



HOUSTON GAY POLITICAL CAUCUS

1310 McDuffie Suite 28a 526-2668

OPERATION: DOCUMENTATION

In response to the increasing reports of discrimination, entrapment, assault, brutality, failure to protect gay people, and harassment by the Houston Police Department in the form of contrived charges of drinking while intoxicated, public intoxication, and assault, the GPC has initiated Operation: *Documentation*.

This program will enable us to accumulate documentation to present to the U.S. Civil Rights Commission hearings in June. The Houston Chicano community is doing the same. Supportive attorneys GPC has access to will meet on January 30 at 1505 Harold, at 7:30p.m. Other unidentified "supportive" attorneys are also invited and needed.

Gay establishment owners have been requested to lend their support in a February 1 meeting at 7:30p.m. at the M.A.C.

The program includes the following efforts thus far:

1. Press release to kick off the program.
2. Notices in gay publications.
3. Push cards with information on your rights if arrested; procedures to participate easily, and who to call.
4. A series of "Gays and the Law" forums to educate people on how they can learn the "system downtown" and benefitted by Operation: *Documentation*.

A common fallacy about documentation is one of "I don't want to get that publicity." *You will not!* We can use case numbers instead of names.

GPC cannot stress enough the seriousness of this call for your participation. The ACLU and Political Association of Spanish Speaking Organizations legal advisors are offering their assistance. The Public Interest Advocacy Center's Executive Director, Mark Campos, has been contacted so as to possibly gain mutual cooperation with this LEAA-funded program that was set up partially due to pressure by the Chicano community after the Joe Campos Torres incident. Call GPC at 526-2668 or the ACLU at 524-5925 for the standardized form for documenting your incident of police problems.

Let's work together to stop the problem, not the symptoms!

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Happy New Year!

1978 brought GPC into an era of significance through well-executed programs that enabled lesbians/gays to represent themselves at the precinct conventions all the way through the State conventions, and even to the national Democratic Mid-Term Convention in Memphis, all in one year!

With our well-earned clout and increasing visibility, GPC has new responsibilities to act on bigger, more difficult to accomplish activities, such as winning a vote before a legislative body, getting the GPC word out to more people more frequently, and involving itself in the mainstream of Houston/Texas politics, and working with the Texas legislature to educate and lobby for human rights.

In order to execute more professional, purposeful activities we need your opinions, time, and talent, as well as access to resources like word processors, copy machines, artists and typesetters. By filling out the GPC membership application we will be able to compile a "talent bank." Please make yourself available to solicitations for help from the GPC when significant needs arise. Personnel Coordinator Don Hrachovy is doing a fine job gathering this information and memberships as well. Of course, we keep the information well-guarded. Stand up for your rights . . . join GPC today!

GPC MAILING LIST

The GPC mailing list is, of course, confidential and closely guarded. As a matter of fact, it is kept on a computer tape to which only a very few have access.

However, because this list is the largest local gay political mailing list in the United States, and because it is growing almost as fast as Houston, GPC is having difficult time paying the bulk rate postage costs for each mailout.

GPC will insert your advertisement with our mailings for a negotiable donation. This list reaches more than 7,000 people with significant disposable incomes. For further information contact the GPC office at 526-2668.

(This costs of mailing this newsletter was paid by The Ritz Disco.)

GPC MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

The Gay Political Caucus is conducting a membership drive this month. For that purpose a membership application has been enclosed in this mailout. If you would like to make a financial contribution, but are not interested in committee work, you may fill out only the top portion of the form. However, you might want to read the entire form in order to get an idea of the activities in which GPC is involved and the uses towards which your contributions to GPC are put.

The Caucus needs the talents and resources that our diverse gay community has to offer. Everyone can contribute in some way to our efforts. You needn't be "up-front" to be a member.

If you would like to become more closely involved with the Caucus, to participate in one or more committees, or to share with us some special skill or resource, we urge you to send in the completed form as soon as possible.

As a result of last month's by-laws revisions, the dues are now \$15 per year. (Students or those experiencing financial hardships may pay \$5 for an equivalent membership.)

Please don't delay. Upon becoming an active member of the largest gay rights organization in the South, you will receive the GPC brochure, a copy of the GPC By-Laws, and your membership/voting card.

RITZ DISCO SOLICITS GAY MARKET

After *Upfront* newspaper reported misgivings on the part of the management at The Ritz Disco for their solicitation of gay business in that gay newspaper, Ritz newly-appointed public relations liaison Scott Hagler has said that this feeling no longer exists. The person responsible for speaking to *Upfront* about this issue is no longer with this swanky N.Y.-style disco.

