



# NEWSLETTER

Houston Gay & Lesbian Political Caucus

March 1989

P.O. Box 66664

Houston, Texas 77266

(713) 521-1000

## GLPC Urges End To Anti-Gay/Lesbian Violence

By Harry Livesay

GLPC members overwhelmingly passed an anti-gay/lesbian violence resolution at its March 1 meeting. The resolution urges city of Houston support for the state hate crimes bill. It also urges the Houston Police Department to begin keeping local statistics on hate crimes. A full text of the resolution is printed on page 4.

GLPC president **Ray Hill** presented the resolution to the Houston City Council March 8 and conducted a news conference that day at city hall.

The March 1 presentation included information about the drastic rise in anti-gay and lesbian violence in Houston, Texas and in the nation, and what our community can do to battle this growing crisis.

According to GLPC president, Ray Hill, "Houston police are currently investigating 12 homicides that cannot be explained as a result of robbery or domestic conflict which occurred in the Montrose area."

A 1987 study by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force found that anti-gay and lesbian violence and harassment increased over 42% in a one-year period. Current reports indicate this level continues to increase from 25% to 65% throughout the nation. Hill believes the majority of hate crimes against lesbians and gays still remain unreported due to "closet isolation and low self-esteem within the gay and lesbian community."

Another factor responsible for the under-reporting is the continued refusal of local and state law-enforcement agencies to give equal consideration to crimes motivated by a victim's sexual orientation, as in cases motivated by a victim's race, color, or religion.

Evidence collected by the Center For Democratic Renewal and the National Council of Churches indicates that increased reports of violence directed against lesbians and gay men occur at the same time of widespread attacks on other minorities, such as Arabs, Asians, blacks, Hispanics, and Jews.

National pressure by organizations such as the NGLTF, NGRA, the Human Rights Campaign Fund, and others has resulted in congressional attempts to pass legislation mandating the collection of statistics on "hate crimes" motivated by sexual orientation, as well as race, religion, or ethnicity.

Some cities have taken the lead by passing "hate-crimes" ordinances, with severe penalties for crimes motivated by prejudice and hatred. The city of Houston has no such law.

Hill believes anti-gay and lesbian violence continues to increase in Houston due, in part, to "the perception that gay people are easy targets, unable to fight back, and unwilling to risk exposure by reporting crimes against them to the police." Citing the recent murder of Debra Marie Koss in Pasadena as an example of the "hate crimes crisis" in the Houston area, Hill urges all persons in our community to attend the March 15 meeting to learn how to combat the bigotry and prejudice which leads to anti-gay and lesbian violence. A letter-writing workshop on anti-gay/lesbian violence is scheduled for the March 15 caucus meeting. The meeting will be at 7:30 p.m. March 15 at the Travelodge Hotel, 2828 Southwest Freeway. For more information, call the GLPC office at 521-1000.

### Major Projects Planned; Committees Look For "Hidden Talent"

By Harry Livesay

The GLPC is undertaking three major projects this year to strengthen the caucus and to increase the solidarity of the Houston gay and lesbian community.

The first project is to improve and enhance the computer system of our organization, and to streamline and update our mailing list. Computer committee chair **Mike Stubblefield** stated, "We're currently updating, researching, and cross-referencing over 4,500 pieces of mail. We plan to implement

four computer work stations for data entry on the master mailing list. Having the ability to correct and input this much information will make your mailing list much more efficient, and will ensure that our members receive vital information from the caucus."

Voter Registration Committee Co-chair **Tim Hall** heads the effort for GLPC's second major project: a concentrated effort to intensify the formidable gay and lesbian voting bloc in Houston through a mass voter registration campaign. The campaign will include prizes ranging from cameras to cash for the three top voter registrars. The next meeting will be at 7:30 p.m. March 22 at the GLPC office, 900 Lovett, No. 101. (See Major Projects, page 2.)

## Major Projects (From Page 1)

Heading the third major project is Jack Valinski, chair of the Membership Committee. Jack stated, "I'll be sending out form letters and a mass mailout for address corrections" to update the GLPC mailing list. Valinski has pledged to work with President Ray Hill and all the members of the caucus to increase membership to 1,000 before the November general election. (A membership application is provided on page 4.)

The GLPC is currently looking for the "hidden talents" of our membership to join the ongoing efforts of these committees in these exciting projects. **We need you!** to help make 1989 GLPC's most successful year ever! For more information contact the GLPC office at 521-1000, or attend a GLPC meeting the first and third Wednesdays of the month.

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## Name The Newsletter

Perhaps you noticed that the name of our newsletter doesn't show much originality. Maybe gay and lesbian political types aren't as witty as many of our brothers and sisters. If *you're* feeling especially witty, however, call the GLPC office with some suggested names. No wisecracs please!

