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▼▼▼ DATELINE: HOUSTON

Silence from the Castle targeted for Act-Up-Gulf Coast demonstrations

By SHAUN KEENAN GILSON

The New Voice/Houston

It all became apparent, and public knowledge, when Harrison Totten was quizzed at the Castle about his health status in the midst of some basic dental work. Denied the care that he had contracted for because of his HIV status, he contacted attorney John Paul Barnich.

Barnich has since filed in court for damages against Castle Dental Centers, a prominent Houston area chain. (The initial filing is detailed in The New Voice Issue 644). As the case chugs through the court system, it has drawn increasing attention from the HIV-concerned community.

Now, Act-Up/Gulf Coast has made the discrimination charges a priority. Saturday, about twenty of the group's supporter's, wearing surgical gowns, held an action for about 45 minutes in front of Castle's Galleria area branch. Several Castle employees watched from behind the storefront office's tinted glass windows, but none were willing to make a statement, nor did any come

contacted the Castle's alleged press relations person, who would only identify herself by her alleged first name, "no comment" was the only response available Monday. The Castle Dental Centers have yet to comment on the pending discrimination case publicly in any form available to The New Voice.

In fact, according to Act-Up/Gulf Coast's Keith Stewart, it is not clear yet in the Totten suit who is actually being sued. Stewart said that Jack Castle, the chain's head, has stated that he can't be sued, and that currently, the group can not pin down Castle's actual corporate origin and ownership. Stewart said that Mr. Castle insists that he can not be sued personally. The corporate entity remains nebulous to Act-Up/Gulf Coast, and again, when queried, The New Voice received "no comment" from

the person introduced as responsible for press relations.

The point of contention for Totten, in his legal filing, and Act-Up, in their demonstration, is that Castle asks about HIV status on its patient medical background form. The Totten suit charges that the dental chain is violating federal law by denying treatment to HIV-positive clients.

Castle claims that it is not prepared to protect its employees from HIV infection, and thus can not accept infected clients. Act-Up counters that if the clinic were following federally prescribed "universal precautions" for all contagious diseases, HIV would not be an issue. Act-Up further charges that if such guidelines are not being followed for HIV, Castle clients may well be at risk for other contagions.



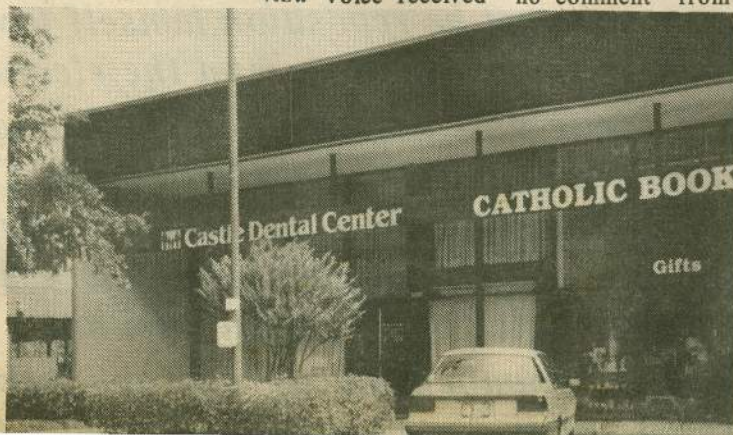
Demonstrators donned surgical gowns



Act-Up demonstrator

asks about previous treatment for a variety of diseases ranging from alcoholism to hepatitis. However, the HIV positive line, near the bottom of the list of possibilities, is in bold type.

Harrison Totten sought legal assistance after the Castle had installed braces on his teeth and refused further treatment. Jack Castle's response to the charge is that the Castle Dental Centers exist in name only, thus he can not be sued. However, it is not clear from the Castle's "original answer" as filed, what the institution is. The document announces that Totten's claim is invalid because he

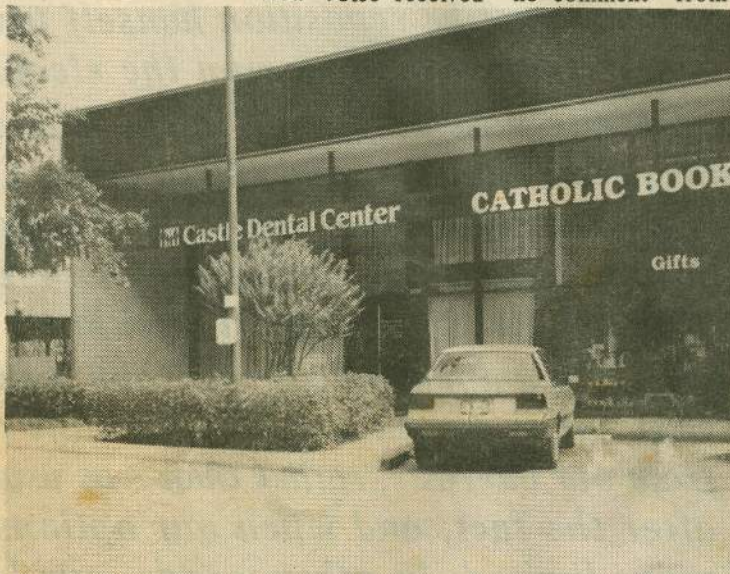


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That remoteness seems systemwide. When The New Voice



Galleria area Castle

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Terri Richardson of Act-Up/Gulf Coast said that the group plans other actions against the clinic in the future. They will continue, she said, until the chain of clinics changes its policies.