Hagler and cohort Rhonda Rezzofi, or "Spandex" -Woman," have requested that GPC schedule quasi-regular Sunday afternoon/evening "tea dances" for GPC fundraising. The first dance will have a Valentine Day theme and is scheduled for February 11, from 3p.m. until ?. Drinks will be discounted and cover is \$3.00. GPC will receive an as yet undetermined percentage of the cover charge and drinks cost.

NEW PUBLIC AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT TO AID GPC OUTREACH

A department that would facilitate preparation of graphics, newsletters, press conferences, press releases, and ad campaigns for various programs is being organized. GPC needs more talent in the following areas to begin using its new volunteer department more fully:

- writers/journalists
- artists
- photographers
- typesetters
- graphic design/layout artists
- printers
- day-time volunteers
- TV/Radio-experience
- marketing skills

Call Steve Schwishow or Carol Fennema at the GPC office (526-2668), or fill out the GPC application to offer your help.

GPC MOVING TO MAC?

GPC is currently seriously considering renting a suite of offices, with the use of one of the three large meeting rooms, in the Montrose Activities Center. MAC Board of Directors representatives will answer GPC members questions about MAC at our upcoming meeting.

Lee Handee will work with Don Hrachovy to coordinate the move if it is approved. We will need help with laying carpet, painting and electrical installations. Most of all we will need an air conditioner and/or a heater, and office furniture. This is another way you can help without being as visible if that's what you prefer.

Call 526-2668 to make your contribution of time, money or office items. We want an office the community can be proud of, and where we can host ourselves and even VIP's. Agree?

Thank you, Vince B., for the window unit air conditioners.

GPC EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Since its founding last spring, the GPC Education Committee has directed its efforts toward making Houston's gay men and lesbians aware of the resources available to them — a first and necessary step in the development of a real sense of Community. To that end, the Committee organized the information booths for Houston Town Meeting I, initiated the development of an expanded and current Gay Community Resource List, and began the Education Forum series during the fall and winter. The Community Resource List is nearly complete; referrals for gay-sensitive lawyers, physicians and counselors can now be obtained from Crisis Hotline, the GPC and the Houston Human Rights League. Additional resources

will be publicized when available. The question and answer Forums on medical and legal problems of the gay community were informative and well attended.

We anticipate this activity will be expanded this year. The Education Forums will be scheduled more frequently and with a wider range of topics and formats. We are working with Ruth Ravas, Public Health Representative of the Texas Department of Health, to expand the VD Screening Program in gay establishments. And finally, new projects under discussion include developing a community contact list for recognizing and establishing links with sympathetic professionals in the non-gay community; beginning a series of small, ongoing consciousness-raising and support

groups for gay men; and bringing to the gay community events which show the full range of art, film, and literature on gay themes and by gay artists and writers.

The gay population of Houston comprises more than a large number of people who share common patterns of sexual and affectional preference.

We are a real and legitimate subculture, strong, dynamic and resourceful, with values and institutions of which we can and should be proud. We can develop this sense of Community only when we have come to see and recognize these values, strengths and resources. This is the goal towards which the GPC Education Committee is working.

GPC FINANCIAL REPORT

GAY POLITICAL CAUCUS 1978 Financial Report (For year ended August 31, 1978)

INCOME:

Balance as of August 31, 1977	\$361.93
Donations/memberships/meeting collections	7,443.67
Mr. Metro Houston Pageant proceeds	1,640.90
Mr. Texas Pageant proceeds	1,080.00
Transfer from savings	590.00
Loans	473.26
Refund of telephone deposit	131.88
Miscellaneous	620.28

TOTAL INCOME:

\$12,341.92

EXPENSES:

Secretarial salary	\$3,338.83
Printing	1,924.83
Postage	1,530.55
Rent	789.30
Advertising	691.00
Federal withholding tax	690.52
Telephone	670.73
Repayment of loans	370.00
Office supplies	365.04
Office equipment	297.95
Donations	190.72
Petty cash	163.11
Car allowance	127.55
Bank service charges	101.71
State unemployment tax	84.54
Franchise tax	38.50
Dues for NGTF, TGTF	40.00
Miscellaneous	911.30

(includes:

\$600.00 prize money for Mr. Metro Houston pageant
\$100.00 Democratic party fun fest
\$100.00 Mayor McConn fund raiser)

TOTAL EXPENSES:

\$12,326.18

CASH ON HAND (as of August 31, 1978)

\$15.74

DINNER WITH THE NGTF DIRECTORS . . . TEXAS STYLE

In a more casual atmosphere than the No On 6 Human Rights Banquet, GPC brings you the Founding Co-Director of the National Gay Task Force, Dr. Bruce Voeller, and its Co-Executive Director, Ms. Jean O'Leary. This prestigious organization is working hard at catalyzing a bigger and better national gay rights movement. The enclosed brochure will list some of NGTF's accomplishments, but feeling the dynamics and enthusiasm and hearing the progressive thoughts on our dilemma will be one of the most invigorating evenings GPC has offered.

