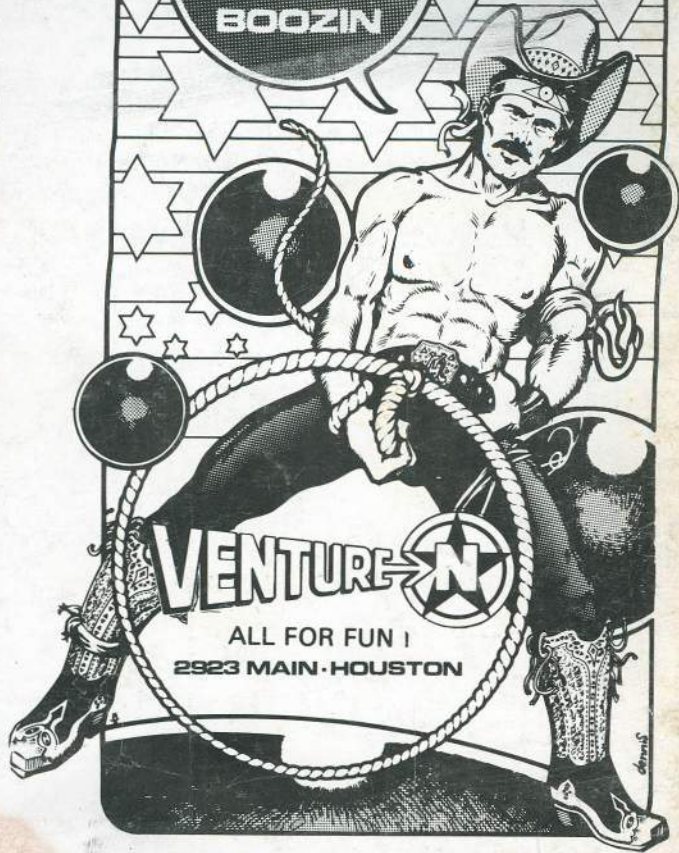


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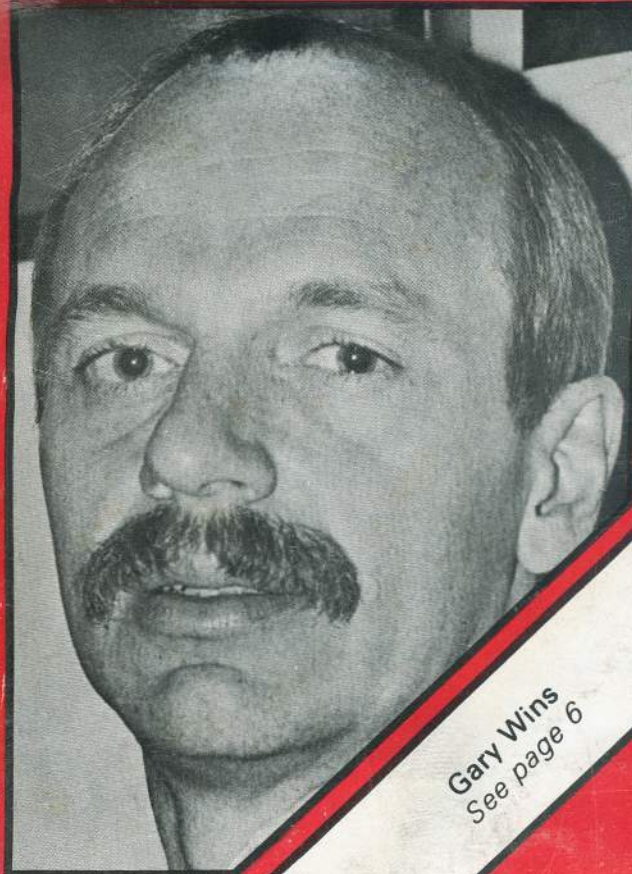


LXIX



Volume 1 No. 8

March 25-31



Gary Wins
See page 6

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From the Editor

-Michael Kenna

Congratulations are certainly in order for **Gary Van Ooteghem**, who has added one more victory to the tally of the Gay community. Some observations should go along with them, however; most importantly, attention should be given the manner in which this particular Gay person won his case. Gary's case is an example of the power of persistence and of using the system.

In past issues we have emphasized the positive effects that might be possible if a significant number of Gays learned to use the "system" that has thus far insisted on oppressing it to in its attempt to overturn that oppression. It is no coincidence, and certainly no mistake, when a Gay person wins a challenge against the system within the disorderly confines thereof. Van Ooteghem took a case to court that was from the start irrepressibly simple and clear-cut. The decision that was ultimately reached was actually unavoidable.

