THE ADVOCATE

Touching Your Lifestyle | Issue No. 176, November 5, 1975 | In Two Sections, 75 cents

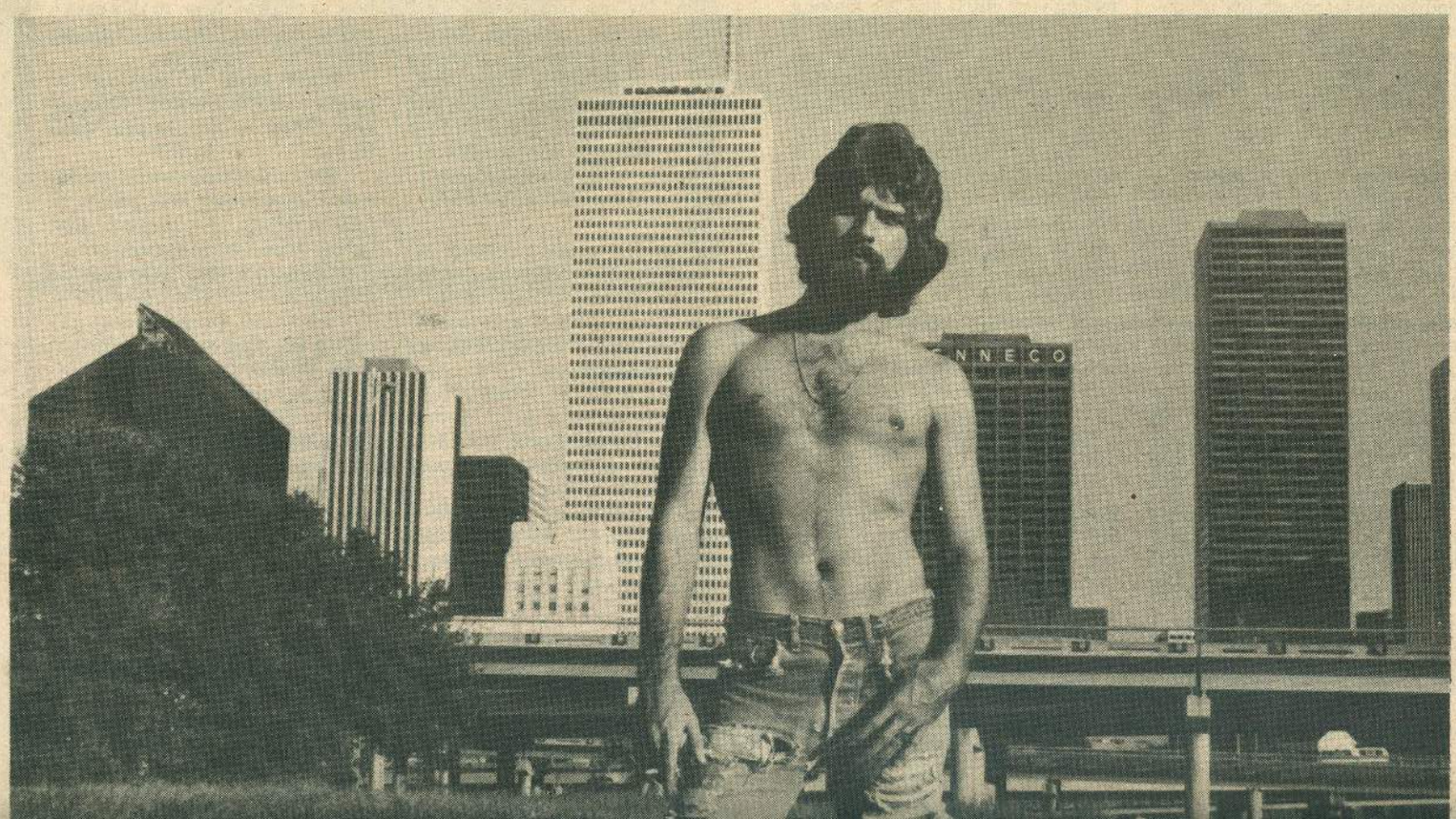
IN THIS ISSUE READ WHAT DEMO PREXY HOPEFULS ARE SAY-ING ABOUT GAY RIGHTS, PLUS FOUR EXPERT OPINIONS ON THE SUBJECT OF

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UALITY AND GAY SENSUALITY. AND CHECK IN ON THE HOUSTON SCENE AND GET UPDATED ON THE LATEST WINS OF BIG CHIEF DAVIS IN HIS EFFORTS TO KEEP GAY COPS OFF THE L.A. FORCE . . .