Our special guest is our Houston Town Meeting I chairperson, Ginny Apuzzo, here to rekindle the spirit of Town Meeting, and call for even better Gay Pride Week activities this year. Come eat all the Luther's Barbecue you can, wear some western duds, and we'll see you at Numbers, February 19, 7:00pm.

LEGISLATIVE LIAISON OF GPC APPOINTED

Steve Caldwell, active GPC'er for three years, and well-respected Education Committee member, has moved to Austin to attend the University of Texas at Austin and volunteered to act as GPC's liaison to the Sixty-Sixth Texas Legislature. At a meeting recently called by Rep. Ron Waters, several GPC'ers discussed how GPC should enlist the support of the Harris County delegations to both houses to "chip away" at the homosexual conduct statute in order to achieve repeal. The need for direct, professional and regular interaction with the legislators was the obvious starting point.

The plan should include these points, which Steve Caldwell will enhance by his presence in Austin:

1. Work with a friendly, but business-like attitude.
2. Have GPC'ers visit Austin each month to introduce themselves and discuss issues of the day as well as gay rights.
3. Educate them to know that they do have gay constituents.
4. Sell them on the idea that gay voting support is not a political liability.
5. Provide literature and stories on who we are, what we are doing, and why we deserve support.
6. Gain their respect on a personal level so as to build a base of support and assure them we're not a "flash in the pan." We're here to stay.
7. Aim to include sexual orientation and marital status in existing civil rights statutes, keying in on state agency hiring/firing policies.
8. Aim to amend section 21.06 of the Texas Penal Code to say "in public places" possibly.
9. Aim to repeal 21.06.
10. Work with TGTF's lobbyist.

GPC CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- January 30 — Operation: *Documentation* kick-off meeting for interested attorneys. 1505 Harold. 7:30 p.m.
- January 31 — GPC Meeting. Call 526-2668 for nomination of officers and Board. 7:30pm. MAC.
- February 1 — Operation: *Documentation* kick-off meeting with bar owners. 7:30pm. MAC.
- February 7 — GPC second call for nominations. 7:30pm. MAC.
- February 11 — Tea Dance at The Ritz Disco. 3pm until ?.
- February 19 — Dinner With The Directors of NGTF, Texas Style. \$15 or \$5. 7pm. Numbers. Call 526-2668 or see brochure for information.
- February 21 — GPC elections. 7:30pm. MAC.
- March 3 — "Late Night Out" 11 p.m.-6 a.m. Tea Dance MAC.

COMING UP SOON:

1. Tax Referendum Election.
2. Single membership district for City Council — possibly on ballot this year.
3. Formation of Municipal Election Committee — City Election Contribution Fund.
4. Screening of Mayoral/Council candidates.
5. Gay Pride Week — June.
6. City Elections — November.
7. Education Committee Open Forums on Gays and The Law; Gays and Their Health; Know Your Civil Rights; etc.

Support the gay businesses that
support your human rights.

CALLING ALL REPUBLICANS, REPUBLICANS...

GPC's power base is defined by heavy voter turn-out in geographic areas where historically, our community has resided in dense concentrations. Interestingly enough, this power base has voted mostly Democratic.

GPC is a multi-partisan organization by definition. However, identifiable Republicans who are gay and want to work within the Republican Party have been hard to find.

With recent Republican gains, the Republican party is now more desirable to work within. Therefore, several GPC Republicans are forming their own caucus within the GPC so as to have their philosophies and ideas more visible and articulated, and most of all, more seriously considered.

The GPC Board considers this to be one of the most significant improvements GPC could make. We have been working with good Democrats, but now is the time to have our presence felt in other parties as well.

Republicans, mark your political preference on the GPC application and you will be contacted for a "social" in order to become acquainted with one another.

VOTER REGISTRATION

Although it is still several months until the next city elections, now is a good time to make sure that you and your friends are correctly registered to vote. The enclosed card can be used for your initial registration as well as for a change of address. If you are already registered, *please make sure that your friends are properly registered*. Many people believe there is a residency requirement before you can register. *This is not true*. However, the County must receive the form at least one month before an election for one to vote in that election. So don't delay. If you need any assistance with voter registration, call the GPC office at 526-2668 or the Harris County voter registration office at 224-1919, extension 310.

When GPC registers people at the various bars and gay establishments in Houston, the registrars are deputized by the County and are GPC members. The cards are *not* turned in as "gay" registrants. They are simply turned in to a bureaucratic system of clerks who have no idea where the cards are collected, and don't care either.