Gay people who do not want up-front visibility should recognize that there are other ways to score points for our side. A decision in any Gay person's favor is certainly a step forward for all of us. When we stop criticizing leaders for being leaders and start demonstrating the quiet power of individuals, our oppressors will begin to doubt the desirability of remaining opposed to such an organized and powerful mass.

RETRACTION: In our last issue, we reported on the recent bar raid at the **Old Surf's Up** and a similar incident at the **Venture-N** over one month before. We have since learned that our informant for that story provided us with a self-serving and exaggerated statement and not an objective report. We apologize to the owners and staff of both clubs, which should not be isolated. The harassment of Gay establishments is occurring all over Houston and our intention is solely to bring such reports into the awareness of our community.

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Gay Discrimination Banned In Frisco

San Francisco's supervisors, noting that an estimated one in seven of this city's 680,000 residents is homosexual, have agreed to ban discrimination against homosexuals in employment, housing, and public accommodations.

The 10-1 vote on Monday night adds San Francisco, long noted for its highly visible and politicized homosexual community, to the list of more than 40 cities that have placed such bans on the books.

A similar law in Miami was repealed last year in a special election after singer Anita Bryant led an emotional campaign that helped bring the issue of homosexual rights to nationwide attention. Other organized repeal moves are underway in several cities, including St. Paul, Minn., Wichita, Kan., and Eugene, Ore.

There was no immediate indication, however, of any organized attempt at repeal in San Francisco.

"All this says is that Gay people are OK," said supervisor Gordon Lau after a two-hour debate. "It says, 'If Gay people can do the job, hire them; if they can pay the rent, rent to them.' It affirms a basic right to be treated as a human being."

Supervisor Dan White cast the only dissenting vote. "There are a lot of people who believe strongly that this legislation is wrong and they have very valid feelings."

White said it would be "counterproductive to force this on them."

Board President Diane Feinstein voted for the measure, but she predicted "some problems coming down the pike, particularly in the field of housing."

"The right of an individual to live his lifestyle the way he or she chooses can become offensive," she continued. "The Gay community is going to have to face this; there is a need to set some standards. It's fine for us to live here respecting each other's rights, but that doesn't mean imposing them on others."

(Reprinted from the Houston Post)

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Gays 1, Harris County 0

A monumental federal court decision reached Monday, March 20th, requires that Harris County treasurer **Hartsell Gray** reinstate Gay activist **Gary Van Ooteghem** as county Comptroller and pay him two years retroactive salary. U.S. District Judge **Ross Sterling** stated in the court order that Gray violated Van Ooteghem's First Amendment rights by ordering him to remain in his office during working hours to prevent him from making a speech on a Gay-related matter.

Van Ooteghem was fired in July of 1975 after informing Gray that he was homosexual and that he intended to publicly urge county Commissioner's Court to support a policy of non-discrimination on the basis of sexual and affectional preference. He said that he initially had no intention of filing suit, and that the **American Civil Liberties Union** had approached him with the idea, insisting that his was a good case to take to court because there was "nothing to cloud the issue." Van Ooteghem said that this was the first lawsuit he had ever initiated.

"I was angry, angry at the system. That's why I got involved in the first place. At that time, I never imagined anything that has happened since."

"I really owe Hartsell Gray a debt of gratitude. He initiated a lot," Van Ooteghem said, referring to the various organizations with which he has been involved since the firing, including the **National Gay Task Force** and **Houston's Gay Political Caucus**, of which he was the first president.

Van Ooteghem learned of his victory Monday afternoon from a message left by the *Houston Post*. His attorney, **Patrick Wiseman** of the ACLU, did not know about the court ruling until Tuesday morning.

The decision is apparently being appealed further. "Right now it affects a few of the southern states," Van Ooteghem said, "We want it to be upheld for everyone, all over the country. What we've done is set a precedent, and now that precedent must be expanded."

"The idea is that we don't have to accept second-class citizenship anymore. I believe that people in leadership roles must try to be role models for others more than anything else. **Leonard Matlovich** was my role model, and I hope I can be someone else's. I hope we can keep the trend going."

Gary Van Ooteghem believes that it will take public exposure for Gays to show that they are no different from anyone else. He intends to continue his political activities and his involvements which such projects as the **Montrose Activity Center** if and when he returns to his old job (which he said that he probably will do.)

"I don't think I'll be too well received," he joked. Hartsell Gray commented to reporters that he would have to "fire a bunch of people" to pay Van Ooteghem.

Van Ooteghem stands to collect up to \$70,000 in back pay plus recompensation for his attorney's fees...a possible \$100,000 before taxes.

"I hope they've learned their lesson," he said, "If not, we'll do it again."