The medical history form in question



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(Editor's note: Act-Up/Gulf Coast's letter to Dr. Jack Castle is printed on page three.)

▼▼▼ DATELINE: THE WORLD

Researchers clash at international conference over best use of anti-AIDS drug AZT

By PAUL RAEBURN
FOR THE NEW VOICE

BERLIN, Sunday, June 6 (AP)—Leading researchers clashed Sunday over the best use of the anti-AIDS drug AZT, as activists, scientists and people with AIDS prepared to open an international conference on the epidemic.

Dr. Maxime Seligmann of the Saint-Louis Hospital in Paris studied 1749 patients who used AZT, the primary drug to fight AIDS. He found no difference in the drug's effectiveness among

AIDS. The symposium was sponsored by Burroughs Wellcome Co., the maker of AZT, one of the few drugs available to fight the lethal disease.

Seligmann's study, known as the Concorde trial, has prompted a sharp debate over whether American doctors should continue their widespread practice of prescribing AZT before symptoms develop.

The study also challenges findings that AZT delays the onset of AIDS in people infected with the human immu-

In an update of the study to be presented later this week, Volberding will report that the sooner AZT is taken, the longer it will keep patients from becoming sick.

Neither Volberding's nor Seligmann's studies find that AZT has any value in prolonging patients' lives. The issue is whether it can slow progression of the disease.

The results of the Concorde trial were released earlier this year, but Sunday's symposium provided an opportunity for

sons for starting early. Studies suggest AZT will remain effective for a longer period if used early in the disease, before the virus develops resistance to it, he said.

He acknowledged, however, that there was logic to Seligmann's notion that the temporary effectiveness of AZT should not be squandered before patients get sick and need some help.

Seligmann said he hoped the question would soon become moot with the advent of combination treatments,

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Dr. Maxime Seligmann of the Saint-Louis Hospital in Paris studied 1749 patients who used AZT, the primary drug to fight AIDS. He found no difference in the drug's effectiveness among people who were given it early and those who were given it after the virus had progressed.

Seligmann said because the drug is only temporarily effective against AIDS, "you may want to save it for later."

Seligmann spoke Sunday at a symposium just before the opening of the Ninth International Conference on

AIDS. The symposium was sponsored by Burroughs Wellcome Co., the maker of AZT, one of the few drugs available to fight the lethal disease.

Seligmann's study, known as the Concorde trial, has prompted a sharp debate over whether American doctors should continue their widespread practice of prescribing AZT before symptoms develop.

The study also challenges findings that AZT delays the onset of AIDS in people infected with the human immunodeficiency virus, or HIV.

Dr. Paul Volberding of the University of California at San Francisco is the author of the leading study supporting the early use of AZT. That study, supported by the U.S. government, led the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to approve the drug's use in HIV-infected people before the onset of AIDS symptoms.

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▼▼▼ DATELINE: NEW ORLEANS

Varied artwork of lesbians featured in current New Orleans show

By BUNCH BRITAIN
The New Voice/New Orleans

New Orleans is having first of what is hoped will be an annual Lesbian Art Show from June 1st through June 30th at Charlene's/Over C's bar. The show is co-hosted by the New Orleans Alliance of Pride and Charlene Schneider.

Six of C's upstairs rooms are packed with oils, sketches, photographs, water colors and multi-media works of art done by New Orleans lesbians. The six rooms serve as an excellent gallery to demonstrate the various art works done by members of the lesbian community. Many of the works are for sale to those viewing the exhibit.

The concept of a Lesbian Art Show grew



Margaret Coble



Charlene Schneider

out of a concern for lesbian visibility and a desire to celebrate lesbian loves and lesbian lives. One of the goals of the show is to celebrate the diversity of the lesbian community by attempting to include women of all class, racial and ethnic background. This commitment to diversity includes the acknowledgment and recognition of bisexual sisters who often feel the same oppression as lesbians.

