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'On Human Nature'  
and Homosexuality

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## Dispatch

aging patrons to touch, caress or fondle each other, from providing an environment conducive to such actions, from featuring entertainment that simulates or in any way depicts sex or includes entertainers "attired in such a way . . . as to violate a municipal ordinance" (i.e., if public cross-dressing is illegal, it follows that female impersonation on stage is illegal), from showing or displaying still or motion pictures depicting sex or exposing certain parts of the human body, and from using "artificial devices or inanimate objects to depict any of the prohibited activities described." The section on live entertainment is so broad that it could be interpreted to include performances of rock and disco music and almost all forms of live theatre in establishments serving alcoholic beverages.

Another measure, HB 907, would place butyl nitrate and isobutyl nitrate on the controlled substances list and make them available by prescription only. This bill, introduced by Rep. Anthony Polumbo (D-Houston), is currently in a subcommittee of the Criminal Jurisprudence Committee.

For information on the status of the bills contact Bettie Naylor at (512) 472-2488 or Kathy Deitsch at (512) 472-3000.

### Evangelist's Antigay Words Nix Dallas Show

A Dallas evangelist who has repeatedly attacked gay people as immoral had his weekly television show canceled in early March.

Dave Lane, station manager of WFAA-TV, which had aired the Sunday morning program for several years, said that the remarks of evangelist James Robison violated station policy. "We believe our religious programs should not deal with such matters," Lane said.

The cancellation came in response to a complaint from the Dallas Gay Caucus demanding equal time to rebut Robison's claim that homosexuality is a sin. WFAA attorneys reviewed the complaint and concluded that "the homosexual community had been attacked and should be given free time to respond" under the Fairness Doctrine of the Federal Communications Commission. The caucus was granted 15 minutes of air time.

Robison said he is considering a suit against WFAA and will seek another station willing to air his program, shown by 84 affiliates across the country.

### Connecticut Rights Bill Wins Key Vote

A bill to prohibit discrimination against homosexuals was approved 10-8 by the Judiciary Committee of the Connecticut state legislature on March 8.

The state bill, amended by state Rep. John A. Berman (D-West Hartford), would protect private sexual activity, but not those who "encourage" others to adopt homosexuality. The proposal protects anyone from discrimination on the basis of any sexual preference. It would, for example, make it illegal for a gay bar to refuse to hire heterosexuals.

Opposition to the bill came from a conservative Roman Catholic group called Faithful, True Roman Catholics. The group's spokesperson, Mary Ann Pressmarita, told the committee members that

similar pro-gay legislation in San Francisco has led to "live sex acts on every corner."

The bill must now win the approval of the entire legislature.

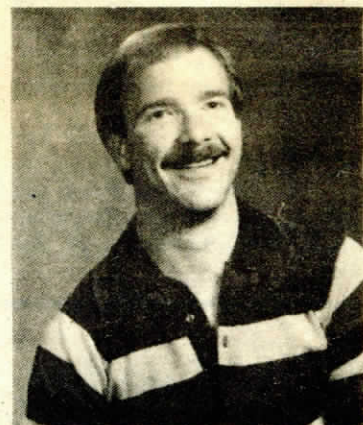
In another move to enact antidiscrimination legislation, seven of Hartford's nine city council members have sponsored a city ordinance that would protect from discrimination city workers and those who have contracts with the city to provide goods and services. The proposed law would also ban discrimination on the basis of race, color, origin, sex and handicap. The ordinance is broader than a similar one approved by five council members last year but vetoed by Mayor George Athanson. Seven votes, however, are sufficient to override the mayor should he decide to veto this bill as well.

### Novel Progay Ideas In Minnesota Co-ops

Minnesota, with one of the largest and most successful cooperative movements in the country, is finding a variety of ways to support gay causes.

The Whole Foods Co-op in Minneapolis has long boycotted all Florida citrus products. A more novel approach has been adopted by The Wedge Co-op in Minneapolis, which donates a percentage of its profits from the sale of citrus fruits to gay organizations. This policy has resulted in donations of more than \$200 per month to The Minnesota Committee for Gay Rights, The Lesbian Resource Center and the National Gay Task Force.

