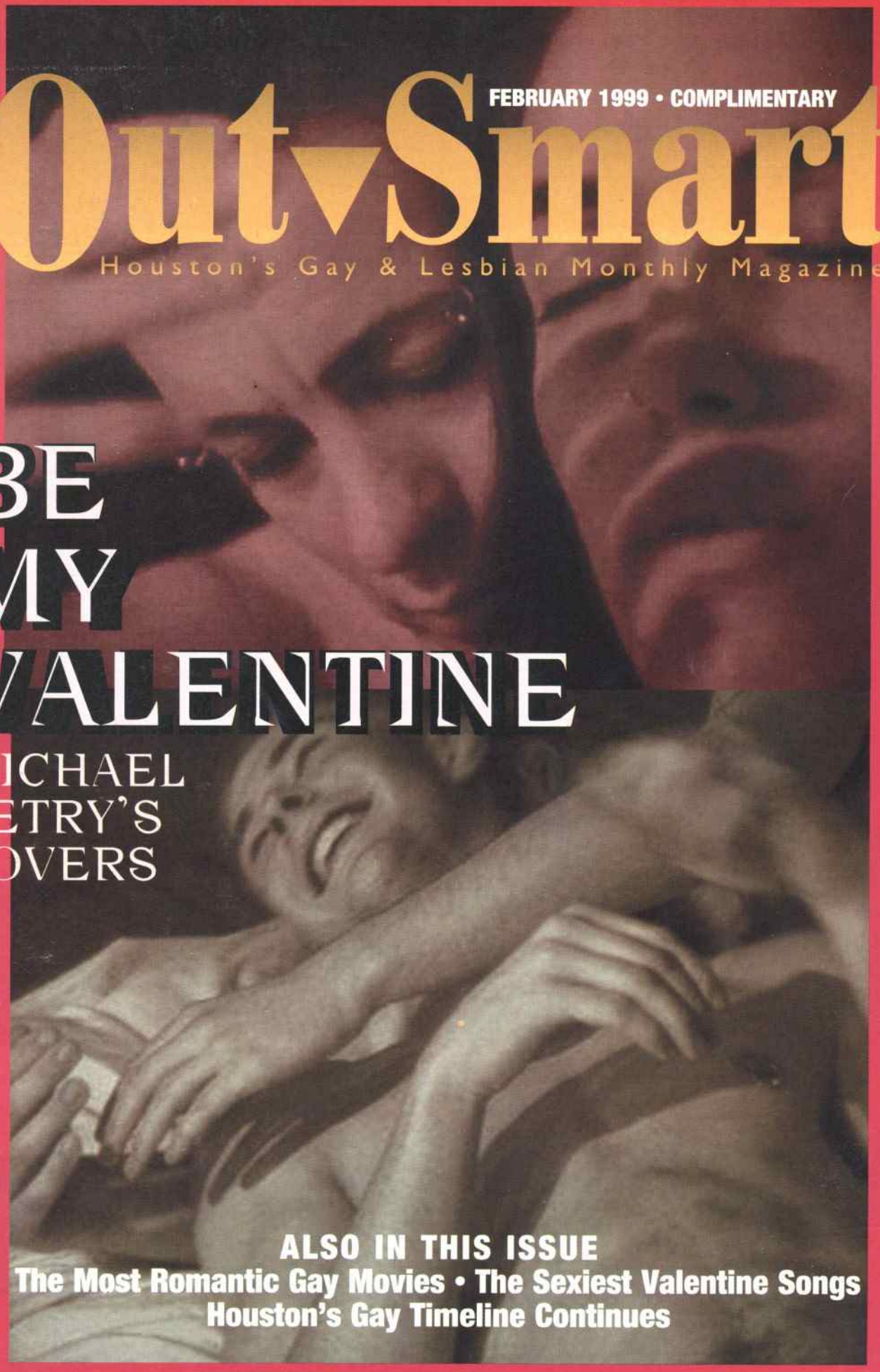
FEBRUARY 1999 • COMPLIMENTARY

OutSmart

Houston's Gay & Lesbian Monthly Magazine



BE MY VALENTINE

MICHAEL PETRY'S LOVERS

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

The Most Romantic Gay Movies • The Sexiest Valentine Songs
Houston's Gay Timeline Continues

Letters to the Editor

PATCHING THINGS UP

I would like to comment on the article in *OutSmart*'s January issue regarding 30 years of Houston gay history. I applaud your staff for giving us some history of what has been accomplished in Houston; however, I would be remiss if I did not point out what I consider to be major omissions.