A reception was held this past Saturday to formally open the show. Special thanks go to those who helped organize the show: Linda Tucker, Angela King, Julie Jacobs, Kathy O'Shaughnessy, Kelly Magee, Kiki Reinecke, Cheryl Duval, Cherrie Lefevers, Maria Mahmoud, Margaret Coble and Charlotte Bahm.

and endorsement business. I still remember Lena Guerra. She staked a lot of her political capital on a school finance plan that, many of her supporters thought she didn't believe in, but had to back because it was the best she could get. It, as most remember, was a disaster at the polls last May. And, Texans are getting a slightly different version of the same anyway, without another opportunity to vote on it. That means that if the electorate hates what



U.S. Senators representing Texas

▼▼▼ OPEN LETTER

Act-Up-Gulf Coast joins coalition for policy change at Castle Dental

(Editor's note: the following was sent to Jack H. Castle, the head of Castle Dental Centers and signed by D. Michael Crawford of Act-Up/Gulf Coast. For background, see page one of this issue.)

As you are no doubt now aware, ACT UP/Gulf Coast has called for a general boycott of Castle Dental Centers until the following demands are met:

1. Castle must immediately discontinue its practice of refusing to treat HIV-positive patients;
2. Castle must remove all references to HIV from its patient information form;
3. Castle must guarantee the confidentiality of each patient's HIV status, if known;
4. Castle must provide all patients

with information on the universal health precautions and on the low incidence of transmission of HIV to patients in dental settings.

ACT UP/Gulf Coast is concerned that you are attempting to profit financially by refusing to treat persons known to be infected with HIV, thereby using AIDS-phobia to create a false sense of security among the uninformed population. This

the May special election. But, it was a successful, single issue campaign that by and large left gay and lesbian issues out. This is a time for queer political organizations to re-examine how the community's concerns became so unfocused as to make us non-players on the most important levels of this race.

(Editor's note: other reports and comment on the race are to be found on page 5)

is unacceptable. Unless and until you can demonstrate that the above demands have been met, we will continue to urge boycott by holding press conferences, protesting at your offices, and distributing literature designed to educate Houstonians about your discriminatory, unethical, and possibly illegal policies.

▼▼▼ GUEST COMMENTARY

An explanation of the Eleanor Roosevelt-Harvey Milk Democratic Club

By PAT GANDY

Just before the Democratic State Convention in June of 1992, I determined that I had an outside chance of being elected to the State Democratic Executive Committee (SDEC) from Senate District 15. Due to "understandings" within the party it was time for an Anglo white female and a Hispanic male to be elected to these two very important offices. I knew that I had the creditability within the party to be a serious candidate but I had not prepared well in advance to get support from the various communities that I would need to work with in order to get elected.

At any rate, off I went and spent a great deal of money personally on the campaign. I had a political advisor, wrote a letter to all the delegates and had stickers made which I would try to get supporters to put on at the convention. I had no official support from any organized political group nor had I tried to get an endorsement. I did have personal support from Councilman Ben

County Democrats (not the official party organization but an ad hoc group formed in the 1950's to purify the Democratic Party). In that exercise, Caucus President Chris Bacon served as a very effective negotiator. It took some real hardball playing to counter the opposition of Billie's old line HCD group to the candidacy of an openly Gay/Lesbian person. Chris handled that particularly well and the results speak for themselves.

In March, the GLPC refused to endorse the candidate chosen by the Democratic party in Texas as its candidate for United States Senator. I proceeded to organize what eventually became the Eleanor Roosevelt/Harvey Milk Democratic Club. Why? The GLPC is a non-partisan group. It is extremely hard to try to organize a Democratic Caucus within the group itself. Many of those who belong to the GLPC are not ever active in either Democratic or Republican party affairs or political campaigns and many people who are

Harvey Milk was added.

Indeed there was some discussion as to why Eleanor Roosevelt was suggested to which I replied, "She was a strong role model figure in political life for women in the 1940's and 1950's. She served of course, as a very active First Lady being the wife of President Franklin Roosevelt and since he was confined to a wheelchair, she became his eyes and ears and actively pushed important social and economic issues. In fact she was coming from a meeting when she died. In her life constantly subjected to those sexist attacks even in death! Books in the past few years have alluded to her interesting relationship with a long time "friend" who is supposed by many to have been her Lesbian lover. Well, as a very good friend of mine says, "you really don't know if two people are lovers unless: 1) they admit it (2) you are under the bed or (3) you are in the bed." Since non of these options have been covered, we must in intellectual honesty state that it cannot be said that

who their heroines should be. Women like all people of color are women first and as such are denigrated by most cultures that I know. Our male critics of the name of this club, just don't get it and probably never will!

The membership of this club is open to all people who subscribe to our constitution. One of the provisions is that a person must be able to work for the civil rights of all persons and that includes gays and lesbians. Due to the fact that we will be working within the Democratic Party and our neighborhoods we are open to all, homosexuals and heterosexuals of every description, ethnicity and color are welcome.

Of course, most of us are gay or lesbian but we do have heterosexuals who belong. We are trying to be inclusive to our friends and supporters. This is not an intellectual organization where college professors will be encouraged to debate the nuances of words. We will be doing grassroots work to promote the civil rights of gays, lesbians and all