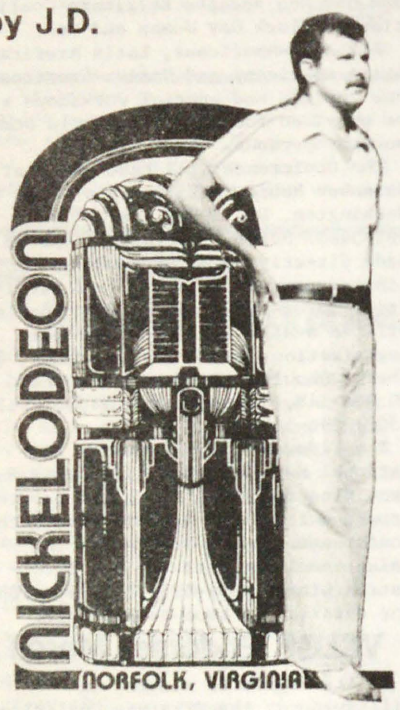
# Nickelodeon Closes

## Or - If This Is Tuesday, I Must Be At The Nickel

**by J.D.**




*Steve Brown*

"If this is Tuesday, I must be at the Nickel." I probably never used that phrase, but it does express something that over the past year became part of my life. I'm referring to the dime-beer nights that packed the Nickelodeon with people every Tuesday night for at least the past several months. They became a tradition for myself and many others to the degree that we did not even consider going anywhere else. I fell into this pattern since many of my fellow UUGC-ers would go there after the Tuesday meetings. That was part of the friendliness there, but it was also fairly easy to meet new people, who became friends, perhaps easier than at the other bars. The Nickel always represented to me the right blend for a bar--somewhere between cruising and socializing, with more emphasis on the latter, but enough of the former.

I should comment that it is not my intention to slight the other nights of the week when discussing the Nickel. They were less crowded and therefore more relaxing--a very homelike atmosphere in which to sit with friends, talk and unwind.

The Nickelodeon was one of the oldest gay bars in Norfolk--only the Cue and the Continental have been open longer--and it, like Mickey's and the Ritz, was a victim of the urban renewal project that is gutting downtown. Steve Brown, the owner, and Carl Gruel, the manager, have stated that they are looking for a new location, but plans at this time are very tentative, and a new "Nickel" is not likely to appear before the first of the year. The closing party for the Nickel was held on Friday and Saturday nights, August 31 and September 1, and a packed house celebrated its closing. It will be missed. ❖❖

# Owner Discusses Nutcracker Sale

**By Scott**

Last month Our Own reported that the Nutcracker, a gay disco in Norfolk, had been sold suddenly, with no advance notice of the change in ownership. Many learned of the change when they showed up seeking admittance at the club's front door. Our Own's reporter was one of these, and he was told by someone who appeared to be a new employee that the Nutcracker had become a "straight black bar." The employee also said that a newly-instituted dress code prohibited the wearing of jeans which this reporter had on at the time.

The next day Our Own confirmed that the Nutcracker's name had been changed to the Fox Trap, and that all of the employees of the gay disco had been replaced. Although an attempt was made to reach the owners of the Nutcracker, Marc and Loretta Gross, in order to confirm these changes, both of them were said to be out of town. Since then, Our Own was able to talk with the Grosses, and they have provided us with the following statement:

"To Our Dear Friends in the Tidewater Gay Community:

It was with deep regret that we sold the Nutcracker, but for financial reasons it had to be done. The way it was done was not to our liking. But the sale made it possible for us to liquidate all our debts with a considerable amount left over in order for us to reopen a large, more unique and a convenient location. We have enjoyed our relationship with the gay community and appreciate its previous support and pledge to further our association with it. A commitment has been made on a new location to house a fine restaurant and an exciting disco. We anticipate opening around New Year's."

In the week that followed the Nutcracker's sale Clift Briggs, who identified himself as a member of an organization that provides services to area military personnel, attended a meeting of the Unitarian Universalist Gay Community (UUGC) and asked the group to consider protesting the Grosses' recent actions. In particular Briggs charged that the Nutcracker's staff had not been given the customary two weeks notice of termination of their employment. Briggs reminded UUGC members that the Nutcracker had been the subject of intense controversy last fall shortly after it had opened as a gay disco. UUGC members discussed these issues with Briggs, but no motion was made that the group should take any action at that time.

When asked to respond to charges that the staff of the Nutcracker had not been given two weeks notice; Marc Gross said that his employees had been given two weeks salary and bonuses which consisted of a weekend in Washington, D.C. He also said when he reopened, his former staff would probably be hired back to work for him.

