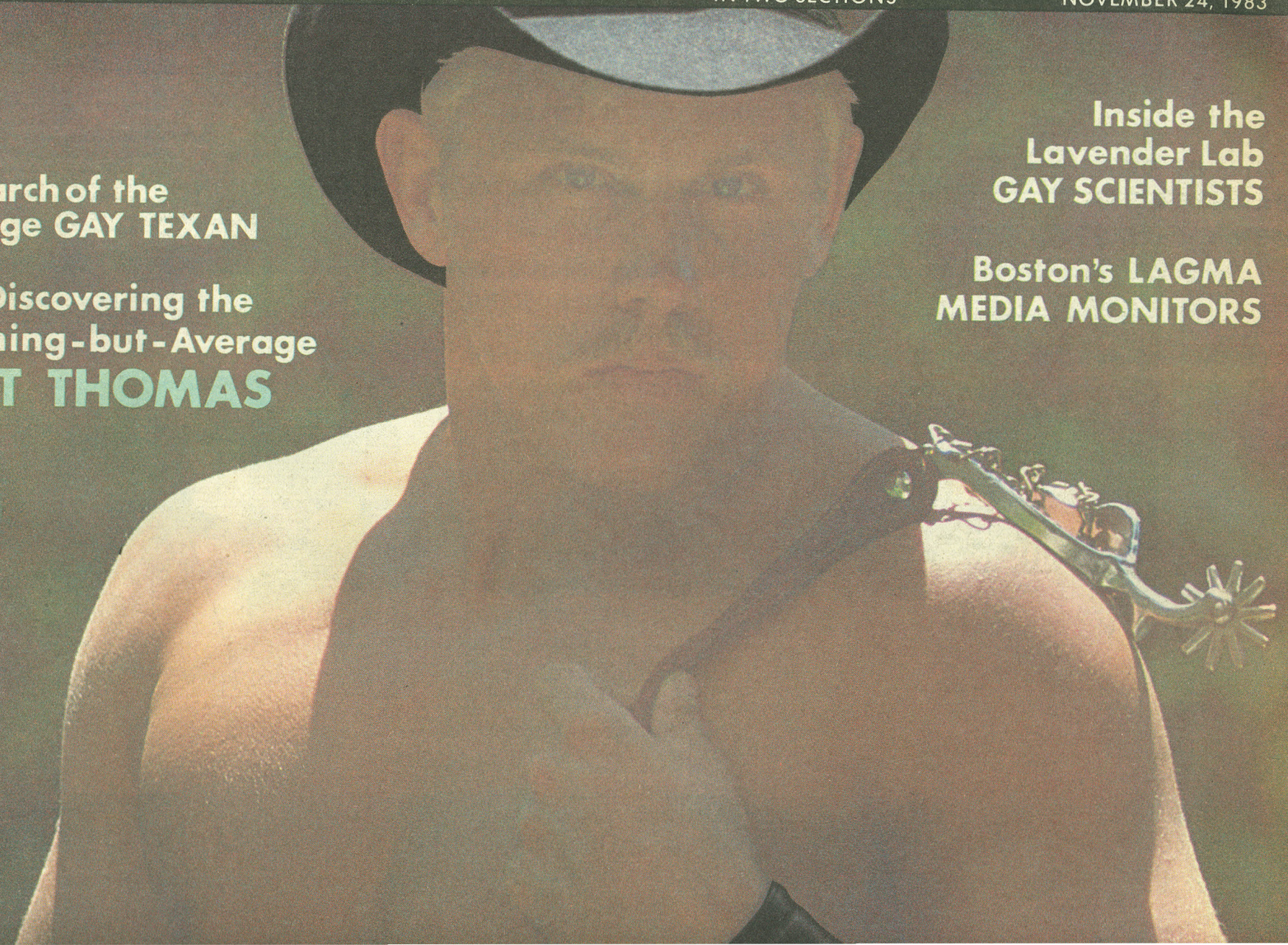
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THE ADVOCATE

ISSUE 381 THE NATIONAL GAY NEWSMAGAZINE IN TWO SECTIONS NOVEMBER 24, 1983



In Search of the Average GAY TEXAN

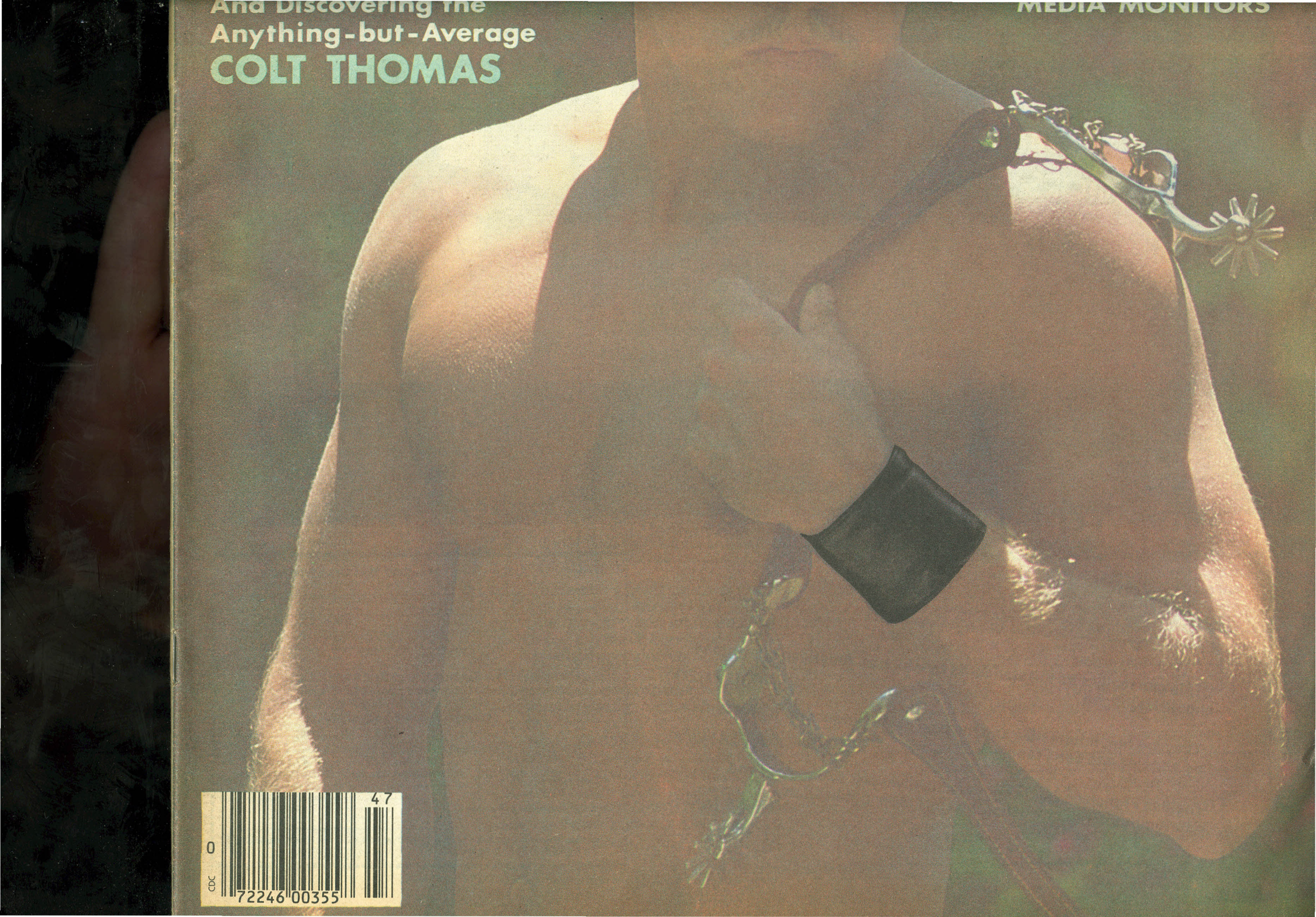
And Discovering the Anything-but-Average COLT THOMAS

Inside the Lavender Lab GAY SCIENTISTS

Boston's LAGMA MEDIA MONITORS

And Discovering the
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MEDIA MONITORS



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SCOTT R. TAYLOR

Gay "Splash Day" at Austin's Hippie Hollow

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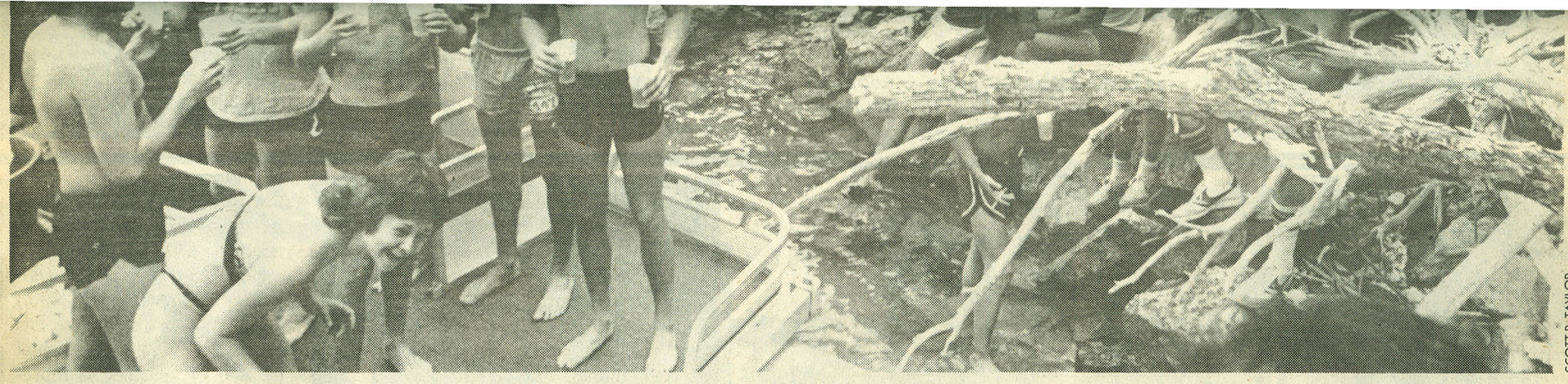
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IN SEARCH OF THE AVERAGE GAY TEXAN IS THERE SUCH A THING?

BY JOE BAKER

Houston activists to conservative Dallas business people. Closeted schoolteachers to rural ranchers. Young college students to factory workers. Whites, blacks, Hispanics, men, women, young and old. These are the gay people of the Lone Star State.

Its critics say it is overgrown, overblown and overshown. But it must be doing something right because 175,000 new residents—thousands of them homosexuals—are moving to the state each year.