In my opinion, a major part of Houston's gay history has happened at a little neighborhood bar in West University, known as the Briar Patch. The BP has been in the same location for 30 years now and during that time:

1. The BP has become the oldest gay bar in the city, and I am told the oldest bar in Texas.

2. The only Houston softball team to win the Gay World Series was sponsored by the Briar Patch.

3. *Out & About* magazine named the BP as one of the best eight piano bars in the country, and No. 1 in Texas in 1998.

4. Perhaps the most important part of our history is our support of Stone Soup Kitchen, having raised more funds for this worthwhile charity than any other Houston club.

While I'm happy [Melissa] Valenzuela was kind enough to mention the support that gay bars have made in the history of Houston, I do wish she had done her homework just a little better. I might add that there were several other names in Houston that made such a contribution, and while I know she could not include everyone, the names omitted were certainly a big part of helping the community achieve the success it has today.

I hope you will not think of this letter as "sour grapes," but I did stop counting the names of other bars at 14 and did not see the Briar Patch mentioned at all. We at the BP are proud of our past and will always strive to do more for the future.

—Wayne Gray
Houston

MAD DOG? GOOD DOG!

In response to your time warp article, I was appalled that every social service agency I started, TV show produced, shelter opened, activist group founded, and contribution I made for gay people with AIDS was completely ignored in the historical archives.

I have put together a list of groups and agencies that made a historical contribution and would respectfully request they be included in any future archives. If you need more information I would be glad to tell you the rest of the story.

1. 1992: Formation of the TSHCC/Thomas St. Healthcenter Citizens Council—founded by Act-Up and Queer Nation members. This group was responsible for creating one of the most powerful PWA advocacy groups in the nation. TSHCC renovated the building, started a model volunteer program with



over 400 members, reduced waiting times, increased HIV meds funding, brought about sensitivity training, hired patient liaisons, etc. Founding chair and co-chair Steven Bradley and Matt Locklin.

2. 1993: Harris County Hospital Districts Council-at-Large—council of all hospital district clinics, including reverends and people from every ethnic background. It elected first openly gay person with AIDS as executive officer: Matt Locklin.

You listed Montrose TV but forgot:

3. 1993-96: AIDS Talk Houston TV—over 300 hours of AIDS (we sneaked in gay rights, too) education on TV with your host PWA Matt Locklin. This show spawned: HIV Positive! TV 1994; Montrose Clinic TV 1993; and Life Today! TV 1995.

You listed Milam House and Steven's House:

4. 1994: TLC House Emergency Shelter, a gay-positive AIDS shelter—founded by Matt Locklin and Joe Dan Harper.

5. 1995: AIDS Housing Coalition—incorporates and assumes control of TLC House emercengy shelter. Founded by Richard Rancier and Matt Locklin. Has served over 300 residents to date without government funds!

6. 1996: Montrose 77006 TV—openly gay programming with your host "Mad Dog Matt" Locklin. M77006 was the model for Montrose TV.

These are just some of my contributions to the gay community, and yet I never received a penny in salary, an award, or cushy job. At least I could be remembered in history, if you please.

—Matt Locklin
Houston

Editor's Note: Retracing history—especially the history of homosexuality in Houston, Texas—is a daunting task at best. OutSmart *regrets these two very important omissions to which you have drawn our attention.* OutSmart *would like to point out that, in the first time in our thirtysomething history, we have had no formal Gay and Lesbian Community Center to become a focal point for such historical knowledge as you, Mr. Gray and you, Mr. Locklin, have so generously provided. It is our sincere hope that you both will provide such information to the center (an invaluable supplier of information for the Timeline piece), so present and future generations will benefit. No historical record will contain every event, every moment. However, with your information—and the information of others—perhaps, for the first time, Houston's gay and lesbian movement will have a more accurate vision of the past with which to carry forth our vision of the future.*

PUTTING ANOTHER LOG (CABIN) ON THE FIRE

This is an open letter to anyone affected by the hateful assault on gays and lesbians by the Republican Party. Unfortunately, once again, so-called community leaders (i.e. Log Cabin Republicans, and local and national writers, specifically *Out* magazine's John Cloud for his "Taking the Initiative" piece in February) suggest we, gays and lesbians, are to blame for the assault on ourselves, and we should stop insisting on equality and be thankful that we are allowed to live, period. We are reading suggestions that if we would just stop fighting for equality, things would be better. That is the stupidest thing possibly ever uttered!