GETTING OFF TO HOUSTON



by George DeWoody

There are only a handful of cities in the world where you will find the combination of a growing economic base, vital cultural energy and a dynamic mix of people and lifestyles. Houston is one of them.

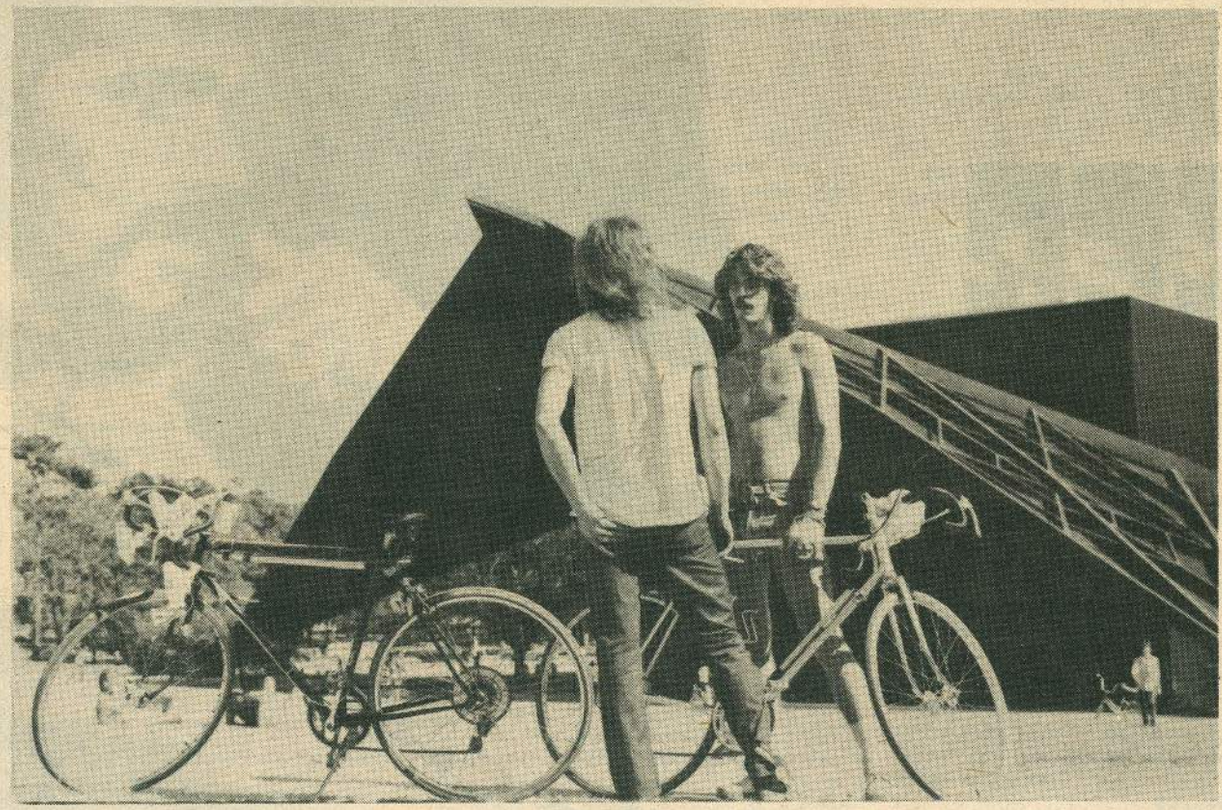
Unlike San Francisco, New York or other traditionally established metropolises, Houston has come on big, strong and fast. In the past 25 years the population has doubled, the metropolitan area approaching two and one-half million. It is the world leader in the petrochemical industry, the center of the American space effort and the nation's third-largest seaport.

With probably the strongest economy of any city in the country, Houston boasts of its low unemployment rate (challenged only by Dallas-Fort Worth as the nation's lowest), an $18-million city surplus, and no new taxes.

A massive Houston-Galveston megalopolis is on its way. It is a City of the Future today. The architectural horizon changes constantly; futuristic sets used in films like *Rollerball* are everyday places of Houston commerce and



Photos: George DeWoody



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With this same spirit of growth and adventure, the gay men and women of Houston are visibly moving to organize and to build.