—John Chester



Steve Shiflett, ADVOCATE sales representative in Houston

### New ADVOCATE Office For Sales in Houston

Responding to economic growth in the Southwest (see story on Houston this issue), The ADVOCATE has opened an advertising and sales office in Houston.

The office is located at 1911 Southwest Freeway, Suite 105; (713) 522-4900.

The Houston sales office will be headed by Steve Shiflett, a Texas gay activist and president of the Houston Gay Political Caucus. Shiflett, 26, has a B.S. in marketing from Louisiana State University and has been employed in sales, buying and managerial positions since 1975. As the Houston advertising representative, Shiflett will be responsible for all sales in Texas, New Orleans and Oklahoma City.

### S.F. MCC Fund Drive

The San Francisco Metropolitan Community Church has announced an intensive drive to raise funds for a new church building, to be located at 150 Eureka St.

The church's goal is to raise \$50,000 in 90 days. Pastor Jim N. Dykes said he hoped to raise 10 to

The ADVOCATE, May 3, 1979

## IS YOUR LIFE COMING A P A R T ?

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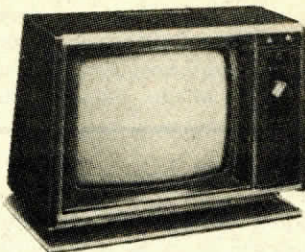
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Box 46412-A, Los Ang. CA 90046

### Evangelicals

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60th St., New York NY 10022

### 7th-Day Adventists

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**M**Y FIRST VISIT to Texas had not made me eager to return. Enroute to visit a lover/friend in Houston during my furtive phase, I totaled my car on an icy, interminable interstate in west Texas and suffered the humiliation of standing at midnight before a redneck judge who added the insult of a speeding citation to the injury of my forlorn, crumpled Volkswagen. On the ride into town, the Texas Ranger had talked of "bustin' Mexicans' heads," and I wondered what kind of treatment gay people could expect in such a god-forsaken land.

Six years later it was winter again as the plane descended into Houston, under a thick cloud cover that lay above concentric rings of freeways and a Los Angeles-like expanse of shopping malls and tract houses. I was skeptical about whether there would be any reason to dislike Texas less.

At the midway point between the two coasts, Houston has become the hub of the Southwest's vast petroleum interests, with all the supporting commerce that implies. With its metropolitan population now at three million, Houston is a boom town. Unemployment is low, and conspicuous consumption very much in fashion. "Houston is like a stock market that keeps going up and up while other indicators are turning down," remarks Joseph Franklin, a local publishing executive. "In a way, it's frightening." Drawn by the city's healthy economy, most Houstonians are transplants; in five days I met only two natives.

All this rapid growth has brought ills, too, of course. Rush-hour tie-ups now rival those in Los Angeles or New York, and the lack of any zoning laws creates a hodge-podge of urban sprawl. For better or worse, I discovered soon after my arrival, Houston and I had both come out.

In the futuristic city center, shiny skyscrapers crowd the skyline to spell one word: money. The Downtown area rambles off past an abandoned concrete building with BENTSEN IN '76 on its side, past desolate empty lots and urban renewal, petering out near the Montrose district, Houston's own gay ghetto. The Montrose—until recently the center of straight hipdom—sprawls along Westheimer Road, an ill-paved street lined with funky old houses, many of which have become gay shops, bars and restaurants. (The week we were there, the mayor—who at \$71,000 makes more than any mayor in the country—made front-page news by announcing an intensive program to fill in the "chugholes" that plague even the high-priced neighborhoods, making parts of town seem like remote outposts.) One rambling old house on Holman has become the Montrose Activity Center, a magnet for various gay groups and social functions.

In contrast to this burgeoning gay area is the lukewarm climate for gay rights in Houston. "Working for a rights ordinance here is counterproductive," says one activist. The mayor and the city council are in general only marginally supportive of gay people. The chief of police has paid lip service to Houston's gay leadership, but there has been little real contact. One local leader describes the chief as "modeled on [former homophobic Los Angeles chief] Ed Davis. But Davis told you what he really thought."