Gays and lesbians aren't fighting to keep the equality they've acquired; they never had it! We're supposed to be fighting for it now!

The Bush family, with longtime pal Pat Robertson, is largely responsible for the recent antigay assaults. When the Bush campaign deliberately launched its family values (re: antigay) campaign in 1992, let us not forget the Mosbacher resignation. It is completely implausible to think that they didn't know they were opening the door to a full-scale assault on gays and lesbians. They knew and didn't care. Now we have a Bush as governor, pushing for a further assault on gays and lesbians. You can almost count on Bush to attempt to cover up his hatemongering antigay adoption bill with a meaningless, watered-down, back-to-compassionate discrimination public relations snowjob, the kind the Bush Republicans do so well.

We would like to support the Log Cabin Republicans. Unfortunately, they have spent more time and effort aiding the assault on pro-gay equality Democrats than stopping the assault on gays and lesbians by their own party. If they are serious about stopping the antigay Republican attack, why aren't we hearing about breaking up the Republican Party? Instead of stopping this assault and fixing the damage they've done, what we are hearing is that if gays and lesbians shut up and go back in the closet and hide, the powerful right-wing Republicans will go along with the pretense that we don't exist. That doesn't work for us! We won't do that.

continued on page 64

Send your letters and comments to: *Outsmart Magazine, 3406 Audubon Place, Houston, TX 77006.* Fax: *713/522-3275.* Or you can e-mail us at: *Letters@OutSmartMagazine.com.* Please include a phone number for verification.

April 4 @ Holocaust Museum Houston, 5401 Caroline St., 713/942-8000.

• **Mexico Ahora: Punto de Partida/Mexico Now: Point of Departure** features 13 emerging Mexican artists whose work is characterized by invention and force of expression. The exhibition reexamines the traditions of Mexican art and charts new creative territory through photography, sculpture, & installation in exciting contemporary works. Through Feb. 14 @ Contemporary Arts Museum, 5216 Montrose Blvd., 713/284-8250.

• **Rhapsodies in Black: Art of the Harlem Renaissance.** Long regarded as a key period of African-American art history, the Harlem Renaissance remains one of the most fascinating periods of 20th-century culture. More than 100 paintings, sculpture, photographs, jazz recordings, & films will be on view through Feb. 14 @ the Caroline Wiess Law Building, 1001 Bissonnet (between Montrose & Main). Info: 713/639-7300; Spanish 713/639-7379.

• **Working Class Heroes: Images From the Popular Culture** features 70 large-scale fiberglass sculptures, maquettes, paintings, drawings, & prints that showcase artist Luis Jiménez' favored social & aesthetic themes. Through Mar. 28 @ Blaffer Gallery, University of Houston, 713/743-9530.

CALENDAR DEADLINE
for *OutSmart*'s March issue: 5 p.m., Friday, February 12.

"YES, THERE IS LIFE AFTER BREAST CANCER. AND THAT'S THE WHOLE POINT."
–Ann Jillian

A lot of women are so afraid of breast cancer they won't practice breast self-examination or ask their doctor about a mammogram. And that's what frightens me.

Take it from someone who's been through it all: Life is just too wonderful to give up on.

But to enjoy it, you do have to give up being afraid to take care of yourself.

AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY

Get a checkup. Life is worth it.

Letters

continued from page 7

What we will do is have absolutely nothing to do with anyone supporting the Bush Republican attacks on our lives. It is a complete lie to say this isn't personal. It is very personal. That is why we have chosen to disown any relative or friend who supports the antigay Bush assault on gays in any way. This was truly relative to us since we have actual friends and relatives in the Bush attack on gays and lesbians. Perhaps even worse is the fact that we shall have to cease relations with family members who are Republicans in general. They are Bush supporters and do know about the Bush assault on gays and lesbians. After all, if they wanted us as friends and family, they couldn't support the Bush attack on us.