Texas: People love to hate it, or they love to love it. Home-on-the-range to 14.2 million people. A whopping 267,338 square miles. Big and brassy, and definitely sassy.

Texas has always been a place surrounded by legends, myths and fantasies. But don't forget the facts.

The nation's leading oil-producing state, Texas pumps enough oil to run every car in the United States—some 960 million barrels a year. Second to California in farm and ranch production. First in beef, sheep, cotton, grain and spinach. Look out California and Florida—citrus production is gaining fast.

Texas is today's promised land. Investors and corporations seek it out. So too do thousands of unemployed, who flock to the state to find the "good life" they've heard so much about. Yes, some don't find it—but many more do.

No doubt Texas is big. And its people —natives and those who adopt it—think big. The Texan is independent, individualistic and unique.

Texas also is diverse. From majestic skyscrapers and three-piece suits to ranches and cowboy hats. Mercedes and pickup trucks. Yankees and good old boys and gals. Texas is a land of many faces, cultures, characters and charms.

No two parts of the state are the same. Each has its own attitudes, lifestyles and action.

Industrial Houston, the cattle and mountains of West Texas, cowboys and rodeos in Fort Worth, the rolling hills of Central Texas and Austin, cosmopolitan Dallas, oil-rich Midland and Odessa, the independent Panhandle, the farms of East Texas, and the Coastal Plains and shimmering waters of the Gulf of Mexico in the Southeast.

All of this is Texas.

But there's another part of the Texas story too. Houston activists to conservative Dallas business people. Closeted schoolteachers to rural ranchers. Young college students to factory workers. Whites, blacks, Hispanics, men, women, young and old. These are the gay people of the Lone Star State.

The conversation was going smoothly enough. I had flown down from Dallas to spend the weekend with my friend "Ted," a Houston-area schoolteacher. But then I mentioned I was working on a feature story about gay Texas for *The ADVOCATE*.

"For once, why doesn't one of you reporters write about the average gay person," Ted snapped. "All you journalists ever write about are the gay stereotypes and the gay activists. Write about the average man or woman."

As a professional journalist for 13 years, I've heard my friend's complaint

Joe Baker is The ADVOCATE's *Dallas news correspondent.*

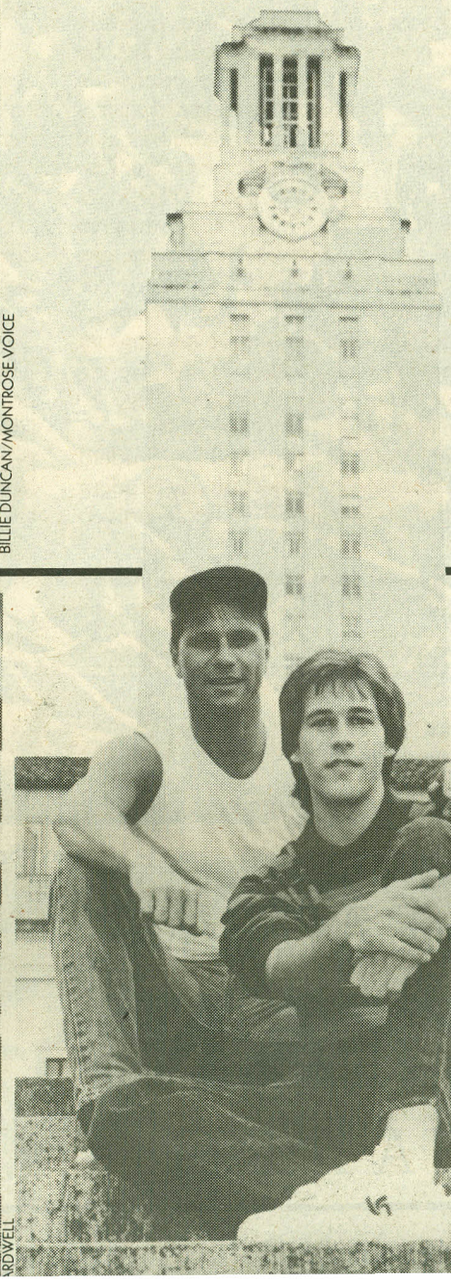
Double take at Houston's Mary's



BILLIE DUNCAN/MONTROSE VOICE



BOB CARDWELL



R. TAYLOR

Afternoon arias in Houston



BILLIE DUNCAN/MONTROSE VOICE

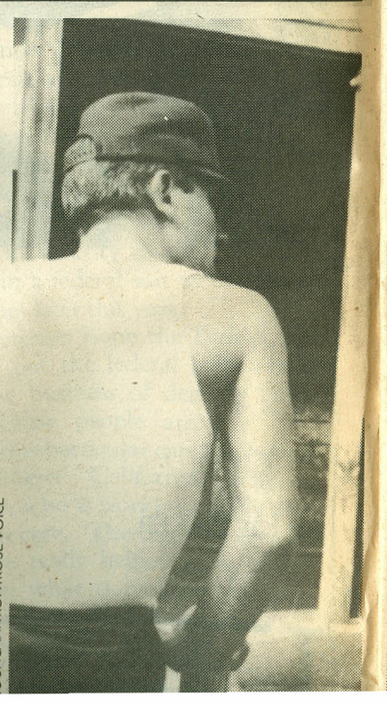


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The "Texas Two-step" at Dallas' Round-Up Saloon



BOB CARDWELL



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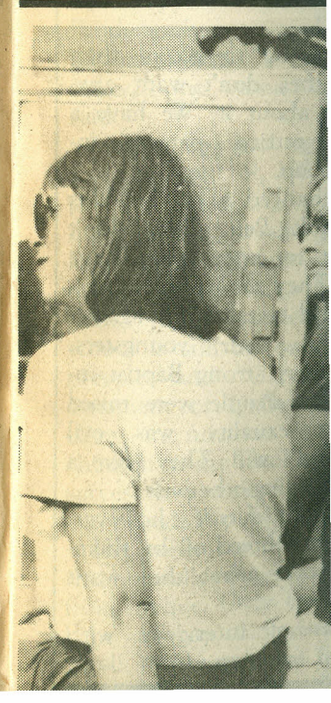
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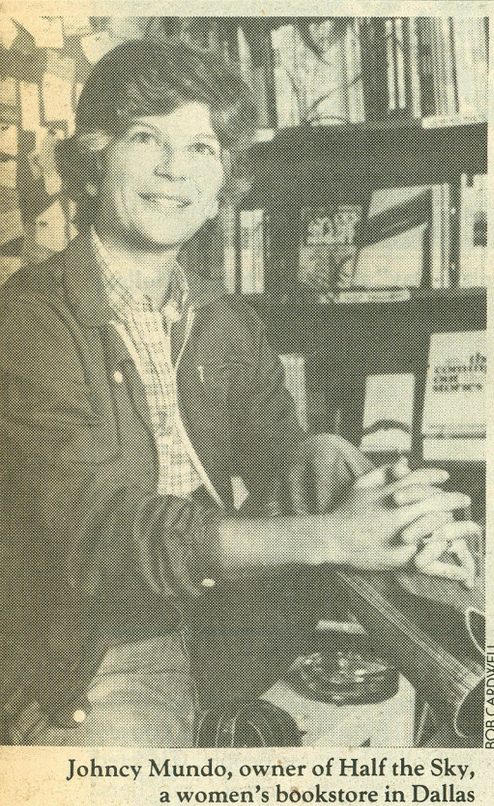
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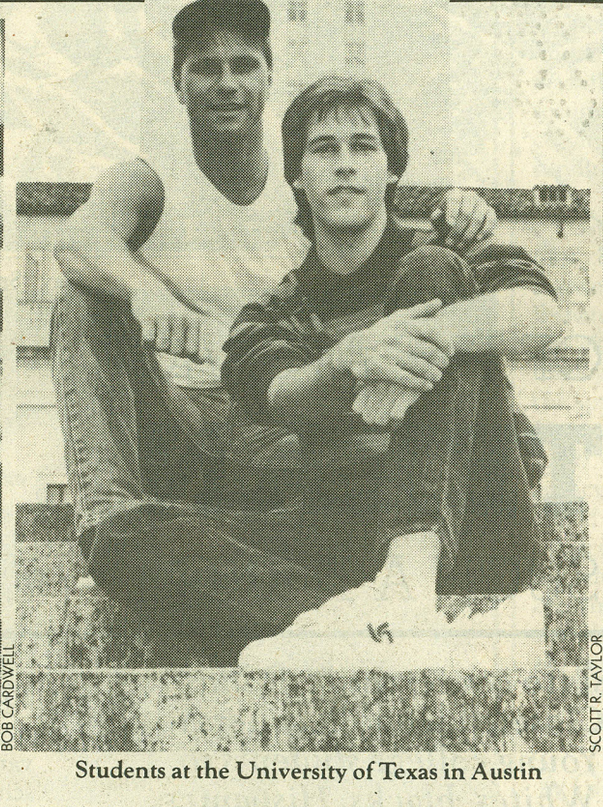








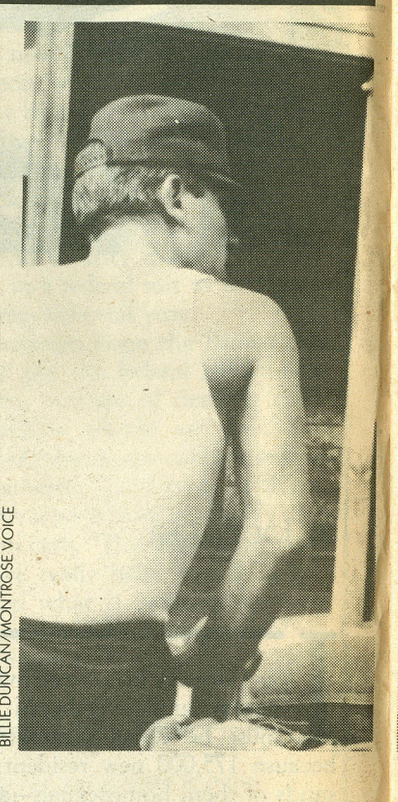
Johncy Mundo, owner of Half the Sky, a women's bookstore in Dallas

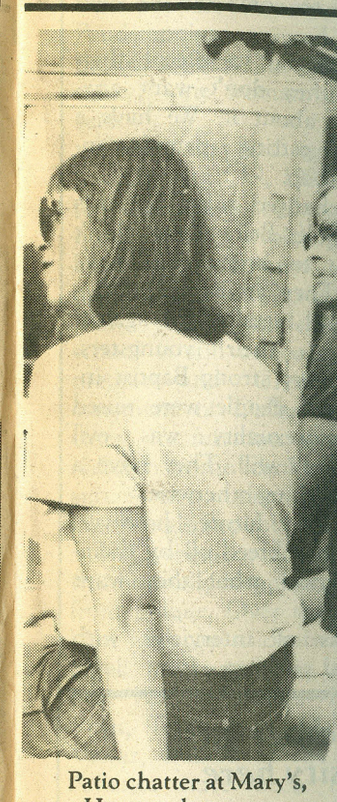


Students at the University of Texas in Austin



At work in Houston's Eagle Leather Shop





Patio chatter at Mary's, a Houston bar

from other people many times. Mainstream or gay—the press is always being accused of ignoring the average person.