As a voting bloc, gay Houston assured the 1973 election of its first liberal, professionally competent mayor. The recently formed Gay Political Caucus (see page 14) held the first gay voter rally in the South-Southwest, drawing over 500 people, drinking beer supplied by six of Houston's gay bars, listening to candidates from right to left, and opening a good many closet doors in the process.

A noticeable concentration of gay residents makes up the Montrose section of the city. "Homo Heights" has it all. Shops, bars, bookstores, boutiques, eateries and the cruisiest area east of Castro Street and west of Christopher.

Recently, on my first visit to Houston, I discovered myself homeless and horny at midnight in the Houston Intercontinental Airport. The situation was easily remedied. With the airport bus depositing me downtown and the cooperation of a knowledgeable cabbie, I soon found myself in The Locker, and appropriately butch-sounding pub on Westheimer. And quicker than you can say "Howdy, podner" I had a home. No strings attached—that's Texas hospitality.

In addition to The Locker, you'll find lots of hospitality in the crowd at Mary's. Both bars are headquarters for Houston's leath-

er set. Mary's, with its Sunday afternoon frolic, is justly famed; its reputation as Houston's raunchiest scene goes unchallenged.

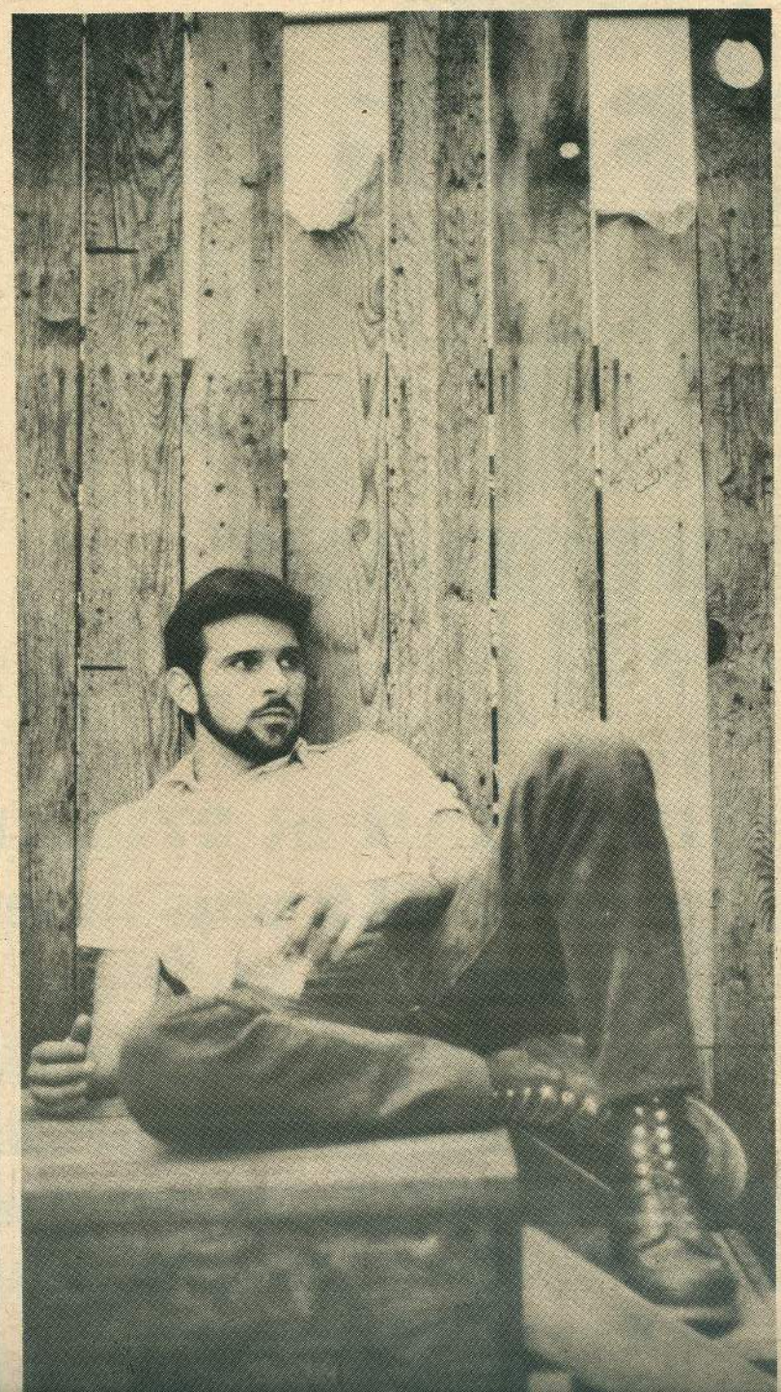
The totally unique Filling Station is becoming quite a popular stopping-off place between Mary's and The Locker. You've never seen a men's room like the one in this converted gas station.