Therefore, there is no possibility of a "list" of gay voters being formulated by any governmental agency.

INITIATIVE/REFERENDA PROPOSITION FOR TEXAS ?

Governor Bill Clements is endorsing a bill that would create initiative-referenda procedures in the State of Texas. This procedure is the one which has enabled issues like Proposition 6 (the Briggs Initiative) in California to be voted upon by the general public.

The GPC has taken no official stand, but these points are under consideration:

1. Should any American have the right to vote on the rights of another America?
2. Are civil rights legislated or guaranteed by our Constitution?
3. Can civil rights be excluded as a category in this proposed bill?
4. Do Texans want more input via this proposal, or are there better methods of gaining input?

What do you think? Write your legislator and GPC!

GAY TEACHERS ORGANIZE

Helping yourself as a gay teacher/administrator by calling your gay teacher/administrator friends before a threat to your job security exists is the best way to keep the more closeted yet concerned gay teachers from staying away from such organizing attempts. These meetings need not be "the talk of the community," but at the same time should involve as many people as possible. GPC would certainly consider discussing preventative and preparatory plans as soon as possible. Call the office for Bob Fliescher, Education Coordinator, so he can get you in touch with the few already organized gay teachers/administrators.

Needless to say, this profession will most probably be the first one attacked in the legislature or through newly proposed initiative-referenda procedures.

OUR TIME
HAS COME

Join The Houston Gay Political Caucus
Call 526-2668 today!

LETTER FROM THE VICE-PRESIDENT

On returning from the National Democratic Mini-Convention, one that was filled with lots of rhetoric and idealism from President Carter, little input from the grass roots Democrats, and even less open minority participation, one might ask what was accomplished and whether the trip was worth the time and money invested.

First let me state that any time we participate in open discussions about our gayness, we gain; but in this instance we gained much, much more than we had expected!

On the national level we were able to set up lines of communication from East to West and North to South that had never been there before. For the first time, Houston has the ability to make national contact and to insure that our movement has the input and foresight which already exists in the southwestern United States. This base is now being mobilized to create a national gay caucus of sorts for the purposes of preparing for 1980. Houston GPC will be a significant force in this movement!

On the state level, we (the Gay Caucus of the Democratic Party) were able to divide state delegations and speak to them on a personal level concerning the need for a gay rights resolution coming from the Democratic Party and at the same time educate them about who we are and what we want. We also succeeded in making supportive friends in the Louisiana and Texas delegations that promised us future support.

On the city level, all I can say is good. Good because we were able to bring, just by our openness, a breath of fresh air to the gay community of Memphis. One not of confrontation, but of education and pride in ourselves as gays. This good fortune was returned in much appreciated hospitality. All I can say is, "Thank you, Memphis," and thanks to all the many people who gave us the financial support needed to get us to Memphis and the National Democratic Mini-Convention.

Having just completed what I would call a crash course in political participation, I must say, "Look out, 1980, here we come!"

Larry Bagneris Jr.

GPC AND THE ERA

Houston GPC sponsored a massive letter-writing campaign in May of 1978 regarding its pro stand on the extension of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA). At that time GPC unanimously voted for the need to hold ERA education seminars so as to promote understanding of this important constitutional amendment.

Now the GPC is proposing the following resolution:

WHEREAS, inclusion in the Constitution of these United States is the basic inalienable right of every citizen, and,

WHEREAS, women have been excluded from the Constitution since its writing, and,

WHEREAS, the same forces which oppose the ratification of the ERA also oppose equal rights for lesbians and gay men, and,

WHEREAS, the Gay Political Caucus of Houston views as intolerable this exclusion of over one-half of the population of this country, and,

WHEREAS, the Equal Rights Amendment, writing women into the Constitution, must be ratified by three-fourths (38) of the states prior to its becoming a part of the United States Constitution,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that all future conventions, meetings, and conferences of the Gay Political Caucus will be held only in those states that have ratified the Equal Rights Amendment.

BE IT ALSO RESOLVED that the Gay Political Caucus focus its economic boycott on the State of Louisiana.

Your support is needed and you can participate in the following manner:

1. Write a letter to the Chamber of Commerce in New Orleans, Baton Rouge and Lafayette advising them of your cancellation of any vacation/travel plans to the state of Louisiana. Make mention of the particular event in Louisiana that you are boycotting.

2. Get one or two friends to do the same thing.

3. Send a contribution to GPC marked for furthering the economic boycott.

Even if you are not planning to visit Louisiana or have no intention of cancelling plans, a letter is still very effective.

OFFICERS OF THE GPC

President — Steve H. Shiflett

Vice-President — Larry Bagneris, Jr.

Secretary — Nick Escobedo

Treasurer — Bob Lockett