Gross acknowledged that the deal for the Nutcracker had not been handled in the best way possible. He said that on Monday July 30, Bob Fields and John Price came into the Nutcracker and offered to buy the place. Gross told them he would sell if the price was right. Fields and Price then made an offer which Gross accepted.

On Wednesday, Fields and Price returned and indicated that they wanted to take possession by that Friday. Gross said that still no papers had been drawn up for the sale. Gross told Our Own that he planned to have about two weeks notice in which he could inform staff and patrons of the impending sale.

According to Gross, it was at this point that the new owners offered him a bonus if he would give up the Nutcracker immediately. On Friday, August 3, Gross along with Price sat in a lawyer's office from 10:00am to 6:30pm to work out a deal and to sign the papers. And that night the new owners took immediate possesion. Because they wanted an opportunity to inform their customers Marc and Loretta Gross, on the night of the sale, stood outside to tell former patrons that this was no longer a gay bar. When the new owners saw what was happening, they asked the former owners to move off their property. Then the Grosses moved across the street to continue their efforts. Marc Gross said that the police were not called. (In the August issue of Our Own an individual who described himself as a former manager of the Nutcracker, had told this reporter that the new owners had called police to the scene.)

When asked about the new place which the Grosses plan to open, Marc Gross said it is going to be a "nice place, with better facilities, very unique disco, finer sound system, and with a much bigger dance floor." When asked if it was going to be in Ghent, he said that it is going to be on the other side of town from the Nutcracker's location. When the deal is finalized, this newspaper will report it. ❖❖

# ISRAEL

from page 1

Ministry and the police would not protect demonstrators from violence. Demonstrators carried placards in both English and Hebrew, some of which read: "GAY, JEWISH and PROUD", "GAY IS GOOD", and "GAY PRIDE and LIBERATION".

The gay and lesbian demonstrators called themselves ne'imin and ne'amot which refers to language found in the Old Testament. Ne'imin was used by David when referring to Jonathan in the Book of Samuel, and ne'amot was taken from the story of Naomi and Ruth from the Book of Ruth. According to the demonstrators' literature, Ne'imim and Ne'amot are "women and men who prefer a lifestyle with those of their own sex. For us, this is much more than a sexual preference. It is a way of life."

Specific demands of the demonstrators included the right of gays and lesbians to live as they choose, the right to organize and assemble, the abolition of the law against homosexual relations, and a change in the attitude of Israeli society toward lesbians and gays. Although born in anger and frustration, the demonstration was peaceful and non-violent and did not generate a counter demonstration. A few people who wished to publicize demands not related to the gay issue were not permitted to do so, and this gave the demonstration a clear focus on gay concerns.

Approximately one hundred persons joined the demonstration, which was given good television and press coverage. After the demonstration four or five gay persons came out during nationally televised interviews.

After the Conference and demonstration many of the conferees participated in an eight-day tour of Israel. One of the highlights of the tour was to have been the tree planting ceremony in dedication to gay Jews. The gay congregations had donated to the Jewish National Fund $9000 for the planting of 3,000 trees in a memorial forest.

For reasons that are not clear, no representatives of the Jewish National Fund showed up to conduct the ceremony, and there was no one on hand who could even show the tour group where these 3,000 trees had been planted. The tour group met for a 3 am brainstorming session and decided to hold the dedication ceremony in spite of the official snub. On the following day one symbolic tree was planted in memory of gay Jews.

(According to a letter which appeared in Boston's Gay Community News, September 1 issue, Israeli newspapers have reported that the Jewish National Fund is now "opposed to inscribing the word 'homosexual' on the monument in front of the new forest." The letter writer explains that local gay activists are insisting that the memorial plaque state that the forest is dedicated to gay male and lesbian defenders of the State of Israel. The letter states that until quite recently the Jewish National Fund has cooperated with gay Jewish organizations and synagogues in issuing certificates and placques that recognize the trees for gay Jews. The letter speculates that this reversal in attitude "sounds like the work of the same ultra-orthodox rabbis who tried to prevent the Conference from taking place.")

This reporter found that Tel Aviv, as might be expected, has its own gay district and beach, and its share of gay bars, discos and restaurants. In many ways Tel Aviv seems to be somewhat liberal, at least when compared to Norfolk. There, men are able to walk with each other hand in hand, and there does not seem to be the redneck atmosphere that is, on occasion, in evidence in Norfolk. While Israel does have its laws of oppression similar to our sodomy statutes, in Israel there does not seem to be the heavy emphasis on forced masculinity which isolates men from one another. While it is only my private speculation, it is perhaps because of the recent turmoil the Israeli people have endured, that they are more apt to act on feelings than out of fear and a false macho psychology.