Since my last visit, Houston's gay community has grown tremendously, and gay politicians have risen to unprecedented respectability. The Texas Gay Task Force recently hired a lobbyist in Austin, the state capital. The Dallas Political Caucus was among several groups that raised money for California's No On 6 campaign. Doyen of them all, with a mailing list of 7,000, is the Houston Gay Political Caucus, whose visibility makes it the target of everyone's judgment. "The GPC now is dynamic," says one Houstonian. "The president is fantastic—he's a good salesman who knows what he's doing. He has a good sense of politics." Another local disagrees. "I don't think they're astute politicians. If I contribute \$15 to the Democrats, they're there every two weeks with a mailing. The

GPC doesn't; they have bad p.r."

Whatever faults its leadership may have, the Houston gay community has racked up several notable successes over the past few years. Houston hosted the International Women's Year conference in 1977, where women's delegates overwhelmingly endorsed a resolution supporting equal rights regardless of sexual orientation. Two successful "Town Meetings" have attracted thousands of Houstonians for discussions of local gay issues. A 1976 visit by Anita Bryant rallied more than 8,000 demonstrators on 72 hours' notice. Other signs of gay clout are two local gay publications, *The Montrose Star* and the Houston-based *This Week in Texas*; a weekly gay program on radio Pacifica; and a human-rights paper called *Upfront*, whose publisher, long-time gay activist Gary Van Ooteghem, has called for a "Human Rights March" on Washington Oct. 28. Such a march would have followed by two weeks a national gay march Oct. 14. Citing "confusion" over the two marches, Van Ooteghem has cancelled his own event, saying he will throw his support behind the Lesbian and Gay People's March on Washington.

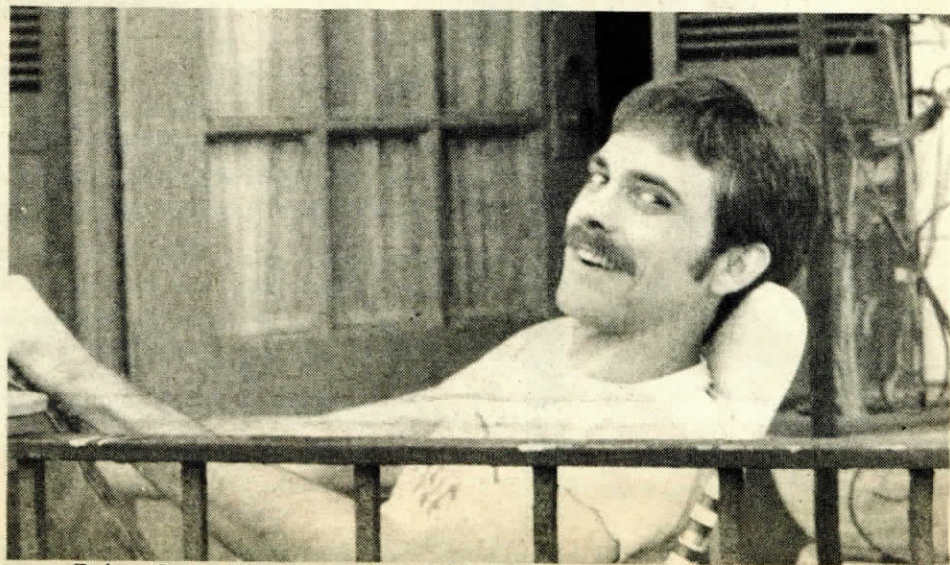
Despite gay people's visibility in Houston, they face considerable hostility from Bible Belt hardliners and unabashed rednecks. Few Houstonians forget that the Ku Klux Klan is headquartered in Pasadena, just outside of town. And one can't be in Houston for long without hearing gut-wrenching stories of police brutality. Last year, police reportedly stopped a man named Jose Torres as he was leaving a gay bar, drove him to a deserted spot, shot him and dumped his body in the bayou. The judge in the case dismissed the charges against the two cops involved. One popular local disco—which recently changed hands—has been the scene of numerous stabbings, and one man told me his convertible roof was slashed there twice. These hazards don't go unheeded. One local gay activist routinely packs a .38 special in his briefcase. "You never know who's going to be around," he says cheerfully.