We are being told we need to try a new strategy. Let's try doing nothing, they tell us. Well, that's been done to death long ago. Remember the 12 Reagan-Bush years? The subject of gays was never mentioned in public. Wouldn't it be better to stop asking for the hatemongers to accept us and instead refuse to accept them as family and friends? Truly there is no such thing as compassionate discrimination. Maybe one of the Log Cabin Republicans could inform their new compassionate friends of this.

—Greg Knight
Terry Hughes
Bellaire, TX

CORRECTIONS

Since time truly heals all wounds, the following blunders in last month's issue will inevitably become history:

• The correct number for Asians and Friends is 713/626-6300. Ask for Albert Carpio, current president.

• *OutSmart* reported that all charges were dropped in the 1980 raid of Mary's Lounge. However, attorney Jim Kuhn represented 33 of the 61 patrons arrested in trial cases; only four were convicted.

• Five of the 10 men charged with the murder of Paul Broussard in 1991 received jail time; the remaining five received probation. We reported nine received the latter sentence.

Making Love

continued from page 56

The film's negative reviews usually criticized the storybook world of its characters, as all were extremely beautiful and held well-paying, prestigious jobs. But the characters' backgrounds were intentional. "We all wanted the characters to be very successful," Hamlin explains. "We didn't want them to be in any way downtrodden because we didn't want to give the audience the chance to say, 'OK, that's why he's a homosexual.'"

Jackson agrees, noting that "it was important to show them as successful and goodlooking so audiences would like them that much more. We didn't want to frighten the audience because of the subject matter."

The ending of *Making Love* is both hopeful and sad, as Claire and Zack meet briefly three years later. The audience mourns with Claire, and wonders if she has truly healed; after all, we learn that she has named her first son Rupert. At the same time, the audience cannot help but feel joy for Zack.

Seventeen years after *Making Love* premiered, the film still holds up well. And it's not surprising that the film's players remain pleased of their work and its place in history.

"I was very proud of that movie and everyone's work in it," says Jackson. "I feel very, very lucky to have been part of that experience."

Adds Hiller: "I loved this picture's story when I read it, and I still have an emotional reaction to it. It remains a beautifully romantic film."

"Many, many men have told me that they were able to come out to themselves, to their family, and even to their wives," says Sandler, who received an avalanche of mail from gay men praising his work. "To this day, people come up to me and say 'That movie changed my life' or 'After I saw your film, I felt a certain pride and dignity that I didn't before.' To be able to use one's ability to create a movie that's going to touch those nerves in people is amazing and rare. That *Making Love* moved and affected so many people has been extremely gratifying."

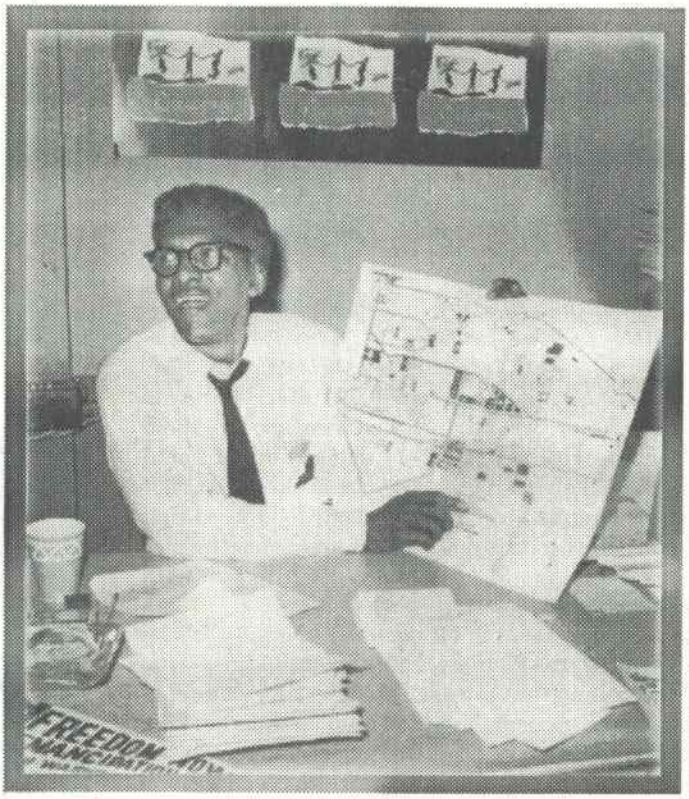
Scott Seomin is GLAAD's entertainment media director. GLAAD, the nation's lesbian and gay media advocacy organization, promotes fair, accurate, and inclusive representations of individuals and events in the media as a means of combating homophobia and all forms of discrimination based on sexual orientation or identity. For more information, log on to www.glaad.org. To report discrimination in the media, call 1-800-GAYMEDIA.