## Warm Reception For Gay/Lesbian Rights

By Bill Willis

Although we're perceived as the leading edge, the GLPC remains the longest standing gay and lesbian rights group in the city. But we've encountered the same kind of problems as others in our community. Some of those we most depended upon have fallen before the ravaging epidemic in our land. One of those stalwarts, Don Hrachovy, willed computers and software to the caucus. Since his untimely death, our systems have fallen into disrepair. To become operational, a consultant estimates our immediate needs at around \$1,000. We believe that the rights we fight for are worth at least that much, and we need your support. Join us and give what you can.

## A Tisket-A-Tasket (Come Fill Stone Soup's Basket)

By Bill Willis

He first got involved in GLPC when he got tired of complaining and decided to take more direct action. Like most of us, board member **Lou Vanech** found that active participation enabled him to really focus on the objects of his complaints. It fulfilled a sense of responsibility too. When he saw that not much political attention was being given to AIDS issues he decided to get busy.

A Tisket-A-Tasket, now in its second year, grew out of that concern. Jointly sponsored by the Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus and the AIDS Foundation of Houston, it

## Voter Registrar, Letters at March 15 Meeting

Part of the March 15 meeting will be devoted to writing legislators in support of pending hate crimes bills. Legislation is being considered on both national and state levels. The letter-writing session is a follow-up to the March 1 GLPC resolution concerning anti-gay/lesbian violence. (See separate story.)

A representative of the County Voter Registrar's office also will be present to deputize caucus members for the new

## GLPC Endorses HISD Bond Package, Elects Board Member

GLPC endorsed the \$300 million Houston ISD bond election at the March 1 meeting.

Two HISD representative addressed the caucus and explained the need for the bond package.

The bond election was scheduled for March 7. The caucus endorsement was immediately publicized in a general press release to all Houston media.

In other business, **Paul Simmons** was elected to the GLPC board.

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We invite you to be our guests at a reception to meet the new officers and to honor the outgoing president and officers. A cash bar will be available and hors d'oeuvres will be served. Former officers of the caucus are expected to attend. Come meet our leaders. Help set our direction for 1989. Make Gay and Lesbian rights a reality in Houston.

*Mark your calendar or appointment book now:*

Saturday, March 18

8 to 11 p.m. (presentations at 10)

Dress casual to semi-formal

4316 Roseneath (See invitation and map.)

If you have a scheduling conflict and you can't make it, send your donation by mail. Mark your check to indicate "computer project". If you have questions about the event, call the GLPC office, 521-1000.

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draws public attention to underfunding problems in caring for people with AIDS. It's also a partial solution that opens the door to greater community participation. This year the collection is set for March 25, the day before Easter.

Lou asks that you pay particular attention to the Stone Soup Wish List during the week prior to the food drive. (See the *Montrose Voice* and *This Week in Texas*.) Food given should be non-perishable. Please bring your donations in doubled paper bags. While you're thinking of PWAs, think

about helping some of their closest friends. That's right, pet food is almost always on a list of wanted items. During a lengthy illness, a pet can be the most enduring of companions.

(See Tisket-A-Tasket, page 4.)

## Board Gets Busy On Busy Year

By Cicely Wynne

GLPC board members spent a lengthy but productive Saturday, February 11 planning for the new year.

The annual board retreat covered every aspect of caucus business, from membership to mailing lists.

The board took several steps to increase membership: A newsletter committee will produce a monthly newsletter; bids will be taken for membership cards; membership/fund-raising letters will be sent to targeted sections of the mailing list; and a combination brochure/membership form will be created.

Also approved was a new membership/mailling list policy designed to clarify and tighten use of the lists.

The motion reads:

The president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, chairs of the membership and newsletter committees shall have operational use of the membership list.

Operational use is defined as regular, direct caucus business including fund-raising for the caucus, excluding fund-raising for any individual or any other organization.

Other usage of the membership list must be approved by a majority of the board. If approval is needed before a meeting can be scheduled, polling of the board and approval by a majority of the board will constitute authorization.

(This operating procedure is in addition to Article XI of the GLPC bylaws, which states: The mailing list, including

all membership records, is the sole property of the Caucus and is to remain confidential at all times. The Board shall insure this confidentiality. No Member may have access to the mailing list for non-Caucus business.)

Other board action:

\* Three fund-raising events were approved.

The search is underway for a speaker for the annual GLPC awards dinner, probably to be held in September. **Joe Thornton** will head a committee to plan the GLPC booth at the April 8-9 Westheimer Arts Festival.

The third event, a March 18 fund-raiser, is featured in the enclosed invitation.

\* The board accepted a computer committee report recommending a \$920 expenditure to update GLPC's two computers. The board and caucus will vote on spending funds for immediate and long-term computer/mailling list needs. The two computers were donated to the caucus by the estate of the late **Don Hrachovy**, former mailing list coordinator.

\* A committee will research the possibility of moving the GLPC office and meeting location.

\* Three presidential appointments were approved: **Mike Stubblefield**, computer/mailling list; **Darrell Young**, voter registration; and **Jack Valinski**, membership.

\* Media policy and strategy was reviewed, as were annual expenses and income.

