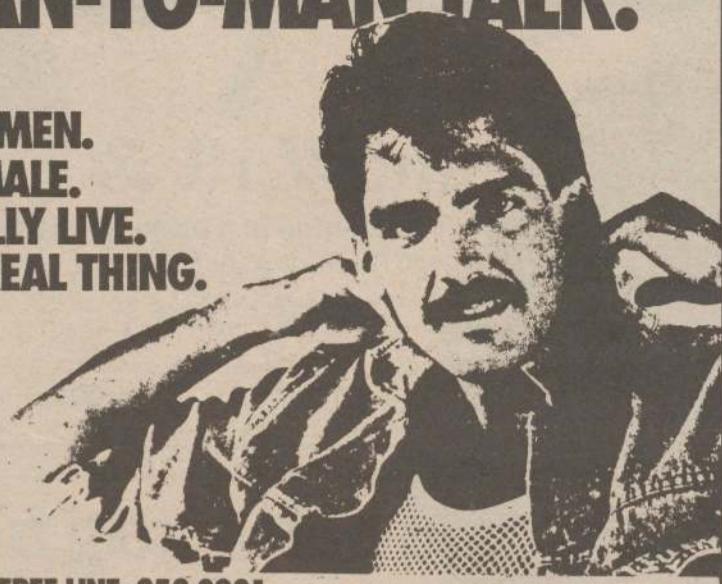
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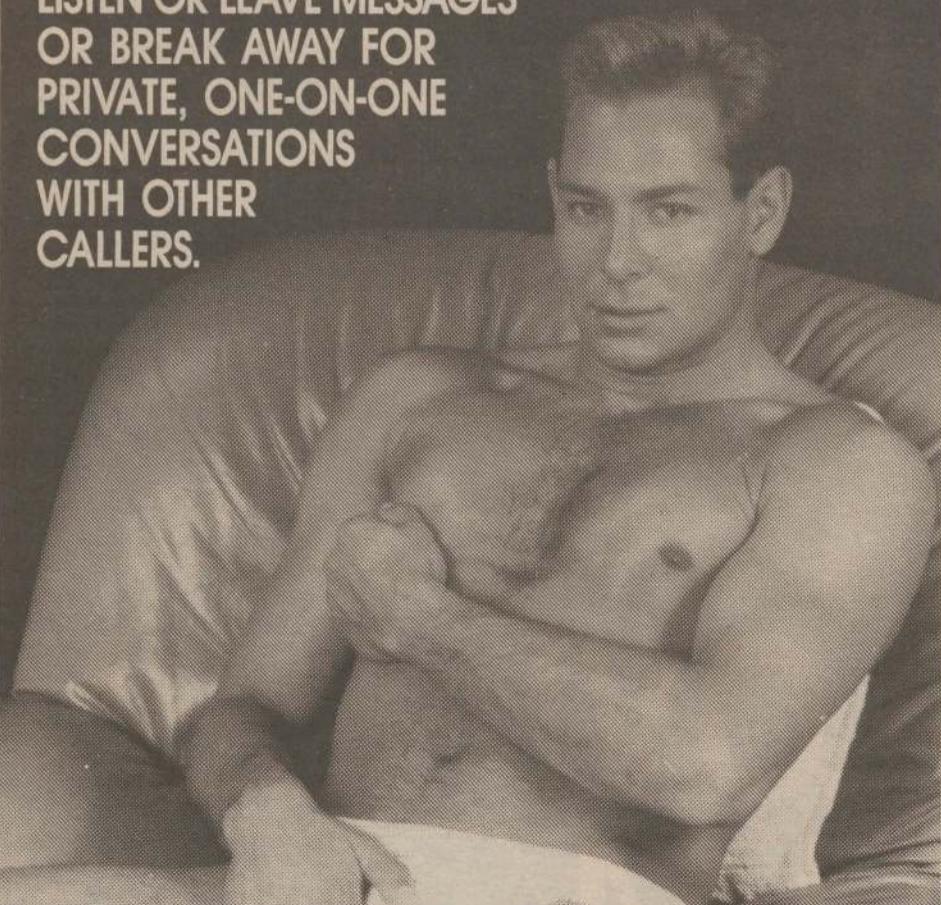
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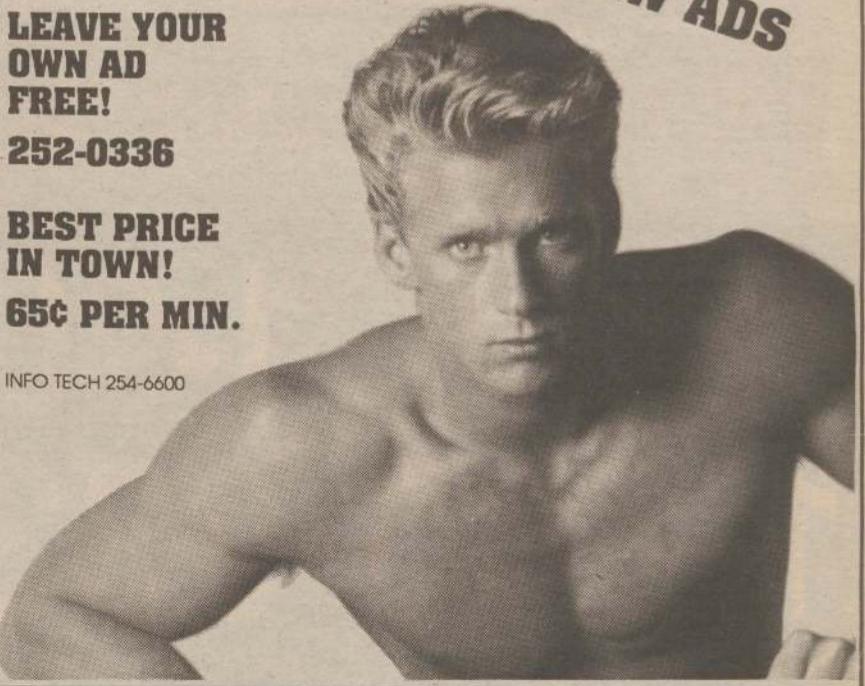
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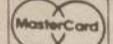
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If you'd like to respond to a Lovelines ad, write the box number on the outside of your envelope and address the envelope to Phoenix Resource.

Goodlooking GWM, 5'9", 155#, new age, brown/brown, moustache. Swimmers build. Looking for a special man. I enjoy movies, working out, dancing, running, climbing Squaw Peak, travel, dinner out. Versatile; always open for new adventures. Photo and phone get fast response. BOX 303.

I'm a 36 year old male—smooth, trim, moustache, brown/brown, 5'9", 130#. Seeking a sincere romantic male who enjoys camping, fishing and hunting. I want a 50/50 relationship and am willing to work at it with a masculine male. Spring is time for new beginnings, let's have ours. Photo appreciated. BOX 731.