TIME OUT

REMEMBERING WHEN GAY AND BLACK MADE HISTORY

by Melissa Valenzuela

In February, many African Americans remember, and invoke others to remember, their black history—from heroic figures such as Rosa Parks, who dared to challenge segregation laws, to the horrible suffering of countless martyrs who were victimized simply because they were black. But some AfricanAmericans were haunted by another stigma: being homosexual. This month, we remember them.



AP/WIDEWORLD PHOTOS

Bayard Rustin, deputy to the March on Washington director.

Radical pacifism led to Bayard Rustin's contributions to black and gay history. But his former ties to Communism and homosexuality were stigmas that burdened him throughout his career.

Rustin, a spirited black man, provided the impetus to Dr. Martin Luther King's 1963 milestone in American history: The March on Washington. Along with longtime friend Philip Randolph, Rustin planned to lead a mass demonstration for black economic power. However, as more people became involved, including King, the focus shifted to civil rights.

King became the march's undisputed leader, and Rustin was appointed as deputy to Randolph, who became the march director. Though he remained relatively unseen during the march, organizers believed he was essential to bringing together this massive undertaking.

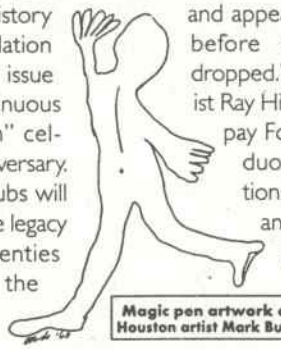
Still, the Pennsylvania native, with his high-pitched voice and flamboyant New York Greenwich Village friends, was considered a liability to his fellow march colleagues and a target for antigay slurs from conservative political leaders; attacks always made reference to his "morals." (The term "gay" or "homosexual" was rarely used at this time.) Rustin's involvement with the Young Communist League from 1936 to 1941 also was used against him.

continued on page 36

TIMELINE 1953-1968

Each month OutSmart will feature sections of Houston's gay history timeline.

1953 Decades after the Diana Foundation's inception, the "Dianas" still dazzle audiences with their glittery and glamorous on-stage performances for local fundraisers. Take a look at the history of the Diana Foundation in *OutSmart*'s March issue as "the oldest continuous roast in the nation" celebrates its 45th anniversary. **1963** Bars and clubs will come and go, but the legacy of the Roaring Twenties peaked well into the mid-'70s, even after it closed. Andy Ruth introduced this "dance" club on W. Dallas, and manager Rita "Poppa Bear" Wanstrom turned it into a lesbian haven. When Ruth called it quits in 1965, Wanstrom took the lead and opened the Roaring Sixties. **1965** Gay publications got moving with Bob Eddy's card-stock artistic magazine *The Albatross*. The "flying" *Albatross*, published by Reuters of Houston, hit the stands in August, when at least 13 gay-oriented bars and clubs existed (including Houston's proudest The Pink Elephant). This short-lived creative quarterly featured prose, poetry, and the "Magic Pen" artwork of Houston artist M. Burke. **1966** Captain M.C. and First Mate Les of the Galleon ran a tight ship for gay men looking for live music and drag shows. The two treated their guests to homemade Friday evening buffets and romping Sunday beer busts. The Galleon was often filled beyond capacity, and many patrons were sadly turned away by the crew. Those lucky enough to get in were witness to grand organist Ethel Smith's seaworthy performances. The owning duo welcomed aboard many clean-cut men before selling this Richmond Avenue nightspot. **1967** Days before New Year's Eve, police raided the Roaring Sixites, a lesbian bar, and charged owner Wanstrom with wearing clothing of the opposite sex (pants). Strong-arm attorney Percy Foreman took the "under-dog" case and appeared in court four times before charges were finally dropped. Wanstrom and gay activist Ray Hill founded Tumblebugs to pay Foreman's $2,500 fee. The duo solicited private donations, sponsored drag shows, and sold Tumblebugs paraphernalia. **1968** Hill and Wanstrom's concerted effort spilled over into political activism. With David Patterson and other community leaders, they formed the Promethean Society, the first homosexual political organization in Houston. But internal conflict between Hill and Wanstrom and lack of support from the community weakened this aggressive organization, and it ceased to function. Subsequently, Wanstrom co-founded the Texas Homophile Educational Movement (T.H.E.M.) to "dignify human rights, all rights." Wanstrom claims that T.H.E.M. was the first gay nonprofit chartered organization in Texas. It fell to community apathy in the early '70s. Socially, the gay scene was plentiful. In "Twelve Fighting Years," Bruce Remmington writes that a 1968 bar guide listed 26 Houston homosexual taverns, including J.V.'s Cabaret on Westheimer where queen Jerry Vanover performed "Mention My Name in Sheboygan" or Hadley Street's plush Red Room where Eddie Foster played host. But imagine, all this was just a ruffle in the wave of fun yet to come in the 1970s. Pick up *OutSmart*'s March issue for what happened between 1969-1973.