Now I was being challenged again. Refraining from saying, "Average is dull," I tried to defend the press— particularly the gay press. "I think we have a pretty good record of covering all newsworthy people and events," I said. "The average person does tend to be overshadowed at times, but he or she is not ignored."

Ted held his ground, prompting me finally to ask pointblank: "OK, then, who is the average gay Texan? What is this person like? Why should I write about them?"

Texas: People love to hate it, or they love to love it. Home-on-the-range to 14.2 million people. A whopping 267,338 square miles. Big and brassy, and definitely sassy.

"The average gay Texan is like me," he responded. "They've got good jobs, and they don't flaunt their homosexuality. They are very concerned about their careers, homes, communities, families and friends. They don't march in gay pride parades, and they don't spend all their time in bars.

"They believe that it is nobody's business that they are gay. They don't make a big thing about it. They are still pretty much in the closet—because they have to be or because they want to be."

A few days later, back home in Dallas, I got to thinking that my friend was probably right. Despite all this new gay activism, hundreds of gay businesses and organizations, and hundreds of thousands of homosexuals in Texas—the average gay Texan is probably still in the closet.

That's probably also true of the average gay person in any American city, except maybe San Francisco, but nevertheless my friend had put a bug in my ear.

I wanted to find something out about this "average gay Texan" person. I wanted to find out if such a person really exists. I began my inquiry.

"No, I don't think there is an average gay Texan," said Don Baker, the former schoolteacher who successfully challenged Texas' antigay law and had it declared unconstitutional. "But I see an

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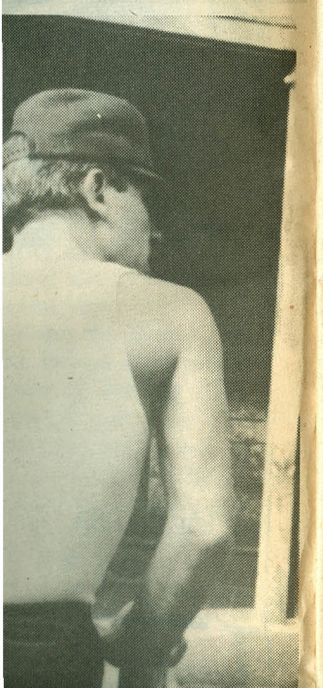
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The "Texas Two-step" at Dallas' Round-Up Saloon





average trait that gay Texans have. It's something special that you don't see in such great force in other parts of the country.

"There's a strong sense of community here. There's an emerging gay identity. People stay here or move here because they want to be a part of it.

"They've chosen not to flee to gay ghettos and be just individuals. They've chosen to be here in Texas and work to make things better. They want roots. They want to cooperate and contribute. This is also true with the influx of gays moving to Texas. They come here for business reasons. They come here to make it and to integrate. They aren't escaping or just passing through."

Baker said gay Texans strongly believe that they control their own destiny.

Larry Bagneris Jr., president of Houston's Gay Political Caucus, also sees that common thread among gays in Texas.

"There's no such thing as an average gay Texan," he said. "There is so much in so many ways."

Ann Brown, a Dallas educator and interviewer on a Dallas Gay Alliance-sponsored weekly radio program, doesn't see much difference between the average gay Texan and the average nongay Texan.

"They are both going after the Texas dream," she said. "There's a strong desire—or rather need—to succeed here. Texans want to make it. Being successful is important.

"That's why I think the average gay Texan is still in the closet. They think that coming out would cost them more than it would get them. Although Texas is changing rapidly, this is still a pretty conservative state."

Brown said a major task facing gay rights leaders in Texas is to convince people that coming out will not hurt them.

"I really believe that you can have it all in Texas today," she said. "So many gays do. They have proven that gays can be successful in their careers—and at the same time be open about their community, is what makes the average gay Texan so special.

"They are willing to work together," she said. "Texas is their home."

Jay Cherin, a University of Texas student and president of the Texas Gay and Lesbian Student Coalition, believes the average gay Texan "needs a little shove."

"The gay rights movement is pretty new to the average homosexual," he said. "They are unconsciously apathetic. They need to learn that it is OK to get involved. I don't think there is a need for closets in Texas today. The state is changing so quickly."

Cherin said a very bright area in Texas' gay rights movement is the gay students' involvement.

"It is growing by leaps and bounds," he said. "Young people are coming out earlier in Texas today. They are no longer waiting until after college to come to grips with their sexuality."

The Texas Gay and Lesbian Student Coalition is composed of gay student organizations from 13 of Texas' universities and colleges.

gains by coming out. I think the average gay doesn't see any need or reason to come out on the job. They aren't ashamed of being gay and won't lie about it if asked, but they strongly believe that their job performance and sexuality have little to do with each other."

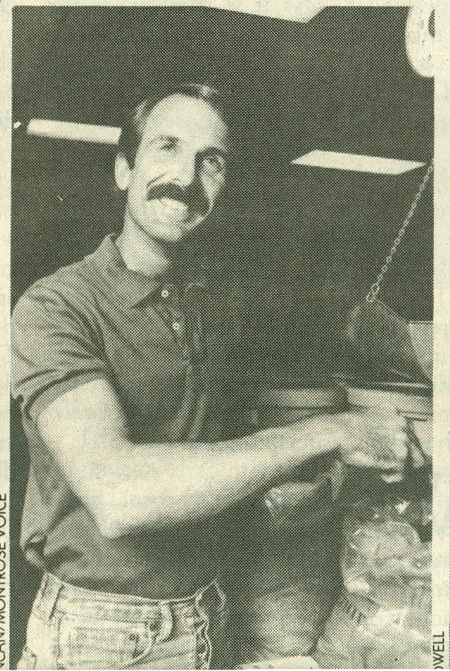
"Don," a Houston banker, agrees. "Everybody talks about coming out as the thing all gays have to do to be happy," he said. "That may be true for gay rights activists who have nothing to lose, but it is not true for the average gay Texan.

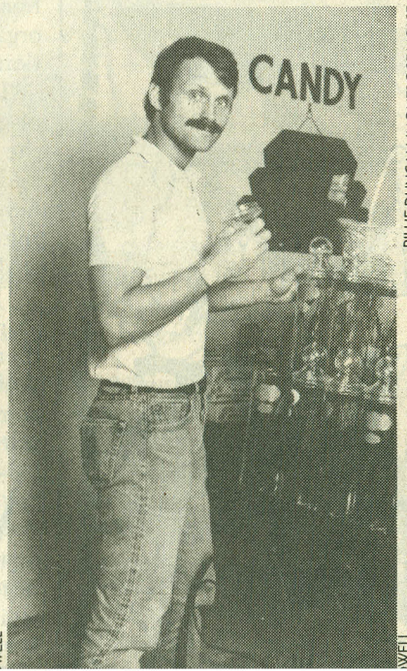
"We have worked long and hard at our careers and we are not going to jeopardize them. I'm sure some people at my bank suspect I'm gay. If they don't ask, why should I tell them? There is nothing wrong with leading a double life. The climate in Texas is not right yet for coming out. We've made progress here educating people about homosexuality, but there is a long way to go."

Johncy Mundo, owner of Half the



BILLIE DUNCAN/MONTROSE VOICE





BILLIE DUNCAN/MONTROSE VOICE



Larry Bagneris Jr., president of Houston's Gay Political Caucus, also sees that common thread among gays in Texas.

"There's no such thing as an average gay Texan," he said. "There is so much diversity here. But there is a common desire among gays. There's a strong desire to contribute. They want to be productive and help make their communities the best places to live.

"I guess you would say that's what an average gay Texan wants. They want their rights, but they also care about a wide range of other issues that affect them as individuals and citizens.

"We've been successful in Houston in gaining political strength because we will no longer try to explain or justify our private lives in public. We deal with the issue of our basic rights and then move on to other areas of concern. We are intent upon making contributions them.

"I really believe that you can have it all in Texas today," she said. "So many gays do. They have proven that gays can be successful in their careers—and at the same time be open about their sexuality.

"Opportunity is Texas' main drawing card. That's why so many gay men and women are moving here, and that's why so many are staying here. Homosexuals want a piece of it, and they are determined to get it."

Brown said the desire to succeed, combined with the desire for a sense of longer waiting until after college to come to grips with their sexuality."

The Texas Gay and Lesbian Student Coalition is composed of gay student organizations from 13 of Texas' universities and colleges.

Mike Stewart, president of the Dallas Gay Alliance, sees the average gay Texan as being politically aware, but not active in gay politics.

"I guess I would say that the average person—if there is such a person—does lead a double life in Texas," he said.

"Since people are very success-oriented, they are leery of losing their double life. The climate in Texas is not right yet for coming out. We've made progress here educating people about homosexuality, but there is a long way to go."

Johncy Mundo, owner of Half the Sky, a women's bookstore in Dallas, credits the migration of people from other parts of the country to Texas with helping to give the state a new flavor.

"There's a mix here now that is changing the ways people think and act," she said. "They've introduced new perspectives and ideas. Texas is still conservative, but there are a lot of social changes going on."

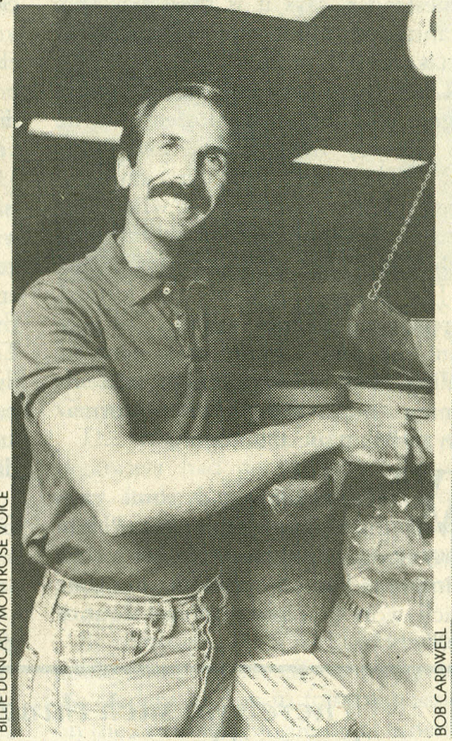
Mundo said she resists putting an average label on anything. "There's no average gay person," she stressed. "They are all different. They are men and women, young and old, black and white and everything else. This diversity is what makes gay people so in-

Despite all this new gay activism, hundreds of gay businesses and organizations, and hundreds of thousands of homosexuals in Texas—the average gay Texan is probably still in the closet.