This rough-and-ready attitude is typical of many Texans. "Texas is macho," asserts goldsmith Bob Sklare, "and that bleeds into the gay scene." One gay man I interviewed said that as a teenager he regularly drove in from the suburbs with his buddies to go queer-bashing in the Montrose, a practice that still flourishes today. To combat attacks on gays, the Gay Political Caucus has initiated Operation Documentation (see Issue 265) to gather data on harassment and entrapment. The evidence will be used starting this spring in testimony before the U.S. Civil Rights Commission, which will be in Houston to investigate discrimination against minorities.

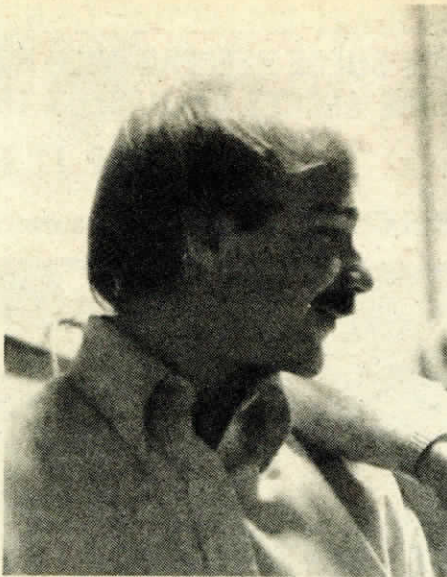
The flip side of the macho Texas cowboy mystique is a certain Southern softness and elegance. Outside fancy hotels in downtown Houston one can see craggy-faced men in Stetsons stepping out of white Cadillacs, wearing bright-colored polyester leisure suits and enormous diamonds. At annual livestock shows in rural Texas, more than one Houstonian told me that as teenage boys (Future Farmers of America—never mind the initials) they would sleep with their animals in a huge barn and masturbate together, admiring the size and endurance of each other's cocks. An undercurrent of homoeroticism tinges even the most macho of institutions, Texas A&M. Hank Wahrmond, now an airlines employee, was sent there by his parents, who thought it would "set him straight." Instead, Wahrmond found the butch military atmosphere "paradise." His lover for three years was a varsity sports star, and Wahrmond had no trouble making other contacts. "There was a sports club at the edge of campus owned by a former jock," Wahrmond recalls. "They showed movies of track and swimming while you drank, and you could pick up tricks there, too." Being gay at A&M was risky. "The first year, you aren't allowed to lock the door, so we'd wrestle around in the middle of the night with an unlocked door," smiles Wahrmond.

# HOUSTON

by Scott Anderson



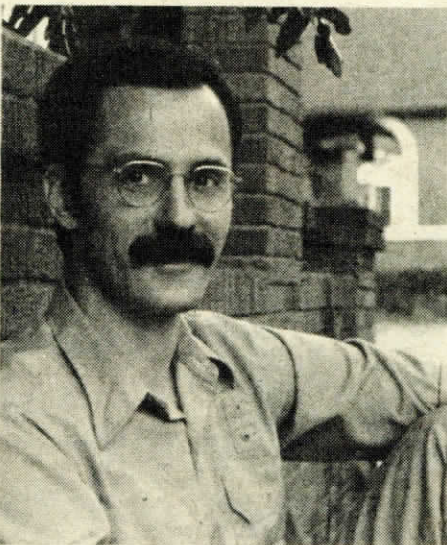
Robert Curry: "Houston will probably be the largest city in the country some day."



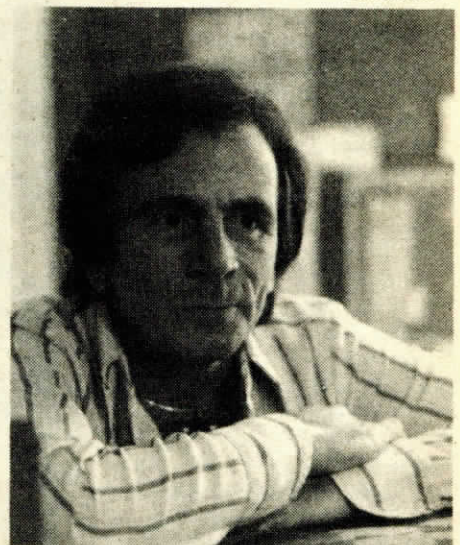
Steve Shiflett, president of Houston Gay Political Caucus



Jenny Willinger: "We must educate the public even though we're different."