Most of the "get down" dance energy is flowing back and forth between the Farmhouse (billing itself as the largest gay bar in America) and the brand-new Depository disco on Westheimer. Try for a busy dance night at the Pisces Club, some distance away from the Montrose action, but worth the trip to Richmond at Hillcroft. And if it's afternoon socializing you crave, then Dirty Sally's should get you started, with Mary's close behind.

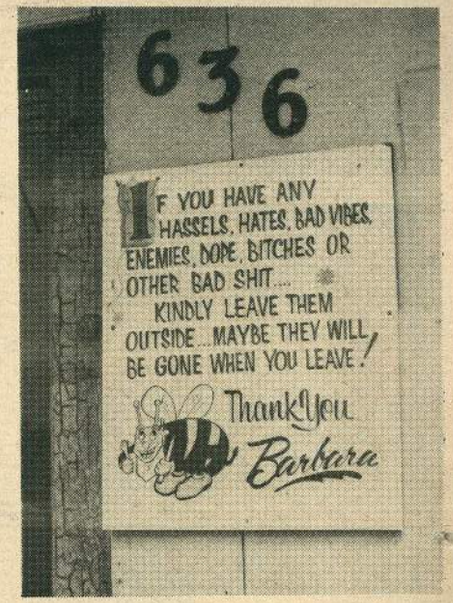
Drag shows are big down this way—lots of reincarnated Southern belles. The Farmhouse, Bayou Landing and, most notably, the Hi Kamp deliver some outrageous shows.

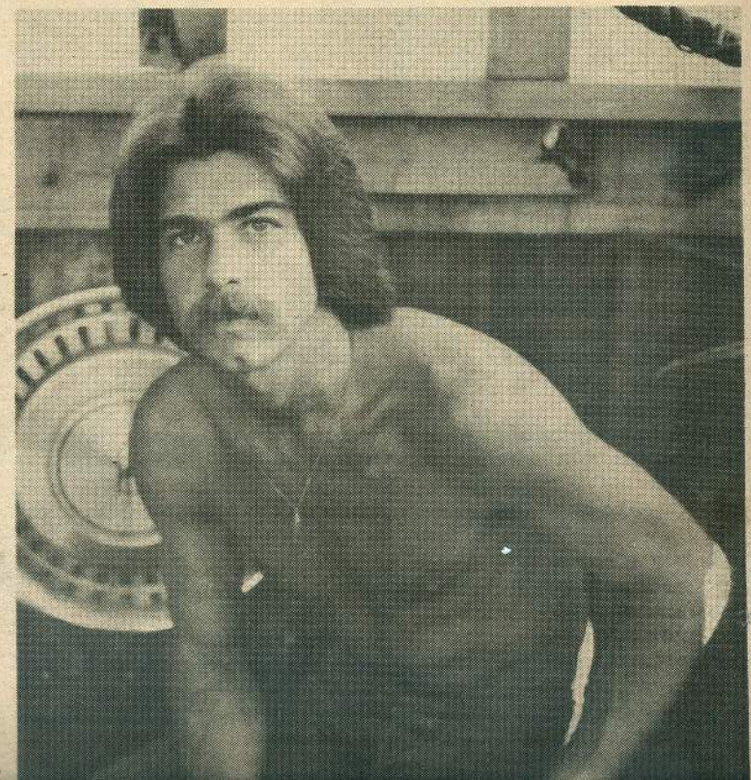
For outside cruising, you'll find "The Circuit" in the blocks above Westheimer to Alabama, primarily along Lorett from Montrose to Garrott. Residents in this area, both gay and straight, are actually campaigning with posters and leaflets to try to move "The Circuit" out of their front yards. It's doubtful that patterns like this can be changed by gentle persuasion, so you might be advised to check on the status of this scene.