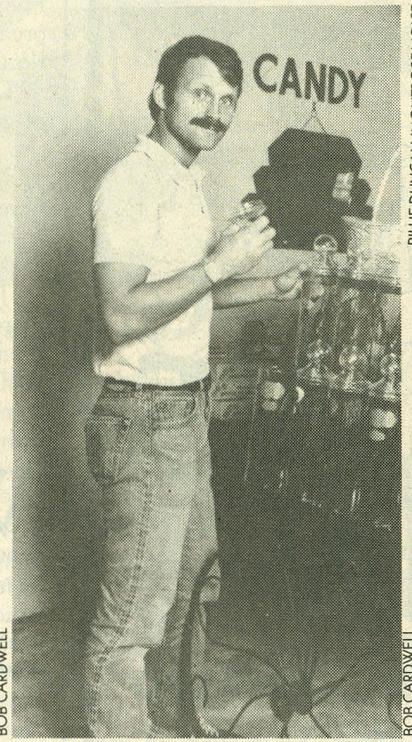
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Patio chatter at Mary's, a Houston bar



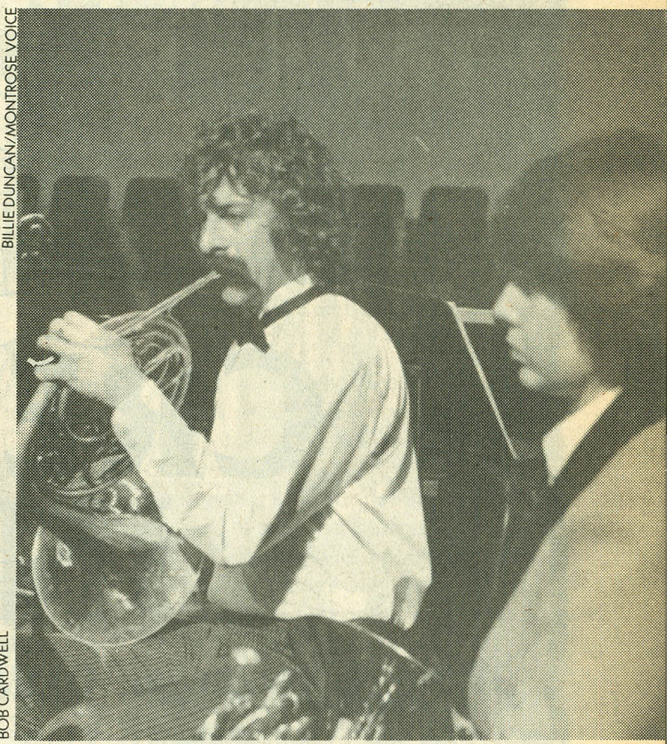
BOB CARDWELL

Bill Nelson, co-owner of Dallas' Crossroads Market and vice president of the Dallas Gay Alliance



BOB CARDWELL

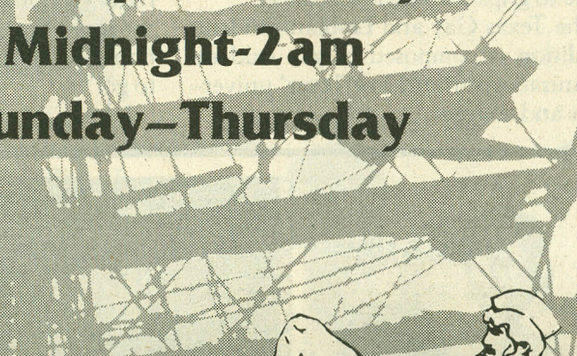
Terry Tebedo, co-owner of the Crossroads Market and active with the Dallas AIDS Action Project



BILLIE DUNCAN/MONTROSE VOICE

Members of the Montrose Symphonic Band

COME SEE THE
NEW CREWS INN
MORE DANCE FLOOR,
MORE ROOM &
A LOT MORE FUN
Happy Hours
1pm-7pm Daily
1pm-8pm Tuesday
Midnight-2am
Sunday–Thursday



MEMBER OF THE DALLAS
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teresting."

San Antonio businessman Wayne Kinzel said it is particularly difficult to define the average gay person in Texas because the state is so large and diverse.

"Every part of the state is different," he said, "and so are the attitudes, people and lifestyles. There is no average straight Texan and no average gay Texan."

If there were such a person, though, he or she would probably live in one of Texas' smaller cities, according to Steve Williams of Lubbock.

"I don't think of the average gay Texan being in the big cities like Dallas and Houston," he said. "Those are the ones who are more visible, and the numbers may seem greater, but there are a lot of homosexuals throughout the rest of the state too.

"These gay men and women lead very closeted lives. They don't go to bars very much. They stick pretty close to their homes and friends."

Kenn Waller-Zanghi, a Whitney homesteader, says it is these gays an organization called the Rural Coalition is trying to reach.

"I bet there are tens of thousands of gays who live in rural areas and in the country throughout Texas," he said. "They are ranchers, farmers, homesteaders and those who just want to live in the country but work in the city.

"The Rural Coalition was formed to reach out to these people. We give them the peer support they need in dealing with their gayness and in coming out, disseminate information and plan social functions."

Waller-Zanghi said rural gays have special interests. "How many city gays you meet in a bar would be interested in talking about your goat which won first place at the county fair?"

ded to get involved in the gay movement," he said. "This is especially true in Austin, which has a very liberal atmosphere. People are very comfortable here. There are few hassles. Even so, I would guess that about half of the gay population is still in the closet. But that is pretty low compared with other parts of the state."

Billy Templeton, a San Angelo journalist, also sees "the desire to belong to a community" as a common thread among gays in Texas.

"There's a strong sense in smaller cities like San Angelo, but it also is evident in larger places," he said. "There's no average gay Texan, though. They are all different."

If getting gay men and women involved in the gay rights movement is a challenge in Texas, getting their parents involved is an even bigger one, according to Freda Jerrell, founding president of Houston's Family and Friends of Gays.

"We get lots of calls from parents trying to understand their children's homosexuality," she said, "but they too are afraid to come out of their closets.

"They are willing to accept their children, but they don't want anybody to know about it. We have a difficult time getting parents involved in our group.

"Texas has changed a lot, but this is still the Bible Belt. They don't want anybody to know they have gay children. They are afraid of discrimination and retaliation against themselves and their youngsters. There's also a very strong Baptist influence in Texas. People were raised believing homosexuality was evil and against God's will. They have a difficult time believing otherwise.

"I see a bright future, however. Gay Texans are a breed all by themselves. They know what they want and they get it."

After dozens of interviews with gay men and women from large

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MEMBER OF THE DALLAS TAVERN GUILD

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Waller-Zanghi said rural gays have special interests. "How many city gays you meet in a bar would be interested in talking about your goat which won first place at the county fair?"

He said gays live in the country for two reasons—by choice or because of circumstances beyond their control. "I wouldn't say that a rural gay is the average gay Texan, but I think they want the same things as a city gay," he said. "We all just want a little security and happiness."

Juan Ochoa, president of the Austin Lesbian/Gay Political Caucus, believes that Texas' good economy has made homosexuals "somewhat laid back."

"They are very educated about what is going on, but they have to be prod-

one, according to Freda Jerrell, founding president of Houston's Family and Friends of Gays.

"We get lots of calls from parents trying to understand their children's homosexuality," she said, "but they too are afraid to come out of their closets.

"They are willing to accept their children, but they don't want anybody to know about it. We have a difficult time getting parents involved in our group.

"Texas has changed a lot, but this is still the Bible Belt. They don't want anybody to know they have gay children. They are afraid of discrimination and retaliation against themselves and their youngsters. There's also a very strong Baptist influence in Texas. People were raised believing homosexuality was evil and against God's will. They have a difficult time believing otherwise.

"I see a bright future, however. Gay Texans are a breed all by themselves. They know what they want and they get it."

After dozens of interviews with gay men and women from large

"There's no such thing as an average gay Texan. There is so much diversity here. But there is a common desire among gays. There's a strong desire to contribute. They want to be productive and help make their communities the best places to live."

cities and small towns across Texas, I know now there are a lot of homosexuals like my friend "Ted." Coming out of their closets is a slow process for them.

Does the average gay Texan lead a double life? Yes, but the number of them is declining every day. And is there really such a thing as an average gay Texan, anyway?

Come on now! Don't forget—this is the Lone Star State. Everybody knows there is nothing "average" about Texas or Texans. ●

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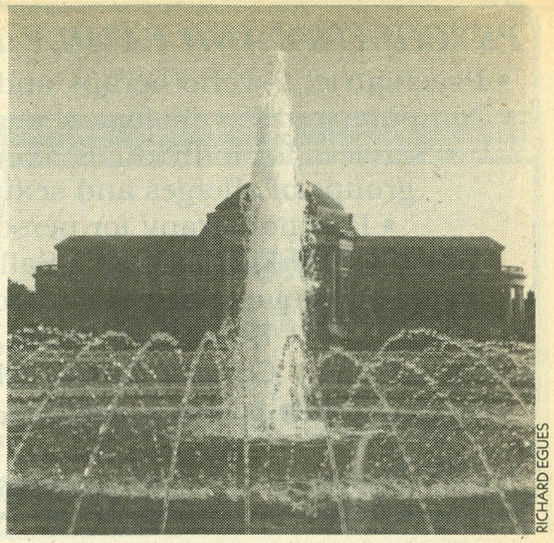
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ACADEMIC CONTROVERSY, TEXAS STYLE

GAY STUDENTS

BATTLE FOR RECOGNITION AT SMU

BY BILL BEAUCHAMP



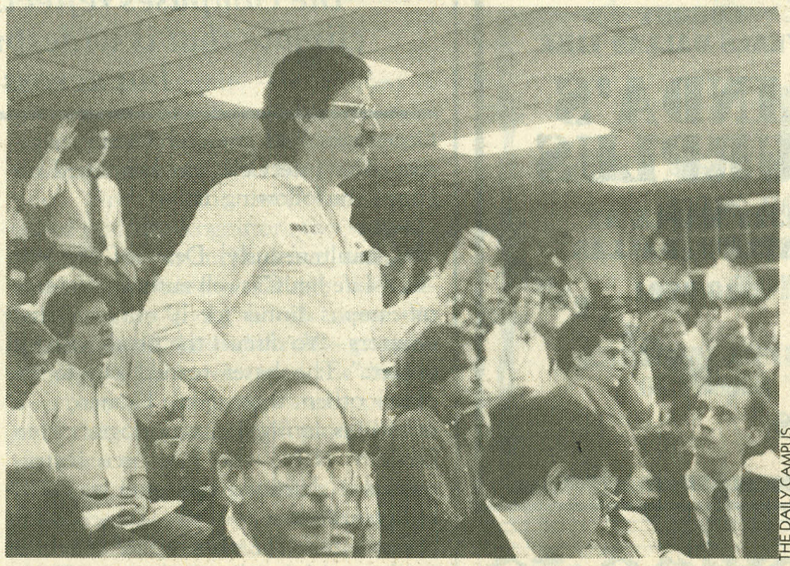
RICHARD EGUES

Dallas Hall, SMU campus

"Now we can shoot you!' one student shouted. "Steers and Queers, Only in Austin!" The student senate of Dallas' Southern Methodist University (SMU), after a turbulent three-hour debate, had just voted 17-11 against recognition of the Gay/Lesbian Student Support Organization (GLSSO). Pandemonium erupted in the tense, packed gallery. "I was afraid for my safety," one woman faculty member said.