Ken Jensen: "Houston is relaxed, with friendly people and lots of variety."



Bookstore owner Hank Bonney: "I've lived other places, but I keep coming back—the people are more open."

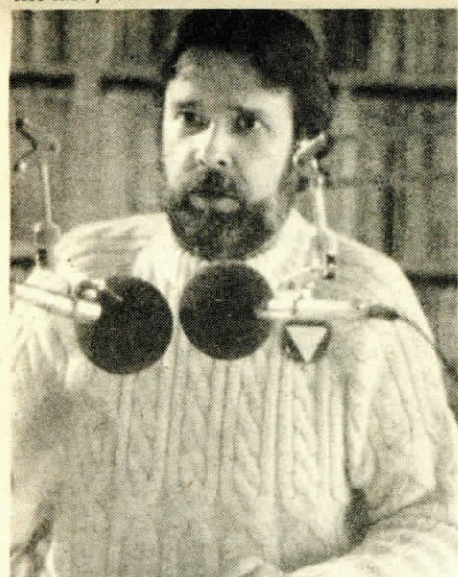


# Deep in the Hot of TEXAS

Photos/Eddie Stocking



Gary Norton and Keith Hayman: "It seems most gay people have moved here within the last year."



Ray Hill gets the word out on the Wilde 'n' Stein Show, a weekly gay program on Pacifica radio.



Goldsmith Bob Sklare: "It's warm, the pace is fast, and there's lots of money. But it's charmless."



Dennis Milam and Bruce Aleksander: "The emphasis is on structure, form and politics. But there's very little soul in the gay community."



Fred Paez: "The Houston gay community is the most open and free after New York, L.A., and San Francisco."

"If they had ever found out, we would have been up shit creek."

Other people, however, are less willing to run the risks of exposure. Of the estimated 300,000 gay people in the Houston metropolitan area, only a fraction are visible—and still fewer are involved in politics. Though the figures are small in an absolute sense, those who are involved tend to be very active. A survey of ADVOCATE subscribers in the Houston area, for example, found that 94 per cent of the respondents were registered to vote, and that 74 per cent had contributed to a political campaign in the last two years. Even more impressive, 49 per cent said they participated actively in Houston's gay organizations, and 87 per cent had made a financial donation to a gay cause or group within the previous year.

Gay people also play a major, though unacknowledged, role in the cultural life of Houston, with its full range of ballet, symphony, opera, theatre and museums. Moneyed gays work behind the scenes to a limited degree, but many haven't really been tapped effectively for gay causes. "We just haven't been approached the right way," confides one affluent psychologist. "It's only because someone hasn't called me up, really," says a geophysicist for a petroleum firm. "If there were any coercion, I would be more involved."

The money is surely there. One gay tycoon has original Klees and Modiglianis on the walls of his home. Another Texan recently gave his lover a gold-plated hard hat as a birthday present. "It looked *fabulous* on the dance floor," said one observer. The hidden wealth takes even the gay leaders by surprise. A Gay Political Caucus fundraiser last fall drew 350 potential major donors.

One group that is particularly wary of coming out of the closet is the medical profession. Although several physicians and psychologists estimated the number of gay doctors in Houston to range from 30 to 60, very few are willing to be openly gay. They fear losing their clientele and—what is more important—chances for advancement, which often depend on the recommendations of older, more established physicians. "We have an extremely conservative medical establishment here," says psychologist Travis Peterson, who specializes in counseling gay people. "It would be a very nontraditional risk to come out in Texas, where homosexuality is less accepted than on either of the seaboard."

Another Houston professional, Ivy League-educated architect Douglas Crandall, describes himself as "semi-underground." "I haven't told people at work," he says, "but if I was ever asked point-blank, I would tell them." Crandall has had a long-term relationship with a woman and sees a lot of gay married men in Houston. "People are very much into double lives here, though that's beginning to change."

The ADVOCATE survey turned up 114 different professions among respondents—and there was only one interior designer. There were teachers, nurses, accountants, priests, social workers, computer programmers, insurance agents, engineers—every line of work imaginable. What these varied people had in common was that most of them were closeted at work (57 per cent), though more than 76 per cent described themselves as "open," about their gayness.