Magic pen artwork of Houston artist Mark Burke.



Jerry Vanover prepares for a performance at J.V. Cabaret

Timeline provided by The Houston Gay and Lesbian Community Center and Steve Brown of the MCCR Botts Memorial Library.

PHOTO: THE ALBATROSS, 3RD ANNIVERSARY EDITION 1968

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This community forum series is partially underwritten by The Hollyfield Foundation. Registration required for social work CEUs. This series has applied to CEUs through the University of Houston Graduate School of Social Work Office of Continuing Education. Please provide 48 hours notice for each event if sign language or Spanish language interpreting is needed by calling 713.527.8219

continued from page 34

South Carolina's pro-segregationist senator Strom Thurmond and North Carolina's outspoken Jesse Helms led an attack against Rustin in a plan to sabotage the March on Washington. Thurmond denounced Rustin's homosexuality on the Senate floor, while Helms expressed his disgust outside a Republican convention. The credibility of the march weakened as Rustin's homosexuality overshadowed his abilities as a black leader.

Many of Rustin's colleagues sought his resignation and disassociation from the march, but King came to his defense, noting that Rustin had taken his share of beatings long before anyone else. His colleagues relented.

Rustin managed the logistics and preparations for the event. He was in command of the grunt work: directing volunteers, making route fliers, releasing press passes, providing water and medical supplies, and getting portable toilets. Another civil rights leader, John Lewis, remembers Rustin squeaking in a British accent: "Now we *cawn't* have any disorganized *pissing* in Washington."

On the day of the march, Lewis and Rustin were rewording Lewis' speech, and they missed the beginning of the march. They were escorted by car to the Capitol, but large crowds blocked the streets. Rustin got out and joined the "sea of humanity."

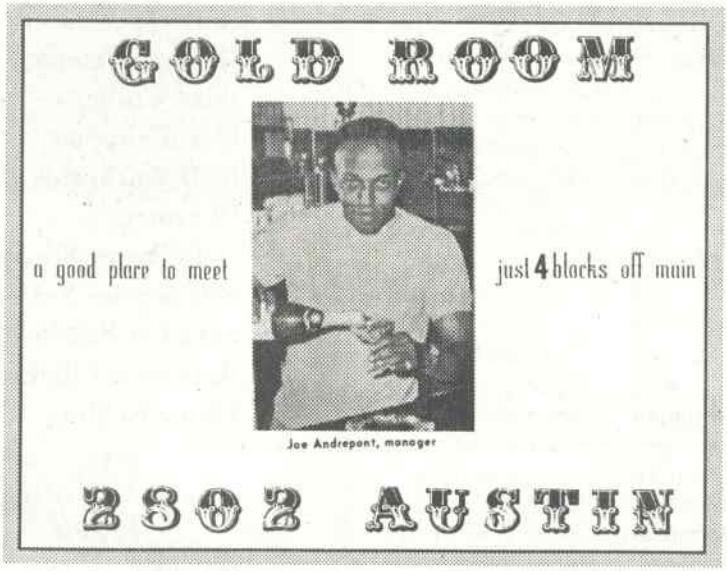


PHOTO: THE ALBATROSS

Original Gold Room ad from the 1968 3rd anniversary edition of *The Albatross*.