Controversy had raged for weeks before the April 19, 1983, vote. GLSSO posed a radical challenge to the SMU norm—white, wealthy, upscale and heterosexual. Known as Camp Wonderland in the '70s, this small (fewer than 10,000 students), prestigious school is still an oasis for privileged preppies and "Greeks." The proud ornament of Dallas' ruling business elites, its function is to train their children in the ideology of money and success. In a student straw vote last fall, every single Republican candidate won.

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The response was more than the organizers had dared hope: Twenty-eight students showed up. The group met weekly, and by April, provided with bylaws, a statement of purpose and a faculty adviser, they were ready to apply for recognition.

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Only one question of substance

On the day of the senate vote, the rout of reason was complete. The report of the Student Organizations Committee, which gave GLSSO a unanimous and unqualified recommendation, was completely ignored. GLSSO goals were impugned: Its real purpose, shouted one senator, was to promote homosexuality and serve as a sex club. Worse, because of AIDS, its

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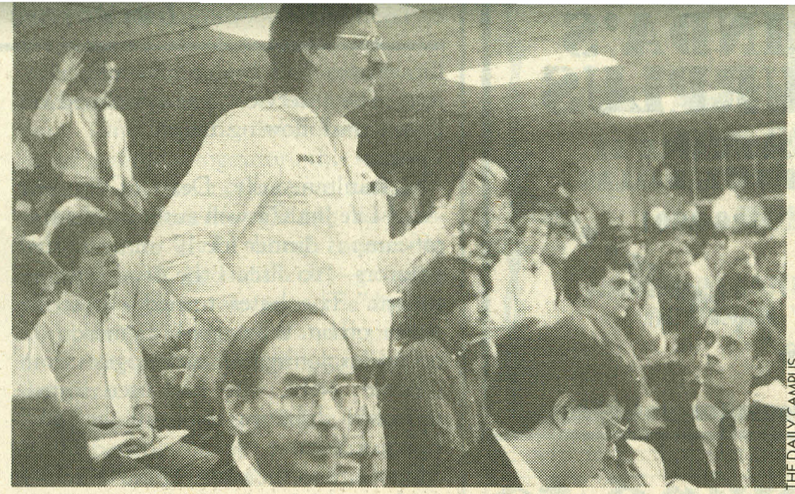
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The vehement antigay reaction on this normally complacent campus is far from unique. Over the past year, lesbian and gay students have been engaged in struggles at universities all over North America—Bates, Georgetown, Texas A & M, Stanford. At Vassar, leaders of the Gay People's Alliance have been repeatedly assaulted and even threatened with death. What is happening on the campuses reflects a social and political climate that is widespread, not only in Texas, but across the nation.

GLSSO grew out of a small ad that appeared in the *Daily Campus*, SMU's student newspaper, the last week of February. Placed by two students fed up with harassment, it announced the first meeting of a gay/lesbian student group. A phone number was included, but no location. Lesbian and gay students still had to be cautious, like Christians in the catacombs.



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Debating the gay issue at SMU Senate meeting, English professor John Lewis *(standing)* **makes points in support of recognition.**



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The response was more than the organizers had dared hope: Twenty-eight students showed up. The group met weekly, and by April, provided with bylaws, a statement of purpose and a faculty adviser, they were ready to apply for recognition.

By that time, GLSSO had become a public issue. Despite efforts of responsible student leaders to focus discussion on the one relevant question—whether or not GLSSO met the criteria for recognition—opponents of the group trundled out all the old bogies of sickness, crime and sin.

The president-elect of the alumni booster club warned of "disease-carrying sexual deviants." According to a student senator, "Rapists, thieves and robbers are humans too, but we don't have groups for them." Some invoked the right of money: "I pay $15,000 a year to come to this school. I have a right to decide if I want a gay organization or not." Others, the might of numbers: "This is a democracy. If the majority doesn't want a minority to exist, we shouldn't have to recognize you."

Alarmed faculty members protested in the name of logic, civil rights and respect for the rule of law. "The student constitution—like the American Constitution—is superior to transient public opinion," argued Brad Carter, a political science professor. Majoritarian opponents, brandishing an anti-GLSSO petition allegedly containing thousands of signatures, were not impressed.

Only one question of substance was raised: Would recognition of GLSSO be consistent with the philosophy of a Methodist university? The answer, loud and clear, came from students and faculty at SMU's own Perkins School of Theology. If the position of the United Methodist Church on homosexuality is ambiguous, its stand in favor of lesbian/gay rights is not.

Prof. Victor Furnish, Methodist minister and author of a recent book on the moral teachings of St. Paul, stated categorically that recognition of GLSSO was compatible with church philosophy. He also warned: "Biblical texts cannot be thrown around like hand grenades!" In an open letter, 17 others agreed. "What's new in all this," SMU Chaplain Will Finnin said later, "is that we denied the group recognition." Other Methodist-related universities—Northwestern, Boston, Emory—already have lesbian/gay organizations.

On the day of the senate vote, the rout of reason was complete. The report of the Student Organizations Committee, which gave GLSSO a unanimous and unqualified recommendation, was completely ignored. GLSSO goals were impugned: Its real purpose, shouted one senator, was to promote homosexuality and serve as a sex club. Worse, because of AIDS, its existence would place the health and lives of the entire campus at risk. "Is the 'fellowship' you have in mind," yelled another senator, "the kind they have in bathhouses?" It was learned later that lurid photos, allegedly of bathhouse sex, circulated during the meeting.

"I played to the crowd on their emotions," opposition leader Ted Brabham admitted later. Defeated in his bid to succeed presiding officer Homer Reynolds as student vice president, Brabham had seized on the gay issue for his political comeback. He used every trick in the book—from striding around the chamber to shouting to sneers. One student officer called the performance "Brabham's last stand."

The tactics worked. Kathryn Costello, SMU director of public relations, believes some senators switched their votes at the last minute—because of peer pressure, the mood of the gallery, the roll call in front of TV

Bill Beauchamp, a professor of French at Southern Methodist University, contributes to numerous publications, including Saturday Review, Life *and the* New York Times. *He is a board member of NGTF and GAU Inc. and is a member of the Delegate Assembly of the Modern Language Assn.*

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cameras. "Some of these kids are only 18 or 19 years old. Their vote was going out to East Texas on the 10 o'clock news right into their Baptist grandmother's living room."

Although for weeks it had claimed neutrality, the administration finally weighed in the day before the vote: That afternoon, SMU President L. Donald Shields granted a strategically timed interview to the *Daily Campus*, in which he announced that communications to him from members of the SMU Board of Trustees and Board of Governors had been uniformly negative. The interview was headlined on Page 1 the following day.

Simultaneously, Dean of Student Life Jim Caswell authorized a free off-campus dinner for 10 uncommitted senators—"to discuss the issues with an expert." The latter turned out to be none other than Paul Cameron, a notorious antigay psychologist from Lincoln, Neb., who had been instrumental in defeating that city's gay civil rights ordinance.

En route to the state capital to testify in favor of legislation barring Texas gays and lesbians from public employment, Cameron had recently warned in Chicago that gay men were potential mass murderers and that AIDS threatened the demise of Western civilization. Speaking of gay male sex in an interview on a "Christian" radio network, Cameron said, "We're talking usually about writhing masses of humanity doing incredible things to one another . . . ." During the dinner, he discoursed on fecal ingestion and illustrated his

• An appeal to overturn the senate vote on constitutional grounds was denied 6-3 by the Judiciary Council. No written report was issued.
• The president announced that investigation of the Cameron dinner revealed no evidence of wrongdoing. Again, no written report was issued.
• An appeal to the president by GLSSO to reverse the senate's vote was denied.

"Abdication of leadership"—this is how one senior faculty member judged the president's conduct throughout the affair. Shields seemed willing to surrender to expediency—under pressure from the all-powerful board, which is not only conservative and business-oriented but, by all accounts, ignorant of the university's fundamental purpose. "The board does not understand the 'open forum' concept of a university," one high administrator said. "And would probably disapprove if it did."

Institutional discrimination at SMU is nothing new. Other marginalized groups have been fighting it for years, and the nucleus of GLSSO support was a coalition of senators representing women, blacks, Chicanos/Chicanas and (mostly Third World) international students.

Last fall the same student senate that would repudiate GLSSO readily granted recognition to the Association of White Students (AWS). Although founder James Robison, a junior, is an Anglo, he once ran for the Mexican-American senate seat to protest alleged favored treatment of minorities. The group's thinly veiled racism caused even the administration to express

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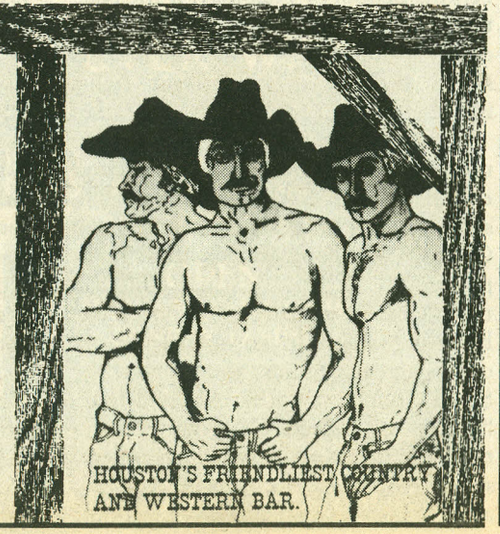
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Three days later, the *Daily Campus* ran an expose of the dinner on Page 1 and called for immediate invalidation of the vote. The university was in an uproar. Calls were issued for Caswell's resignation. Denying any malicious intent, the chastened dean admitted to "a serious error in judgment," which many hailed as the understatement of the season. "It's as if he had invited Dr. Mengele to enlighten students about Jews," one faculty member said.