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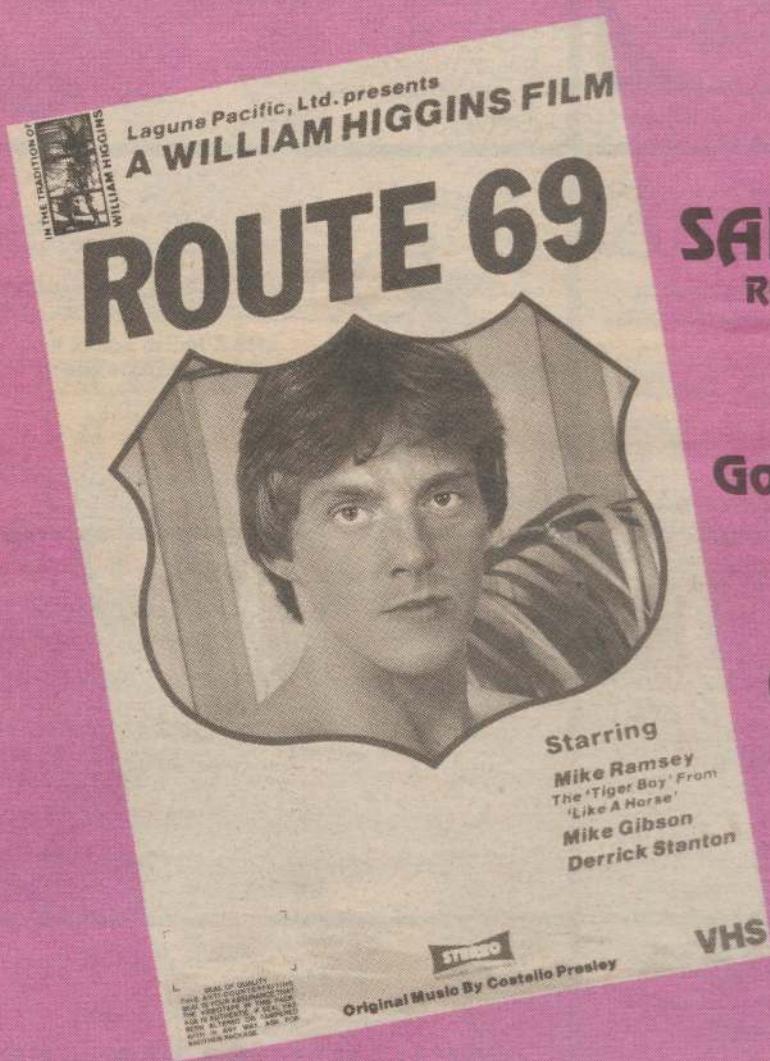
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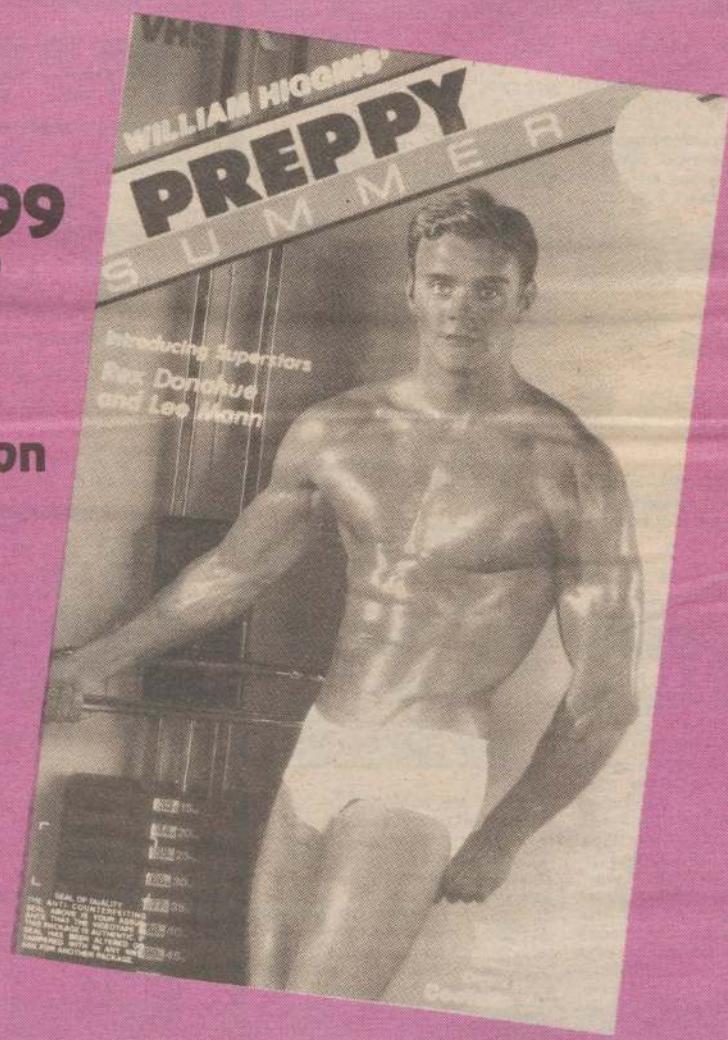
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