Even though we experienced some infringement of our rights while there, gay Jews should be made aware that the government does welcome everyone to visit the country. Gay people need have no fear that they will be harassed at Israel's borders. Also the wide publicity given to acts of terrorism and violence creates an inaccurate image of present-day life in Israel. Isolated acts of terrorism notwithstanding, the people of Israel, representing so many different religious cultures, live in friendship and mutual respect for one another.

Finally it must be noted that Israel is a land of dynamic beauty. The diversity of its features, from the Mediterranean coast to the Dead Sea shores, from the majestic mountains of the Golan Heights to the awesome Negev Desert to the South, helped make our stay in the Holy Land a fascinating experience

# Cue Club's DJ: On The Inside Track

If you want to hear the new disco sounds before they hit the charts or before a friend tells you about it--go to the Cue Club. On Thursday evenings starting at nine, DJ Dan Tomasulo weaves some of the 30 to 60 weekly new releases and test presses into his program.

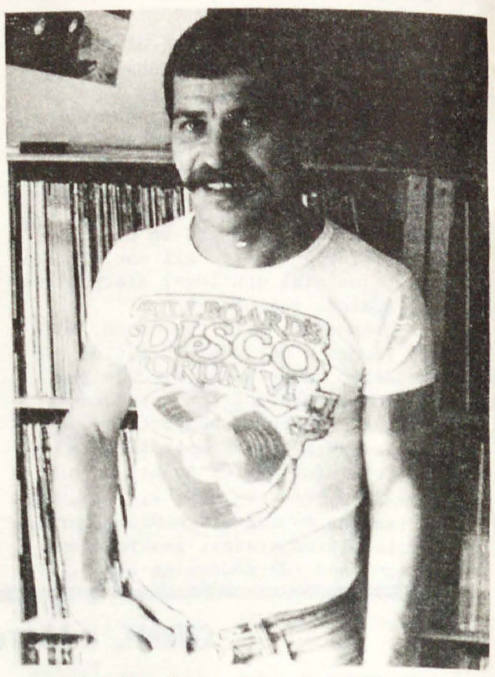
According to Dan, former DJ of the Lost and Found in D.C., the Pits in New York, and the Come Together in Jacksonville, Florida, Tidewater residents hear the same hits when they go out-of-town. Compared to other areas Norfolk is right in line when it comes to the top ten; otherwise this area leans to Funk Disco while the larger cities like New York go in for the trippy drug scene type of disco.

However, Tidewater residents have not always picked up on new sounds. Last August Dan played Gloria Gaynor's "I Will Survive" and the people just walked off the floor. It was not until November and December, after the song had received play on radio stations, that people began asking for it. Dan says, "a lot of people are not sure about new music. They don't know whether they should like it or not and how to dance to it."

Each week Dan receives 30 to 60 new releases from record distributors, and from these he picks a few that he thinks will make it to the top. Dan's ability to select the sounds that are going to make it to the top is beginning to be recognized by the industry and its publications. In July Dan's picks were listed along with four other DJ's from Studio 54, NY NY, Reginnes (all of New York) and Maxis of San Diego. He will be in future editions of "Michael's Thing" and "Disco DJ."

Dan recently taped a feature for "Stepping Out" a syndicated radio show from California and is in the process of making a tape for Paris' The Palace, the largest disco in the world, and there is a possibility that he will be their guest DJ for the month of December.

Dan's expertise also keeps him in close touch with record industry news. He commented that disco, which three years ago represented 18% or record sales, now comprises 34%. This has encouraged artists who have not yet recorded disco to try it, such as Ann Margaret and Andy Williams. He has also heard that Barbara Streisand is working on a disco album with Donna Summers. Dan disagrees with those who say disco is at its peak. He feels it has just reached one of many peaks and is on the doorstep of becoming part of American Life.



*Cue D.J. Dan Tomasulo* *Photo by J.D.*

Dan, a native of Newark, N.J., enjoys the Tidewater area and says, "The people here have been real nice. The Cue Club is a good place to work because of the people and the relaxed laid back atmosphere. The people come ready to let loose and it makes my job easier." Dan compares Norfolk's Cue Club with the Lost and Found and the Eagle in Exile in D.C.

Other than music Dan's interest include hunting, skin diving and paleontology. His interest in fossils have taken him to a dig in Nebraska.

Some of the albums that Dan says we will be hearing are: "Sweet Blindness" by Mighty Pope on RFC; "Whatcha Do To Me" by Louis Love on Ocean; "France Joli" by France Joli on Prelude; "Bad Reputation" by The Ritchie Family on Casablanca; "Ooh La La" by Suzi Lane on Electra; and the new Grace Jones release on Muse, which includes "Sinning" and "Suffer", two songs Dan refers to as Sado/Masco Disco.