Events moved swiftly:

• The student-run Program Council hurriedly organized a public debate on gay rights, with seasoned gay advocate Bruce Voeller, but canceled at the last minute under pressure from the administration.

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In defense of AWS, senate leaders invoked the rule of law and the need to protect partisans of unpopular viewpoints. Vice President Reynolds strongly affirmed that the senate is not in the business of making value judgments. Student President Joe Dooley said: "Our job is not to decide need for the organization. If the members of the organization say there is need, then there is need." (Six months later, speaking of GLSSO, Dooley told the *Dallas Morning News*: "I voted against it because I thought we don't have to recognize a group's civil rights when the civil rights are based on sexual preference.") Media focus on AWS prompted the university to seek a compromise. In a classic SMU solution, the group changed its name—to Students for Equality. The reaction of black MBA student Trina Robinson said it all:

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"When GLSSO lost the vote," said Prof. Vicki Hill, "I was more grieved for my straight students than my gay ones. SMU needs GLSSO even more than its own members do." Hill's paradox underscores the education and growth that dialogue allows, and that SMU has, at least temporarily, rejected. In this, the university reflects society at large. Zealots everywhere, with AIDS as their latest pretext, have incited an epidemic of antigay bigotry and violence: Homophobia at SMU is a symptom of national pathology.

Commenting on the year's events, Bonnie Wheeler, an English professor, said, "The whole campus looks like a movie set, but the beautiful exterior masks hatred for gays, blacks, women. . . . This is the enemy camp, but at least here it's out in the open. There's no pretense to intellectualism." About GLSSO, Wheeler added: "Anyone who was surprised at the mob of gay-haters is naive. What surprised me was the number of students who spoke in support of GLSSO. They were brave, impressive. It was like the early antiwar movement."

This courageous student minority, whose sense of social justice has been deeply violated, offers hope for the coming year. Many faculty came through as well: At the first GLSSO meeting following the defeat—the best-attended in the group's short history—a third of those present were professors (gay and nongay, men and women, senior and junior) who had come out on a weekend evening to show their support.

On Oct. 4, the SMU Student Senate again voted to deny recognition to GLSSO—by a margin, however, of only 16 to 15. Presiding Vice President Tom Davey had to cast the tie-breaking vote. This time there was no cheering.

Citizens of Texas—a small, right-wing group that specializes in antigay crusades.

An incensed Faculty Senate and an angry Shields both promptly issued public disavowals of the mailing. "My decisions are not in any way swayed by pressure tactics from any group," Shields asserted.

"Ludicrous," Brabham countered to the *Daily Campus*. "Of course he's pressured by alumni"—and by the Board of Trustees and the Board of Governors as well. "Need I remind him that they're the ones who pay him and could revoke his job at any minute?"

Brabham claims that at a recent meeting in a downtown Dallas bank, four businessmen and two alumni agreed to provide whatever is needed to get GLSSO off the campus—even if it takes $50,000 for mailings to every alum in the country. He declined to give names.

Despite the ongoing shenanigans, all sides agree that GLSSO has gained support. One senator, who last spring voted against recognition, this semester was one of its most active and persuasive proponents. Debate was distinctly more civil, though numerous senators still had difficulty grasping concepts such as relevance, the distinction between recognition and approval, and the importance of pluralism to democracy.

"The university is missing out on a lot of benefits by not recognizing us," said GLSSO Co-chair Leslie Cooper. "Even without funding, we're putting together quality programs, and we're one of the most diversified groups on campus."

"SMU has to bear the burden of its choice," said University Chaplain Finnin. During the debate, the distinction was drawn between rights and privileges, and in the student code recognition of an organization is a privilege. How does one determine criteria for bestowing or withholding privilege?

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Robinson said it all:

. . . This is the enemy camp, but at least here it's out in the open. There's no pretense to intellectualism." About GLSSO, Wheeler added: "Anyone who was surprised at the mob of gay-haters is naive. What surprised me was the number of students who spoke in support of GLSSO. They were brave, impressive. It was like the early antiwar movement."

This courageous student minority, whose sense of social justice has been deeply violated, offers hope for the coming year. Many faculty came through as well: At the first GLSSO meeting following the defeat—the best-attended in the group's short history—a third of those present were professors (gay and nongay, men and women, senior and junior) who had come out on a weekend evening to show their support.

On Oct. 4, the SMU Student Senate again voted to deny recognition to GLSSO—by a margin, however, of only 16 to 15. Presiding Vice President Tom Davey had to cast the tie-breaking vote. This time there was no cheering.

Several days before, 1,000 Dallas-area alums had received a surprise in the mail: an antigay packet prepared by student opposition leader Brabham. It included a homophobic tract citing, among others, the ubiquitous Cameron—as well as, surprisingly, a Xerox of SMU Prof. Bill Beauchamp's pro-GLSSO op/ed piece from the *New York Times*. (The assumption may have been that SMU alums would find anything printed in the *Times* offensive.)

Written on stationery bearing the SMU imprint, Brabham's cover letter uged alums to call or write University President Shields and express their opposition to GLSSO. He also requested that they mail $25 donations to Alert alum in the country. He declined to give names.

Despite the ongoing shenanigans, all sides agree that GLSSO has gained support. One senator, who last spring voted against recognition, this semester was one of its most active and persuasive proponents. Debate was distinctly more civil, though numerous senators still had difficulty grasping concepts such as relevance, the distinction between recognition and approval, and the importance of pluralism to democracy.

"The university is missing out on a lot of benefits by not recognizing us," said GLSSO Co-chair Leslie Cooper. "Even without funding, we're putting together quality programs, and we're one of the most diversified groups on campus."

"SMU has to bear the burden of its choice," said University Chaplain Finnin. During the debate, the distinction was drawn between rights and privileges, and in the student code recognition of an organization is a privilege. How does one determine criteria for bestowing or withholding privilege?

"Such criteria make a statement about the character of a community," Finnin said. "And they should reflect the character *we are striving for*, not the ambiance of the moment. There is tension between where the culture is and where a university *ought* to be in relation to that culture. It's that tension we have to bear the burden of."

Many now feel that it's only a matter of time until GLSSO is recognized. The group will apply again next spring. "They call SMU the Harvard of the South," said GLSSO faculty adviser Campbell Read. "But until we get past this issue, a more accurate description may be the Bob Jones University of the Southwest." ●

"This is a democracy. If the majority doesn't want a minority to exist, we shouldn't have to recognize you."

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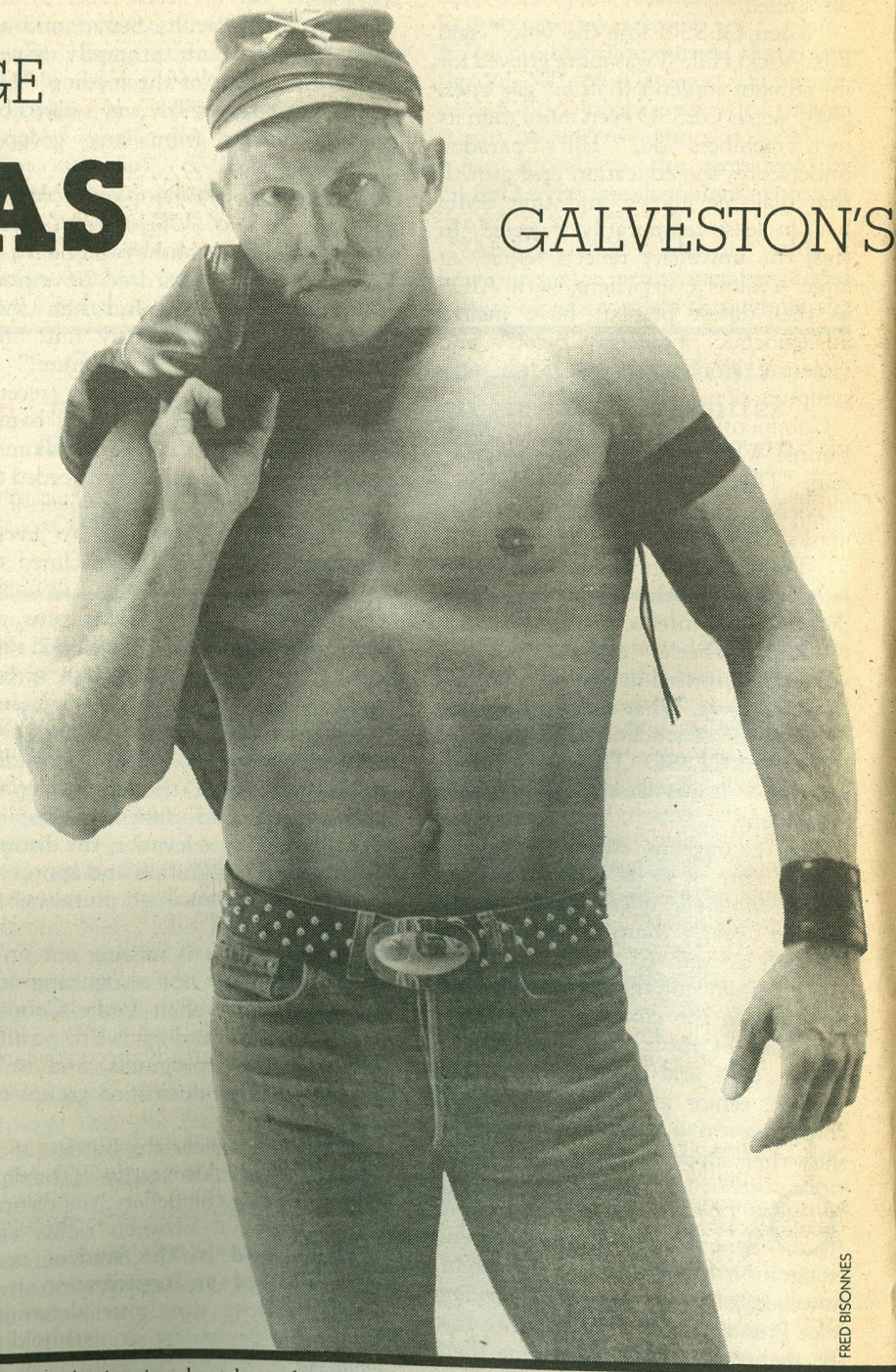
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COLT THOMAS

GALVESTON'S MR. INTER

BY DENNIS FORBES



FRED BISONNES

Hairy, dark and grim—especially grim. That's a stereotypical leatherman in the eyes of most gay men who don't themselves affect black motorcycle leathers as erotic cruising costume, or who aren't "into" leather as a total lifestyle rife with kinky sexual practices, particularly sadomasochism.