Houston professionals who have not yet gotten involved in gay activities will now have their chance. The recently formed Executive and Professional Association (EPA) has more than 100 members from the business, educational and medical communities, and has set up committees to determine what directions the group will take. The possibilities are great, given the high income levels. The ADVOCATE survey showed that 20 per cent make more than \$30,000 a year; another 20 per cent earn between \$20,000 and \$30,000. Such business associations already exist in Los Angeles, New York and San Francisco, and give urban professionals a place to come home to.

The association is seeking to involve

more women professionals, something that has not happened in the gay community at large. As in most large cities, there is a much-bemoaned lack of connection between lesbians and gay men. Some women claim the gay political leadership in Houston consciously excludes women; gay men say most lesbians are not interested in traditional, male-oriented politics. Indeed, the major women's group—the whimsically named *Lesberadas*—functions primarily as a consciousness-raising club; they do not review candidates. In contrast to the strong hierarchy typical of male groups, *Lesberadas* has a different chairperson for each meeting, and everyone sits in a circle.

But some women are involved in establishment politics, such as Nancy Rose and Sandy Simmons, active in the Texas Gay Task Force. They sympathize with women who are reluctant to get involved with men's groups ("The most sexist people can be gay men"), but don't agree with them. "Women who claim to be separatists are sexist women, though they don't see it that way," says Simmons. "They call themselves feminist separatist lesbians. To me a feminist is one who believes in equality, and if one is equal, why not associate with a man?" Rose believes that women and gay people in Houston—as elsewhere—are both oppressed by the same thing: sexism. "It's crucial for all men—especially gay men—to be feminists," she says. "But a lot of people don't get that."

Women who overcome their reluctance to get involved with men, however, find "tremendous support" in the gay community, according to novelist Elaine Weston, who came out last year. Weston tells of arriving at the Montrose Activities Center for a Christmas party. "A nine-year-old neighborhood girl was out front and said, 'You don't want to go in; they're all guys in there.' I patted her on the head and went in. I was introduced to everyone, including the three other women. I had a terrific time." Weston attends some political meetings and contends that her presence is important. "My tendency is not to be outspoken, just *there*," Jenny Willinger, who describes herself as "a tomboy from a conservative Southern Baptist family in Kentucky," sums up the male-female interaction: "The lesbians see the men on a power trip, as usual. The women don't have influence in the GPC, so a lot of them are against it. Gay men have more money and power. But the only rights we will get are through the system. I want to get involved."

So does another part of the Houston gay community—minorities. In Houston about 30 per cent of the population is Chicano and 20 per cent is black, according to Larry Bagnieris, president of the Gay Chicano/Third World Caucus. The caucus, originally composed of Chicanos from Town Meeting I, now includes blacks, women and Asians. Their large numbers give clout to Houston's minority population, especially to Chicanos, who are more deeply involved in the political process than elsewhere. "The Chicanos here are at least as well organized as the black community," says Bagnieris.

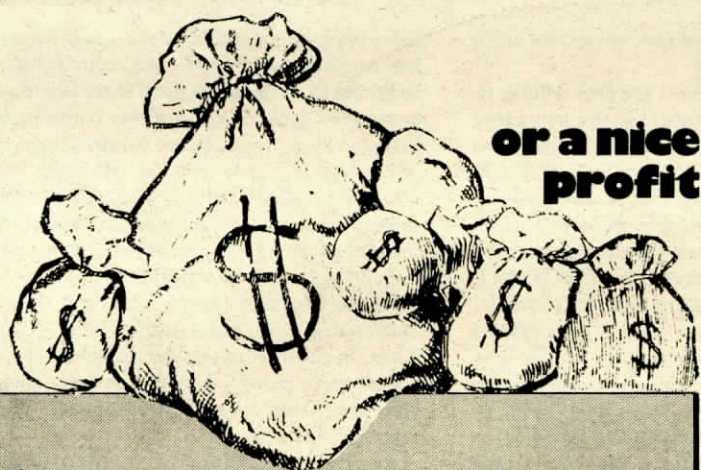
The minority caucus interacts with the GPC, of which Bagnieris is vice president. Its major task is now to educate the Catholic Church about gay people and to continue already established contacts with Hispanic politicians, who Bagnieris says are "very supportive" of gays. One tangible result of the caucus's work has been an end to discriminatory admissions policies at a popular local disco. Under pressure from blacks and Chicanos, Bagnieris says, the new management has stopped asking minorities and women for up to five pieces of identification.