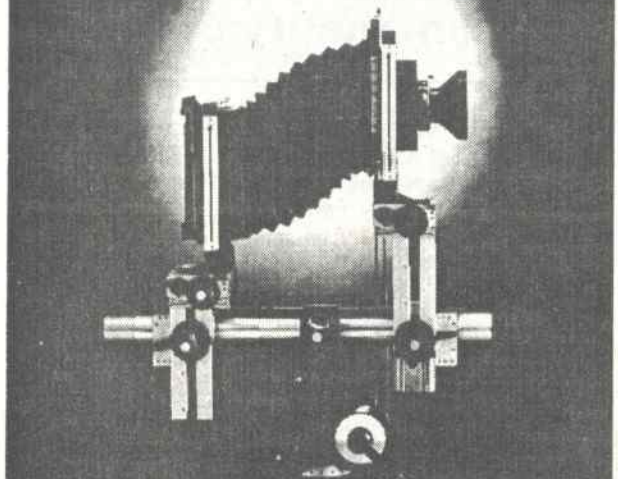
And the rest of the march is history.

Small civil movements in Houston mirrored the work of Rustin. Black community leaders and students staged protests at Texas Southern University and sit-ins at government offices. Fred Freelow, a gay black civil activist, rallied support for his own "freedom movements."

Freelow and all black gays faced a social menace—segregation. A "common bond" among homosexuals was not enough to unite the two races. "There was segregation within the gay community. Whites didn't go to black bars, and vice versa," said Jim Cass, who believes black bars were not located in the Montrose area until Studio 13 opened on Westheimer more than 10 years ago.

A short time after the historical march, Joe Andrepont

WOODALLEN PHOTOGRAPHY



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opened the Gold Room on Austin Street, dubbed by former patrons as the city's first gay black bar. The interior of this gray old house (once the Golden Nugget), nestled behind a high fence for semi-privacy, was adorned with sharp-gold drapes that shimmered from small stage lights. Only a handful of white gays, who were "curious," visited this black bar, Cass said.

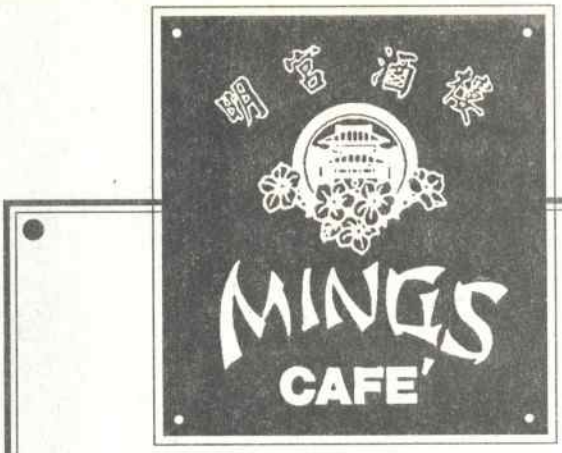
On Friday and Saturday nights, nearly 120 patrons were treated to the Gold Room's high-energy performances by voluptuous drag queens in beautiful costumes, including "The Supremes" and "Eartha Kitt." They were also pampered by feature bartender Delois Gaines on Sunday afternoons, when Andrepont hosted his wiener roasts.

Police raids and arrests were frequent at the Gold Room, as they were at all gay bars during this decade. Patrons were often verbally and physically harassed when police officers with flashlights combed through the crowd. Rarely did anyone challenge police authority.

The Gold Room thrived until the late '70s, before Andrepont moved to Seattle, Wash. His bar was more than a social outlet for black gays; it validated being black and being gay during a time when both seemed socially repulsive. And this month, black gays remember these stigmas as history.

Join community advocate George Rimmey next month when he takes a look at the history of the Diana Foundation and its upcoming 45th anniversary.

Information obtained from Walking in the Wind *by John Lewis with Michael D'Orso, and research assistance provided by Roger Ward.*



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