For the second consecutive year, however, men along the entire spectrum of leather persuasion have as their official representative to the world at large someone who is smooth, fair and anything but grim. Leather's public image may never be the same.

When selected International Mr. Leather '82 in competition in Chicago last year, blond Luke Daniel of Los Angeles broke the old mold of ideal leatherman-as-gruff-macho-mumbler who needs a close shave and maybe a good scrub-down too. Hunky, boyishly handsome (he'd turn heads even wearing a three-piece business suit), gregarious, generous with his Colgate grin, animated and articulate both in private and onstage before audiences, Daniel took his titles seriously (he was also chosen Mr. Drummer '82) and voluntarily became a roving ambassador and from a pack of 44 entrants—many of them hairy, dark and grim—selected as the man most exemplifying leather yet another boyishly handsome blond hunk who smiles easily and a lot, and is self-poised, articulate, humble as homemade pie and especially charming with the soft-spoken Texas drawl. Some Folsom Street cynics quickly accused the Chicago seven of merely picking a "Luke clone."

Comparison—bitchy or otherwise—of the fifth International Mr. Leather to the fourth is easy and inevitable. And wrong. Coulter Thomas out of Galveston, Tex., is his own man. Simply "Colt" to his friends and now to the whole leather world, the 24-year-old, third-year medical student is fully adjusted to being in harness, so to speak. Contrary to sour-graping gossip that's always in the air after contests of the International Mr. Leather sort, Thomas isn't brand-new to the leather scene, isn't simply some hot number sent north by sponsors to compete because he'd look fantastic in flashy, custom-tailored ensembles whipped together for the occasion.

His first leathers were cowboy chaps worn while riding rodeo broncs, but he

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A dedicated swimmer—Thomas still

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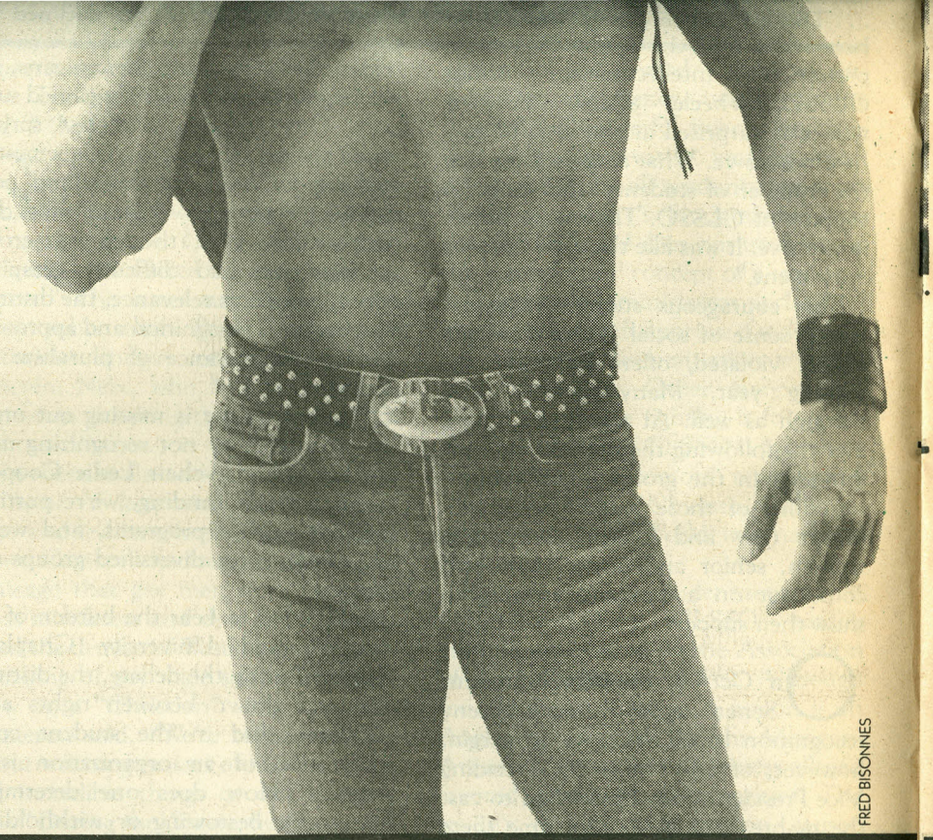
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This last May, again in Chicago, seven International Mr. Leather Contest judges (including Daniel himself, MCC's Rev. Troy Perry, and erotic artists Etienne and Tom of Finland) unintentionally followed last year's precselected as the man most exemplifying leather yet another boyishly handsome blond hunk who smiles easily and a lot, and is self-poised, articulate, humble as homemade pie and especially charming with the soft-spoken Texas drawl. Some Folsom Street cynics quickly accused the Chicago seven of merely picking a "Luke clone."

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His first leathers were cowboy chaps worn while riding rodeo broncs, but he graduated into black leather some time ago and has been acquiring the expensive gear little by little, as he can afford it. As a direct result of the Chicago contest, he now has a fairly extensive leather wardrobe, much of it highly customized. Admittedly, he doesn't "live" in his leathers, any more than can any other gay professional (or in his case, preprofessional) who is also a leatherman at heart.



FRED BISONNES

Of the many hunky men in competition at the International Mr. Leather Contest in Chicago, the consensus was that Colt Thomas was definitely the hunkiest of the lot.

A graduate of highly conservative Texas A & M, Thomas hails from the prairie heartland of Texas. He is the eldest son of a close-knit, small family (he has a brother and younger sister). Active in church and an Eagle Scout as a teen-ager, he was a straight-A student in high school, varsity tennis captain, and in his own words, "a very late bloomer" physically. "I didn't start puberty until the end of my junior year," he recalls. "God, was that exciting! It finally happened! Until the start of my senior year, I wasn't five feet tall!"

Perhaps because of this, or more likely because even in junior high he had "messed around a lot—really a lot!—with other guys" and so was already self-defining his gayness, Thomas didn't date much in high school. "I mostly just asked girls to dances," he remembers, but he didn't think of himself as an outsider. Going off to Texas A & M, he decided he could "finally be myself." But once there he became engaged to a woman he still thinks very fondly of, a relationship he broke off in the middle of his junior year.

A dedicated swimmer—Thomas still manages 2,000 meters in 35 minutes every day—he didn't start regular gym workouts until about two years ago, mostly in an effort to develop his legs to match his swimming-pumped torso. The International Mr. Leather audience in Chicago would agree that he's accomplished that goal admirably. Of the many hunky men in competition there, the consensus was that Colt Thomas—"very late bloomer" or not—was definitely the hunkiest of the lot. In fact, he had already won Mr. Gay Texas, a physique title, before his Chicago triumph.

In certain leather circles Thomas is criticized for not being a bona fide leatherman. Some of the old-school leather crowd believe that, like those of Luke Daniel before him, Thomas' leathers are too untraditional on the one hand, too "showgirl" on the other. South of Market wags have even

Photographer/illustrator/author Dennis Forbes is a frequent contributor to The ADVOCATE *and numerous other publications.*

like Marilyn Monroe Thomas gently bristles ject is mentioned.

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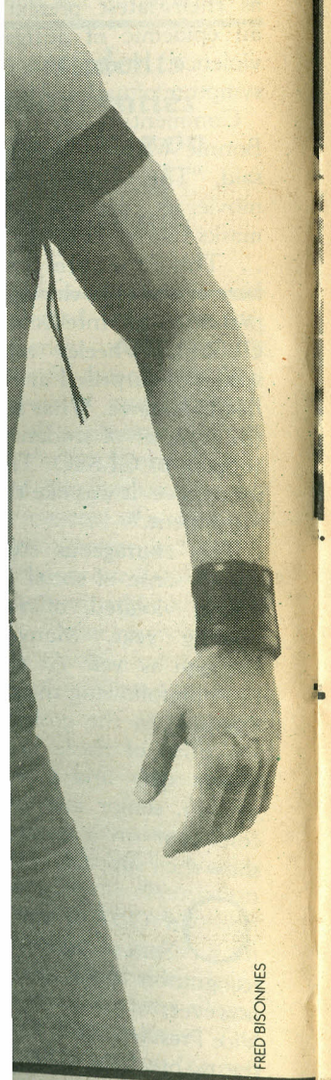
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FRED BISONNES

swimmer—Thomas still

MR. INTERNATIONAL LEATHER

dubbed him "Ann-Margret." (Daniel publicly described himself as "feeling like Marilyn Monroe in leather.") Thomas gently bristles when the subject is mentioned.

"When there are so many things leather can represent, so many possibilities," he responds, "why should the Official Leather Image only be right-straight-down-the-line motorcycle chaps and jacket . . . ? The cowboy outfit I wore in the first part of the [International Mr. Leather] contest is every bit as much 'black leather' as the more traditional leather image I wore at the end. My cowboy leathers portrayed another side of the coin. Certainly they are a very real aspect of *me*. There are lots of cowboys in Tom of Finland's work, after all, and, at least in my mind, he's the epitome of leather opinion."

Thomas clearly sees his International Mr. Leather role as representing a moderate approach to leather

"I don't want anybody to be afraid to come up and talk to me. I must be approachable. For other leathermen and for anyone."

became a public celebrity, albeit to a small public, people who previously wouldn't have dared or cared to approach Thomas now feel he's fully accessible to them, to their come-ons.

"You become International Mr. Leather, and suddenly lots of people fantasize that you're some kind of sex god getting it on everywhere, all the time," he explains. "They certainly thought that of Luke [Daniel] and he's not promiscuous at all. And now they think it of me.

"It's amazing how some people come on to me sexually, what they expect. Not that I don't get involved in scenes, but these have to be right for *me*. And people take that wrong. They think I'm being stuck up or cold, when actually I just couldn't get into what they're proposing. I'm really an advanced voyeur! I do wish, though, that more people would come on to me just socially."