Discrimination is not based solely on race. As in any *nouveau riche* city ("old" money means pre-World War II), Houstonians are touchy about social class. One well-known professional, from one of the "best" (read *moneyed*) families, caused a scandal when he came out to his socially prominent wife. She finds his sexuality unthinkable; it is simply incompatible with their class standing. Gary Galloway and Dick Perrine, together since

(continued on next page)



# MAKE A BUNDLE

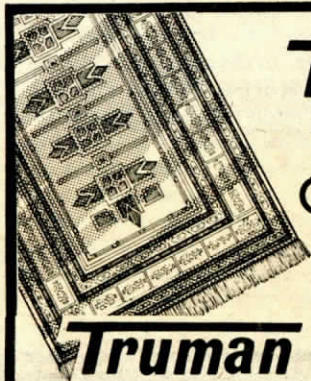


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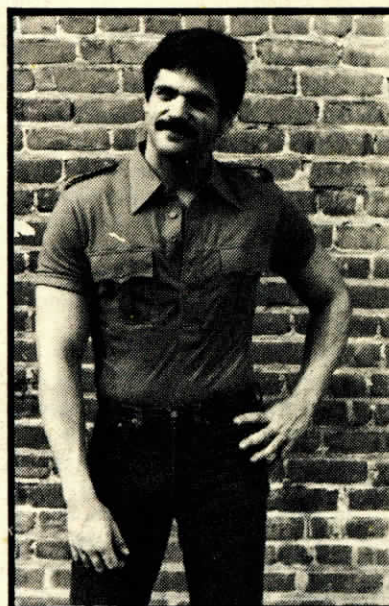


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(continued from preceding page)

they met in a Venezuela oil camp 30 years ago, speak wryly of The A Group, those elegant and fabled gay men who retire to villas in Cuernavaca or Santa Barbara, where they live with their poodles and drink too much. "They're social climbers, name droppers," grins Perrine. "They're so chic they don't go to Acapulco. They go to 'Aca.'"

The social dislocation of a city as rapidly expanding as Houston is severe. Traveling businessman Peter Joseph compares the city to a teenager. "It's young, vital and growing—growing so fast that it's awkward and doesn't have skills yet. Houston is both the child brought up to believe a lot of things, and the adult who has learned that all these things are not true. When you look at all the contradictions—Southern Baptist bigotry to self-interest liberalism—you realize they're similar to an adolescent's conflicts. That turns on a lot of people here."

With 1,200 people moving to Houston each week, it's an excitement that's bound to spread. ●

## HOUSTON DIRECTORY

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Dignity  
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Episcopal Integrity Houston  
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Houston 77006

Gay Chicano Caucus  
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Gay Political Caucus  
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526-2668

Gay Resource Services  
University of Houston  
749-3489

Houston Human Rights League  
Box 3624  
Houston 77001  
523-6969

Integrity/Houston  
Box 1604  
Houston 77022

Lambda  
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433-8380

Lambda Center for Alcoholics  
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Lesberadas  
c/o Alice Schrader  
529-7014

Lutherans Concerned for Gay People  
453-1143

Executive and Professional Association of Houston  
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Houston 77019  
526-7287, 965-9664

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277 Westheimer  
528-8921

Lampost (mixed)  
2417 Times  
528-8921

Locker  
528-9097  
1732 Westheimer

Marion's Too (women)  
109 Tuam  
528-9097

Mary's  
1022 Westheimer  
528-8851

Midnite Sun  
534 Westheimer  
526-7519

Montrose Mining Co.  
805 Pacific  
529-7488

Numbers  
300 Westheimer  
529-5599

Old Plantation  
2020 Kipling  
522-2353

Ram Rod Tavern  
5110 Airline  
691-9928

Venture-N  
2923 S. Main  
522-9019

### Baths

Club Houston  
2205 Fannin  
659-4998

Midtowne Spa  
3100 Fannin  
522-2379

2306 Club  
2306 Genesee  
528-6235

### Businesses

[Though not necessarily gay-owned, all welcome gay patrons. For information on gay people in everything from accounting to zoology, contact the Executive and Professional Association]