The gay restaurant is Tooter's on Westheimer; everyone seems to show up there after bar closing. The food is not as worthwhile as the clientele, but at 2AM who's interested in food, anyway? You might want to check out the Two Greek Brothers restaurant for a variation on the same theme. But the very best eating I found (given the state of my budget) was Barbara's Home Cookin' on Ala-









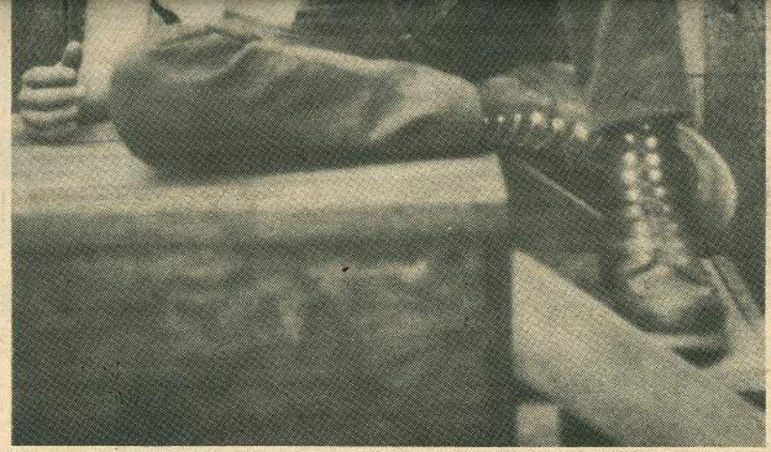
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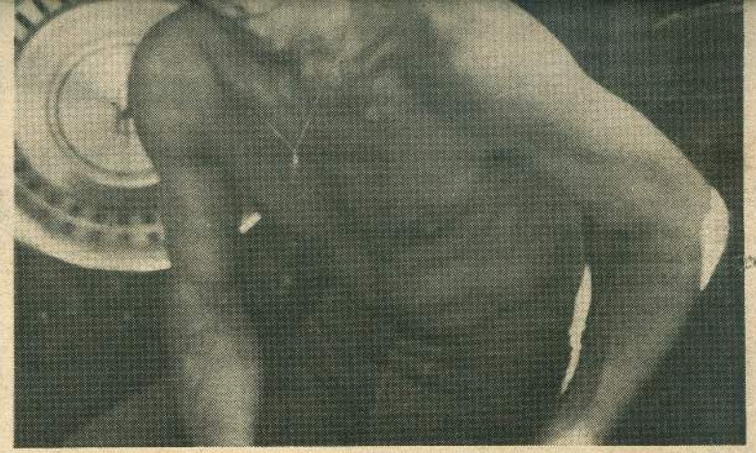
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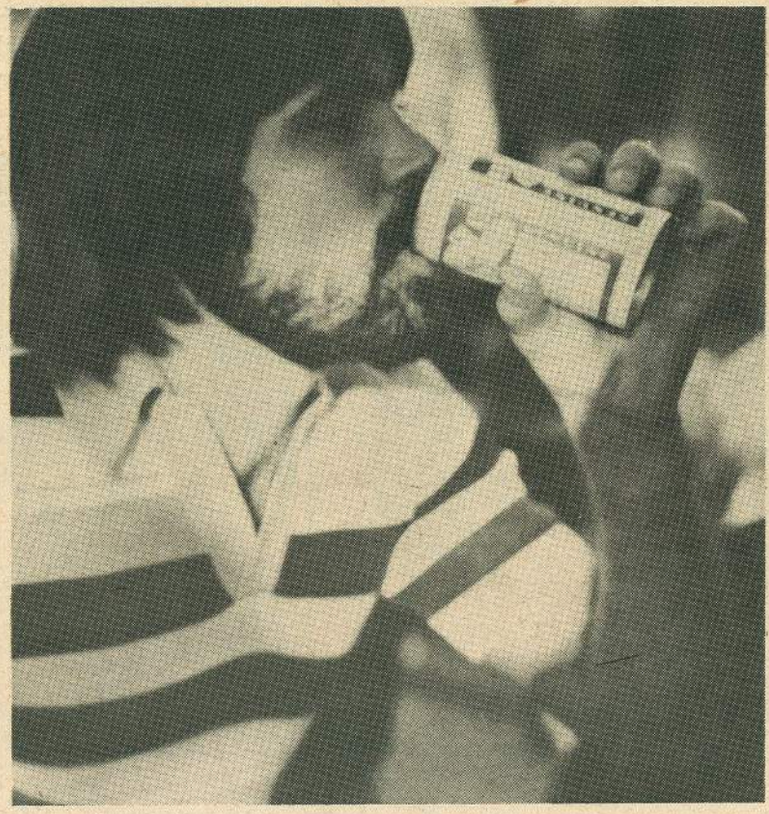
While we're giving out tips on this and that, the best haircutting in town can be had at Hairphernalia on San Felipe; you'll find organic food and lots of good people at the Richwood Food Market, a.k.a. "Freaky Foods," on Richmond at Woodhead; the threads at Tootsie's are *tres chic*; and if you want to pick up the latest disco hits you heard at the Farmhouse you'll probably find them at the Record Rack at Alabama and Shepherd. It there's anything else you need, just ask someone appealing—you may end up with a lot more than you expected.