As a gay man, a leatherman and a future medical doctor, Thomas has a triple concern about AIDS. When he

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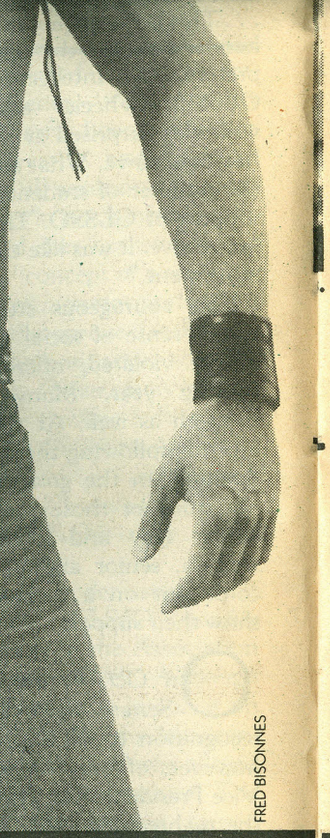
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Thomas clearly sees his International Mr. Leather role as representing a moderate approach to leather as gay style, sexstyle and lifestyle. Before the Chicago contest audience, he pledged to work towards healing what he called the "schism" between the leather community and the gay community at large. That he, admittedly, isn't as "heavy-duty" as some mainline leathermen might like, makes this possible, he thinks.

"A total leather lifestyle—living leather 24 hours a day—is viable for those men who get more satisfaction out of leather than out of anything else. Why not?" Thomas asks. "No one should tell them they can't do it." But such a heavy-duty leatherman is easily misunderstood, Thomas thinks. He's usually unapproachable. He threatens. He intimidates. "I don't want anybody to be afraid to come up and talk to me. As representative of the whole leather community, I must be approachable. For other leathermen and for anyone."

Approachable, to be sure. Since he wouldn't have dared or cared to approach Thomas now feel he's fully accessible to them, to their come-ons.

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As a gay man, a leatherman and a future medical doctor, Thomas has a triple concern about AIDS. When he was named International Mr. Leather '83, he pledged to appear at fund-raisers for the AIDS cause. To date he's been surprised and disappointed at the lack of response to his availability. He was in Los Angeles for a full week recently—"I let it be widely known in advance that I'd be there"—and no one, no bar, took advantage of his presence to stage a fund-raising event of any kind. "I haven't any capacity to create AIDS benefits on my own," he says, "but I'm ready and anxious to help out, as called upon."

Thomas feels that the leather community, in particular, must be responsive to the AIDS crisis. "We are really vulnerable," he thinks, "because of our promiscuous lifestyle and because we open ourselves up, so literally, to possible infection."

He thinks the front-line battle against AIDS must be fought primarily

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 37)

"I don't want anybody to be afraid to come up and talk to me. I must be approachable. For other leathermen and for anyone."

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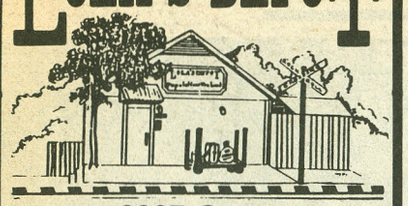
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(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 35)

by gay men, in their own behalf. "Straight people don't care about us. They really don't," says Thomas. "And if we don't take care of ourselves, we're going to be in even more trouble than we already are." He's optimistic in this regard, however. "I'm seeing a general caring for each other in the gay community in the past couple of years that wasn't there when I came out."

Why does Thomas think so many doctors, lawyers and merchant chiefs can be counted in the leather-world population?

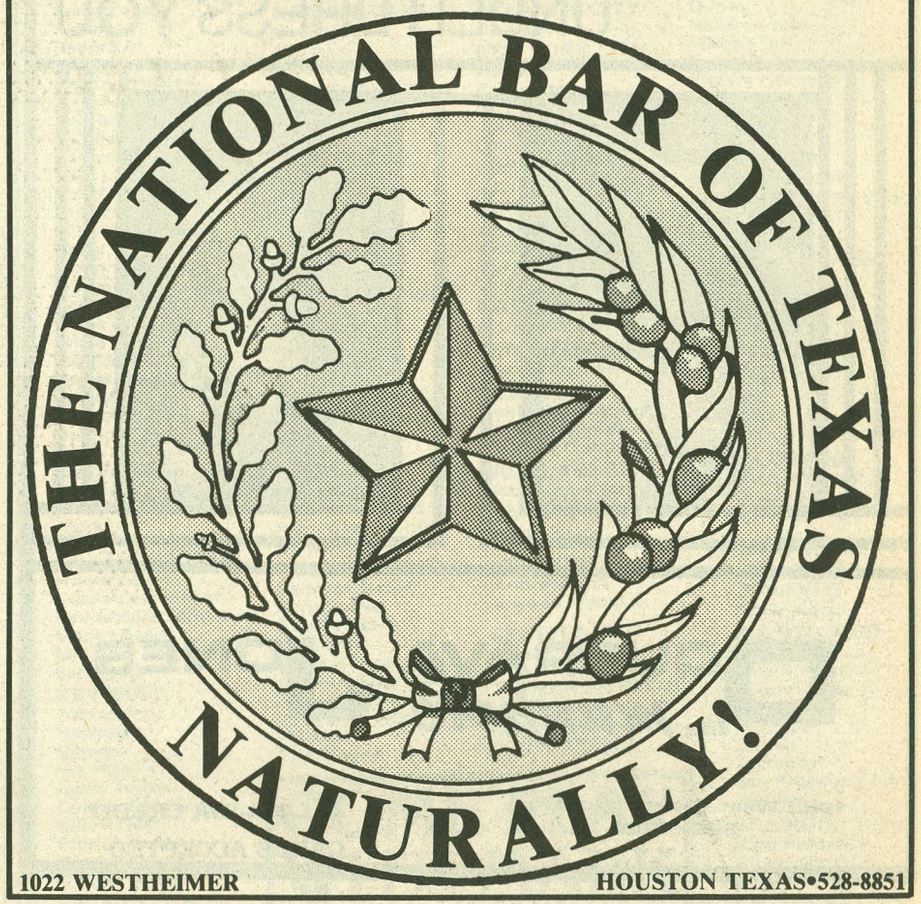
"Leather sex involves more senses than just gut fuck and suck. People who are mentally focused are therefore attracted to leather," he feels. "They're looking for—and have the resources to get—something more out of their sex life than just a series of quick fucks, and so they make sex as erotic and exotic as they possibly can. The leather scene is where that happens."

Asked about the reaction back on campus at Galveston to his winning in Chicago, Thomas replied, "I haven't felt any backlash in medical school, per se. Some of the reaction there has been very, very good, in fact. I've had a lot of people come up and congratulate me and express an interest in what it was all about and how I won."

At the same time he has received a lot of indirect negative reaction, especially from members of the medical fraternity to which he belongs. "They are saying lots of nasty things behind my back, but then they've said nasty things about me in the past [because I'm gay]. None of them have the balls to confront me in person, however. I guess it's easier for them to express their disapproval by backbiting."

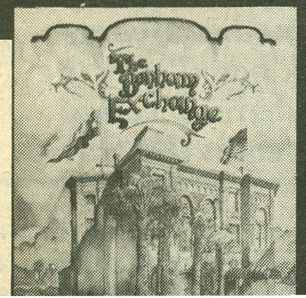
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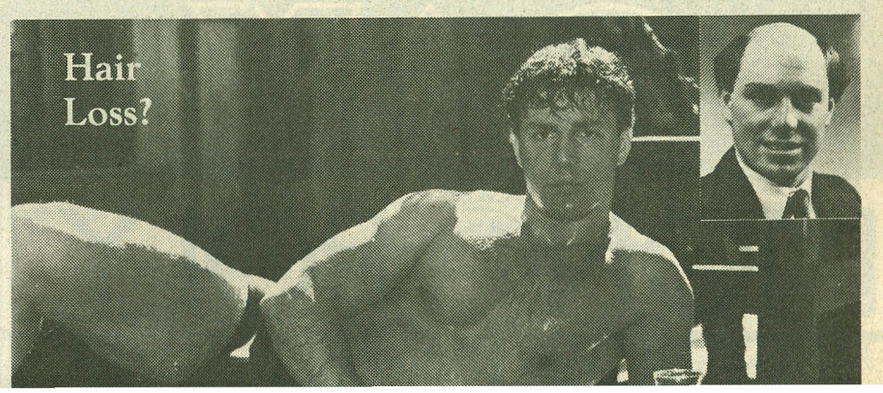
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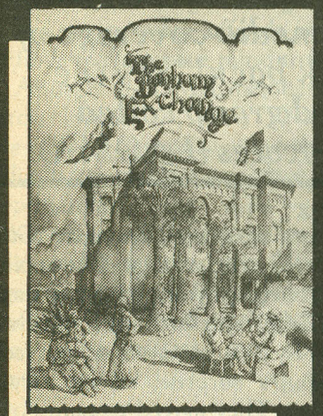
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Thomas continues, "As far as being in the limelight, in the end, my having the title might actually help me professionally. I've had a chance to meet lots of gay professionals across the country that I wouldn't ever have met otherwise. I'd love to meet the right person to help me get a residency in California!

"And should some vicious person in the Texas university system decide he wants to kick all the queers out of medical school, my having won the title would prevent him from taking his wrath out on me; I'm a very easy person now for the Civil Liberties Union to make an example of."

The seven International Mr. Leather '83 judges in Chicago were coached in advance that the event wasn't a beauty contest. That we (and this writer was one of the seven) selected as first-place winner a real head-turner was incidental to a larger fact. Light-duty by some standards, perhaps, but certainly no lightweight, Coulter "Colt" Thomas seems to be performing just fine as the ideal leatherman he was chosen to represent, to be. At the end of his year in harness, he will certainly have expanded leather's image to the world. •

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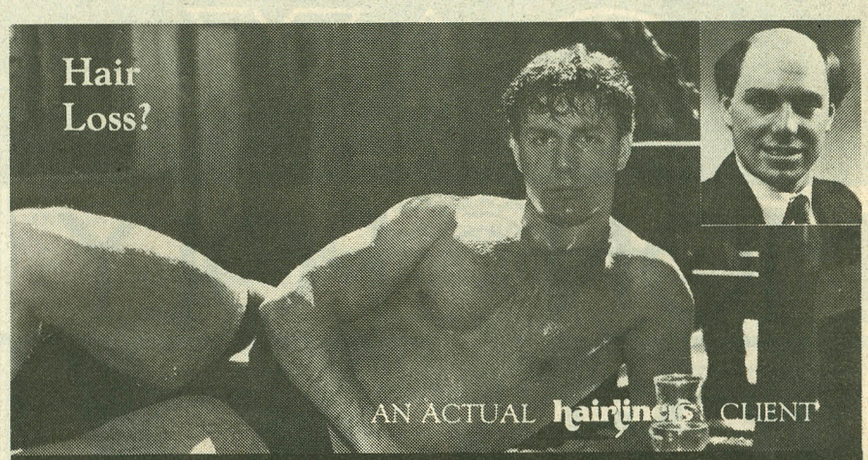
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