\* As time ran out, other political brainstorming was postponed until the March 8 board meeting.

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## Mickey Leland Honored, Committee Heads Approved

A resolution honoring U.S. Rep. Mickey Leland was overwhelmingly approved at the Feb. 15 GLPC meeting.

The 18th Congressional District representative was commended for mailing constituents an AIDS informational packet and for supporting gay and lesbian rights.

GLPC Vice President **Dennis Spencer** personally delivered the resolution to Leland's Washington, D.C. office.

In other caucus business, new President **Ray Hill** announced three key committee appointments: **Mike Stubblefield**, computer/mailling list; **Darrell Young**, voter registration; and **Jack Valinski**, membership.

After adjourning the business meeting, Ray Hill presented a special program on homophobia within the gay and lesbian movement.

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## Supplies Needed

The GLPC office cabinets are almost bare. We would gratefully appreciate:

- Copy paper, 50-60 pound (white and colors)
- Business envelopes
- Stamps

If you happen to have any extra supplies, call the caucus office, 521-1000.

## Business Card Ads \$10

Ad space is available in the GLPC monthly newsletter. For only \$10 monthly, you can support the caucus and promote your business to people who financially support GLPC and the community. The caucus has about 300 dues-paying members.

Business cards ads must be camera ready. A 6-month contract is \$50, and an annual contract is \$100. For more information, call the office, 521-1000, or 522-9837.

## Operation Get-Over-It

By Michael Hollier

A committee has been formed within GLPC to organize a political response and raise community awareness about a form that the Texas Association of Realtors (TAR) is distributing to its members as a "courtesy."

The form is an Owner Disclosure Statement. In section four, along with questions about active termites and the hundred-year flood plain, is the question: Did the prior or current resident have AIDS? Many protests have been raised by state and local organizations.

There will be legislation introduced during this session of the state legislature prohibiting realtors from asking this. In (See Get-Over-It on following page.)

**Get-Over-It (From preceding page.)**

addition, our committee will attempt to convince TAR that this question should be deleted from the disclosure form NOW!

It is extremely important that realtors who are members of TAR express their displeasure with their trade association. Concerned individuals can contact their legislators and urge a speedy legislative end to this matter. Individuals are urged to send letters to TAR to voice their outrage. Send letters to: Texas Association of Realtors, P.O. Box 14488, Austin, Texas 78761.

Letters can be forwarded to the Houston Board of Realtors, 3693 Southwest Freeway, Houston, Texas 77027, to request that they urge their state organization to drop this question from the disclosure form immediately.

If you would like to volunteer for this project or have any suggestions on strategy, please contact GLPC at 521-1000. We are planning an organizational meeting for late March. Additional information will be available at the bimonthly GLPC meetings.

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**GLPC - NOW Joint Meeting May 17**

Mark your calendars for May 17.

Join GLPC for a special program on pornography and First Amendment rights.

GLPC will hold a joint meeting with Houston National Organization for Women (NOW) at 7:30 p.m. May 17 at the Travelodge Hotel, 2828 Southwest Freeway.

Get Involved.

**JOIN THE GLPC!**

(Sign your friends up too.)

**Hate Crimes Bill Resolution Text**

The following is the text of the Hate Crimes Resolution passed at the March 1 GLPC meeting.

WHEREAS: There has been a recent increase in violent crime motivated by hate and prejudice in Houston and specifically in the Montrose area, and

WHEREAS: The City of Houston does not keep statistics on such crimes when the victims are gay or lesbian, and

WHEREAS: The perpetrators of such crimes are frequently the same assailants that target other groups in society for similar violence, and

WHEREAS: The keeping of only partial statistics on hate crimes is a danger to the safety of all Houstonians, and

WHEREAS: Senator Craig Washington has introduced Committee Substitute Senate Bill No. 22, that addressed these and other concerns presented by hate motivated crimes,

BE IT RESOLVED: That Houston Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus ask Houston City Council to instruct Houston Police Department to begin keeping complete records of hate crimes including those with gay and lesbian victims, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: That Houston Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus ask Houston City Council to add support for the passage of this Bill to their legislative package and instruct their lobbyist to press for its passage in the Texas Legislature.

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**Tisket-A-Tasket (From page 2.)**

If you can help for just one day, think about unloading food from cars, sorting it, or transporting it from the collection area to the pantry. To get involved, leave a message for Lou at the GLPC office, 521-1000 or call 523-8935.

The collection will be in the parking lot of Mary's (1000 Westheimer) on Saturday, March 25, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

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|--------------------------|--|-------|-----------|
| Name                     |  | Phone |           |
| Address                  |  | City  | State ZIP |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | \$25 regular annual membership                             |       |           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | \$40 two-year membership                                   |       |           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Monthly checking account deduction for GLPC pledge program |       |           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Change in mailing address                                  |       |           |

Fight Back.  
**JOIN THE GLPC!**  
Help protect your rights.

Mail to: GLPC, P.O. Box 66664, Houston, Texas 77266