They tell me that Houston has the world's worst climate, but I enjoyed a week of beautifully moderate San Francisco-style weather that had everyone freaking out on how cool it was. Summertime, when you can expect temperatures in the 90s with humidity to match, finds everyone down on Galveston beaches. Out of necessity, Houston has got to be the most air-conditioned city ever.

However you find the weather and wherever you stage your scene, you can be assured that the gay folk of Houston will give you plenty of reason to want to stay around. The energy and good times are booming just as high as the skyline. •











Farmhouse

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HOUSTON'S #1 SUPER BAR at 2710 Albany Rock and roll every night 7 til 2 plus after hours Friday and Saturday, with disc jockies Bill Lewallen & Wayne Howarth. Swimming pool open at noon. Divine shows Wednesdays & Sunday, Amateur Night Monday, in the Plantation Room. $1.25 beer bust 7pm-midnight Sunday, half price nights Monday & Thursday...

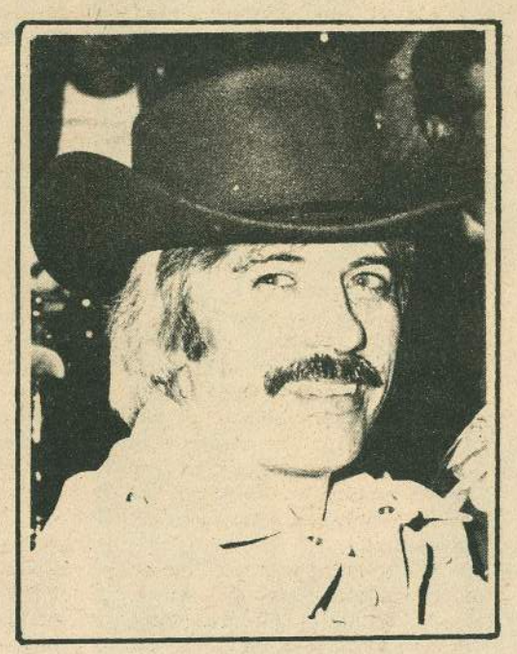
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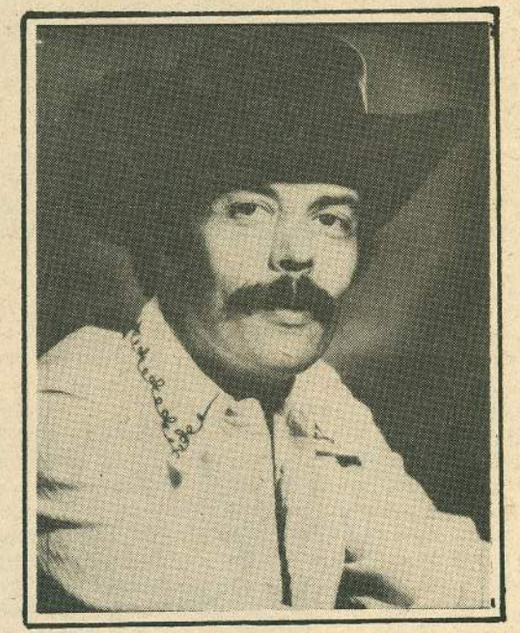
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THE FARMHOUSE



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