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THE GAY READER

REVIEW

The Sorcerer of Bolinas Reef by Charles Reich, Bantam Books, New York, 1977, \$2.25 (Available at Wilde 'N' Stein Books, 819 Richmond)

The author of **The Greening America**, Charles Reich, has done it again with the autobiographical chronicling of his inner development and his outer transition into a positive, fulfilling and Gay lifestyle.

A student at Oberlin College and Yale University and then an attorney in Washington, D.C., he was to write **The Greening** still later during 14 years tenure as Law Professor at his Alma Mater, Yale.

Purposefully, in 1974 he left Yale for San Francisco to live an openly Gay lifestyle in order to write **The Sorcerer of Bolinas Reef**.

Among other things, he writes of his personal concern of individual human rights vs. the ever-growing power and corruption of the state. He writes of his disillusionment with American middle-class lifestyles, personified by the Washington political bureaucracy at first and then by Yale academic bureaucracy.

He almost rhapsodizes about his awakening as a Gay and finding finally the thrills of new roads, new choices, and the viability of a lifestyle which not only frees him but opens up so many avenues which were not open to him before his acknowledgement of his true sexuality.

(continued on page 13)

An astonishing journey
to personal freedom
by the author of

THE SORCERER OF BOLINAS REEF CHARLES REICH

"I have to grow. I have to be
free in ways that people
have never been free before.

I have to learn what
people have never known before.

I have to search for
the truth as people have never
searched before."

Ask Auntie

Dear Auntie,

I'm new to the Gay scene.
Can you explain the
difference between being
attracted to boys and
being attracted to men?
-Coming Out



Dear Coming,

About twenty years.

Dear Auntie,

Is there any way I can stop being a practicing
homosexual?

-Desperate

Dear Desperate,

Yes, stop practicing and start playing!

Dear Auntie,

My problem is that everyone I meet wants to go to
bed with me, but nobody likes me as a person.

-Friendless

Dear Friendless,

I like you already. Come on over!

His confrontation of alienation from the "establishment" and then his discovery of "self" and consequent enlightenment is so rich an experience that the reader of *The Sorcerer* cannot help but be drawn into the mystic, almost spiritual revelations which Reich so ably places upon the written page.

In a much larger sense, the author challenges those extremely deep assumptions by which so many people have measured their lives. With compassion and insight, he guides each reader into new realms of re-measuring those concepts under which we have been conditioned and, unthinkingly, accepting.

The value of *The Sorcerer* lies, perhaps, not in its poetry of prose, nor of its naturalism and romanticism, but in its universal appeal of a call for a new and complete re-birth of the INDIVIDUAL American - and for new and REAL ways of living our private, public, and political lives.

After all, there ARE many different kinds of closets.

-Hank Bonney

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Gay USA, a documentary film about the Gay Liberation movement in America, will be showing at the **River Oaks Theatre** on West Gray April 4th. The film is said to be "an accurate an informative documentary" and it should be interesting watching for both Gays and non-Gays.

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*Miss Gay Houston Pageant
1979*



Above left: Two of the contestants for the title of Miss Gay Houston ; Below left: "Heather," first runner-up; Above: Co-emcees Eartha Kitt and Robert Jones.



Ramona Sims was chosen *Miss Gay Houston, 1979* at the "show bar of the Southwest," the **Midnite Sun**, Wednesday (March 22nd), after two nights of competing in sportswear, evening wear, and talent categories. Ramona gave a dazzling performance of a vaudevillesque number in the talent competition. Congratulations to the new *Miss Gay Houston* from **LXIX**.

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New Books for Lesbians

-by Octavian Rofrano

If the Gay civil rights movement has done nothing else, it (with a little help from the U.S. women's movement) has given some writers, literary critics, translators, and graduate students the courage and professional leeway to begin developing a Gay literary history.

Writing is, of its nature, a message art. Books start wars, make indelible statements, change people's minds, outline the deeper patterns of human thinking. The British found when they outlawed Gaelic, Irish folkstories, and Irish literature for several generations that they could almost utterly destroy Irish tradition and culture. They had eradicated any record of it.

So has been the case with straight publishers' oppression of Gay books. In part a response to legal and public resistance, publishers' pussyfooting (if you will) about Lesbian themes in literature and non-fiction is infamous. As we all know, until the mid-1960's, a Gay literary character had to end the book badly. Many examples exist, especially of Lesbians committing suicide (*The Children's Hour*, Hellman), having a tree end it all (*The Fox*, Lawrence), going insane (pick any book), or self-sacrificing any hope of a long-term relationship so the other lover could go straight (*The Well of Loneliness*, Hall).

When I was reading Lesbian books for the first time, the quality of them was so poor (as with Ann

Bannon's *Beebo Brinker*) they were laughable—until the end, when separation, death, madness, or being struck by lightning was the Lesbian's inevitable end. Such a literary legacy takes its toll on all Gay people, whether we realize it consciously or not.