Acuff's Carpet Service  
1004 California  
623-5685

Apollo Hair Replacement  
7320 S.W. Freeway  
988-4084

Archer AMC/Jeep/Mazda  
8711 N. Freeway  
445-1383

B&G Plant Company  
2600 Houston  
862-1213

Billie Jean Hair Design  
2403 S. Shepherd  
523-4727

Black Dragon (tattoos)  
1207 Westheimer

Brashears Furniture  
7486 Harwin  
783-4582

Brazos Paint and Body Shop  
2500 Brazos  
522-0722

J. Browning, Inc.  
Plants and Cacti  
2000 Waugh Dr.

Byman Furniture and Interiors  
1401 S. Post Oak  
961-1813

Cherryhurst Pharmacy  
1340 Westheimer  
524-3114

Creative Glass  
1838 Westheimer  
523-8802

Creative Stained Glass  
1403 Westheimer  
523-0783

Cutlery Hair Studio  
3106 Brazos  
521-0557

Dav-El (limousines)  
506 Milam  
228-8127

Facets (gifts)  
1412 Westheimer  
523-1412

Guenther Flowers  
2030 W. Alabama  
523-2828

Hodge Podge  
1338A Westheimer  
522-7988

Holcombe-Lindquist  
3133 S.W. Freeway  
526-7691

Ivory Hunter (plants)  
1534 W. Alabama  
521-0854

Jim Holloman Realty  
521-0278

Mahan Volkswagen  
2405 Richmond  
526-1711

Manhole (clothes)  
1938 W. Gray  
522-1089

Mid-Town Art Gallery  
1848 Westheimer  
522-1400

Miss Gaye Pet Grooming  
522-7551

Montrose Ventures, Inc.  
711 W. Alabama, Suite 201  
527-0686

Packie's Hair-pos  
906 Westheimer  
527-0188

Payless Construction Co.  
680-2585

Ram's Records  
521 W. Alabama  
529-2551

Record Rack  
3109 S. Shepherd  
524-3602

Reed Keys  
1612 Westheimer  
523-2927

Roommate Services of Houston  
523-7168

Sheer Fantasy Soft Sculpture  
1401 Westheimer  
528-3325

Showcase Realty  
3902 Mandell, Suite 3  
526-7824

Specs of Houston (eyewear)  
4709 Richmond  
626-1161

Styx and Stones (antiques)  
914 Snover  
869-9865

Styx and Stones (antiques)  
3517 Washington  
869-9271

Top of the Stairs  
3509 Montrose  
528-4659

Trashy Lion Boutique  
303 Westheimer  
528-0512

Tumbleweed Gallery  
1225 Campbell  
932-7503

Union Jack (clothing)  
4025 Westheimer  
622-3100

Wilde 'n' Stein Books  
819 Richmond  
526-7014

### Restaurants

Angelo's Pizza  
224 Westheimer  
528-7851

Auntie Mame's  
2278 Holcombe  
661-5970

Baja Sam's  
402 Lovett  
527-9866

BP's  
1322 Westheimer

Brasserie  
515 W. Alabama  
528-8744

Don's LePatois  
428 Westheimer  
523-5595

Happy Buddha  
516 Westheimer  
527-8494

House of Pies  
3112 Kirby  
528-3816

House of Pies  
6142 Westheimer  
782-1290

Lee Garden  
224 Westheimer  
526-2683

Mabel McGowan's  
708 W. Alabama  
528-8885

Mexican Restaurant  
813 Richmond  
528-2365

Pip's Great Expectations  
212 Westheimer  
528-2731

Pleasant Peasant  
1502 S. Post Oak  
621-9463

Somewhere  
1525 Westheimer  
528-8474

Spirit Cafe  
243 Westheimer  
522-0583

Taco Place  
1536 Westheimer  
528-8282