In the late 1960's, a few exotica-erotica books involving women making love began to appear. These were mostly photographed by men, apparently for the amusement and stimulation of men. Three of the more well-known are David Hamilton's *Sisters* (Morrow, 1972) and *Sappho: The Art of Loving Women and Sappho by the Sea*, with photographs by J. Frederick Smith. *Sisters* is extremely beautiful, not graphically erotic, with text by Alain Robbe-Grillet, and well worth having. Of the two Smith books, *Sappho: the Art of Loving Women* is better because of the translations of Sapphic verse, and the mixture of women involved. (I swear one of them is the British comedian Eleanor Bron.)

Following upon the 1973 publication of Nigel Nicolson's *History of a Marriage*, detailing the marriage-of-convenience between his parents (Vita Sackville-West and Harold Nicolson), comes a better overview of the relationship. *The Other Woman* by Phillippe Julian and John Phillips is the biography of Violet Trefusis, who was for many years Vita Sackville-West's lover. The back of the book holds letters from Violet to Vita (Violet's husband burned almost all of Vita's to Violet) which shed an entirely new light on the intensity and passion of this turn-of-the-century romance.

(continued on page 24)

Referenda Watch

The repeal of the **Dade County** Gay rights law by public referendum last June appears to have inspired similar attempts in other cities around the country. The **National Gay Task Force** has received reports from Gay groups in **Wichita, Kansas; St Paul, Minnesota; Washington, D.C.; and Seattle and**

The repeal of the **Dade County** gay rights law passed by public referendum last June appears to have inspired similar attempts in other cities around the country. The **National Gay Task Force** has received reports from Gay groups in *Wichita, Kansas; St. Paul, Minnesota; Washington, D.C., Seattle, and Eugene, Oregon* on repeal efforts; and there is also concern about the possibility of a referendum in New York City if a Gay rights bill should pass there. NGTF staff and board are actively assisting in each of these cities.

In **Wichita**, 31,000 signatures have been collected and filed with city officials there since the Gay rights ordinance passed in September. Only 10,000 signatures were actually needed so a referendum will definitely be held there this spring.

Although a poll taken by the **Homophile Alliance of Sedgwick County** indicated that public sentiment favored repeal by a 3-1 ratio, a large number of civic and religious groups have since come out publicly as "The Religious Caucus for Human Rights."

The Gay community has rallied to the cause, contributing time, energy, political strategy, and some financial support. Opponents of the ordinance consist primarily of fundamentalist religious groups.

NGTF co-executive director **Bruce Voeller** visited **Wichita** in December to consult with leaders of the Lesbian and Gay community on the referendum, then met with the **American Civil Liberties Union** in New York to discuss the feasibility of challenging the constitutionality of referenda on Gay rights. Such a challenge does not appear to be possible, but the ACLU did offer to research local referenda statutes and provide advice and assistance to Gay communities whose ordinances are threatened.

In **Seattle**, NGTF board member **Charles Brydon** has reported that a police officer filed an "Initiative" in mid-January to have a Gay rights ordinance repealed by public vote. Although initially rejected, the proposal for the initiative was revised and approved after being submitted for a second time. If 17,600 signatures are collected before July 24, the initiative will be placed on the ballot in November. If twice that many are collected, a special election will be held.

Brydon said the **Seattle** Gay community was exploring a court challenge on the basis that any effort to repeal should be done by referendum, not initiative. It is now too late to file a referendum because the ordinance was passed in 1973.

In **Washington, D.C.**, there is currently no provision for referendum or initiative, but a law providing for such legal routes will probably be passed soon.

(continued on page 27)

positive light, or who hid their work from the public eye in an attempt at living an unharrassed life, Brooks' story gives both pause and courage.

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LXIX - 26

In **St. Paul, Minnesota**, an initiative was filed on January 17 by two fundamentalist congregations. Signatures that have been collected to exceed the 5600 needed. The Gay community has filed a legal challenge to this action based on the premise that it is illegal to do by initiative what should have been done by referendum. A referendum would have to have been filed within 45 days after passage of the ordinance.

In **Eugene, Oregon**, a referendum on the Gay ordinance is scheduled for May 23. Opponents of the ordinance are led by **Maureen Gieber**, a housewife who supposedly has a broad spectrum of support. She spearheaded a campaign which resulted in collection of 10,000 signatures in one week.

Another city which may face a referendum if a Gay rights ordinance is passed there is **New York City**. Although the Gay rights bill has been defeated there several times in the past, it is now given a fair chance of passage. It is not known whether the bill will be brought up in 1978 or 1979 for a vote. If and when it passes, however, a referendum is likely.

-reprinted from It's Time

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